Every Man His Own Monument
Self-Monumentalizing in Romantic Britain

Chris Haffenden
Dissertation presented at Uppsala University to be publicly examined in Auditorium minus, Gustavianum, Uppsala universitetsmuseum, Akademigatan 3, Uppsala, Friday, 9 November 2018 at 10:15 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The examination will be conducted in English. Faculty examiner: Dr. Samantha Matthews (Bristol University, UK).

Abstract

From framing private homes as museums, to sitting for life masks and appointing biographers, new forms of *self-monumentalizing* emerged in the early nineteenth century. In this study I investigate the emergence and configuration of such practices in Romantic Britain. Positioning these practices at the intersection of emergent national pantheons, a modern conception of history, and a newly-formed celebrity culture, I argue that this period witnessed the birth of distinctively modern ways for the individual to make immortality. Faced with a visceral fear of being forgotten, public figures began borrowing from celebrity culture to make their own monuments.

Concentrated upon early nineteenth-century London, I characterize these practices as attempts at *self-made immortality*. I do so by analyzing the legacy projects of three well-known but seldom connected individuals: the *Auto-Icon* by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), the Soane Museum by the architect Sir John Soane (1753–1837), and the life-writing efforts of the painter Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786–1846). Employing both sociological and materialist frameworks to analyze the making of immortality, I contend that these projects were characteristic of a novel regime for the production of lasting renown. Whereas earlier scholarship on Romantic recognition has tended to focus *either* on mass-media celebrity *or* the longer history of canon-formation, I highlight the interactions of celebrity and monument embodied in entrepreneurial efforts to secure future recognition.

In *Every Man His Own Monument*, I demonstrate how a constellation of media forms and recording practices we now take for granted—the statuary figure, the house museum, and the published *Life*—assumed a central place within a new memorial regime. Bringing the historical roots of self-monumentalizing individuals to light, this study contributes to discussions both within the History of Celebrity and Cultural Memory Studies, and to broader debates regarding our Instagram-saturated present.

*Keywords:* Self-monumentalizing, self-made immortality, history of celebrity, cultural memory, historical consciousness, Jeremy Bentham, Auto-Icon, John Soane, Soane Museum, Benjamin Robert Haydon, autobiography

*Chris Haffenden, Department of History of Science and Ideas, Box 629, Uppsala University, SE-75126 Uppsala, Sweden.*

© Chris Haffenden 2018

ISSN 1653-5197
urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-361353 (http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=nbn:se:uu:diva-361353)
To Elin, William, Clara, and Theodore
Contents

1. Introducing self-made immortality ...........................................................11
   Self-made immortality as an object of study ..........................................13
   Excavating immortality:
   theoretical and methodological starting points ...................................18
   Looking beyond words: contexts and approaches ..............................23
   Competing immortality regimes in Romantic Britain .........................26
   Empirical material and disposition .....................................................36

2. “Every man his own statue”:
   Bentham’s body as DIY monument .....................................................40
   Framing the Auto-Icon in terms of self-made immortality ..................44
   Rejecting state immortality .................................................................46
   Every man his own and the individualist manual ...............................54
   Bentham’s Auto-Icon as a performance of self-consecration ..............60
   Making the self-made statue ...............................................................67
   Staging the Auto-Icon ......................................................................79
   Conclusion .........................................................................................89

3. “Perpetuating for the public my museum”:
   Soane’s house museum ......................................................................93
   The house museum as self-made monument .....................................95
   Soane’s strategies of self-commemoration .......................................97
   Self-collecting and the self-made archive .......................................113
   Soane’s museum as scrapbook .........................................................129
   Soane’s ruins as self-consecration ....................................................140
   Busting the pantheon ........................................................................161
   Conclusion ........................................................................................167
4. A life in paper:
Haydon and the making of a textual monument ................................................. 170
  Parsing the autobiographical frame .......................................................... 172
The struggle for “immortality in this world” ............................................. 175
  Living as an immortal: the material practices of self-consecration ... 180
Haydon’s diary as self-made monument .................................................. 188
  The personal archive as extraction of lasting value ......................... 197
Haydon’s Life as epitome of self-made immortality .......................... 206
  Conclusion ............................................................................................. 212

5. Conclusion:
  self-made immortality in perspective....................................................... 215
    Encapsulating the regime of every man his own monument .......... 217
    New directions in the history of nineteenth-century renown .......... 220
    Digital immortality and the curating of the individual life .......... 222

Acknowledgements .................................................................................. 226
List of images ............................................................................................ 228
Bibliography .............................................................................................. 234
Index of names .......................................................................................... 262
Fame is the recompense not of the living, but of the dead. The temple of fame stands upon the grave: the flame that burns upon its altars is kindled from the ashes of great men. Fame itself is immortal, but it is not begot till the breath of genius is extinguished.

William Hazlitt (1818)

Mortality is ours without asking— but immortality is something we must build ourselves.

Zygmunt Bauman (1992)
1. Introducing self-made immortality

One of my principal points of departure is the curious instance of the Buribunks. Conceived of in a Carl Schmitt satire from the final years of the First World War, these fictional characters were a parodical take on the tendency of individuals to participate in shared practices of what Schmitt termed “self-historicization.”¹ The Buribunks thus compulsively recorded their lives in minute detail via diary-writing practices in which they sought to document their existence for future publics.

By enacting this project of self-inscription these relentless diary-keepers were committed to “consecrating [their] exploits on the altar of history in the illuminated temple.”² Engaged in such concrete steps to write themselves into history, Schmitt depicted the Buribunks as a group driven by the urge “to immortalize oneself.”³

Insofar as they were preoccupied with preserving their life stories for posterity, the Buribunks constitute a striking entrance point to the questions concerning strategies for posthumous recognition and capturing future commemorative attention I explore in this study. These self-historicizing characters accordingly exemplify the logic of Zygmunt Bauman’s later maxim that “[f]uture immortality will grow of today’s recordings.” More specifically, they illustrate the aggressively opportunistic conditions for the production of lasting value implied by Bauman’s vision, given that “[t]omorrow’s immortals must first get hold of today’s archives.”⁴


Schmitt and the self-made monument

Schmitt’s text certainly outlined the convergence of a commanding will to memory and an aspirational entrepreneurship. This connection between practices of recording achievements for future acclaim, on the one hand, and the energetic pursuit of public renown exercised by the self-made man, on the other, was driven home in exaggerated form when he came to sketch the biography of a prominent early Buribunk leader called Ferker.

Schmitt thus explained Ferker’s “sensational rise” from “humble origins” in terms of the energies and strategies of self-promotion honed over a long career, culminating in his position as “Professor of Marketing and Upward Mobility at the Institute of Commerce in Alexandria.” Ferker’s efforts in seeking this “mobility” were further evident in his personal memory-making mantra: imploring everyone to “[b]e your own history! Live, so that each second of your life can be entered into your diary and be accessible to your biographer!”

Such a relentless drive to immortalize his life while living it ultimately led Ferker to produce his own carefully-planned death show. This took the form of a spectacular posthumous publicity project, where the self-made man became his own monument via a material process transforming his body into print media. Schmitt described this in the following terms:

[Alexandria] is also where he [Ferker] was cremated and, in the most grandiose style, his ashes processed into printer’s ink, as he had specified in detail in his will and which was sent in small portions to printing presses all over the world. Then, with the aid of flyers and billboards, the whole civilized world was informed of this procedure and was furthermore admonished to keep in mind that each of the billions of letters hitting the eye over the years would contain a fragment of the immortal man’s ashes. For eons, the memorial of his earthly days will never disappear; the man—who even in death is a genius of factuality—through an ingenious [...] gesture, secured himself a continued existence in the memory of humanity, a memory, moreover, that is even more safely guaranteed through the library of diaries that he released in part during his lifetime, in part after his death. For at each moment of his momentous life he is one with historiography and the press; in the midst of agitating events he coolly shoots film images into his diary in order to incorporate them into history. Thanks to this foresight, and thanks as well to his concomitant selfless research, we are informed about almost every second of the hero’s life …

This upwardly mobile figure thus used the full range of his marketing nous in directing this campaign to make his own immortality. Working extensively to avoid being forgotten, Ferker exploited his physical remains to enhance his claim upon the attention of future publics.

---

Self-made immortality as an object of study

In this study I examine the wider regime for producing immortality that Ferker’s death show variously characterized and satirized. Understanding the Buribunks as emblematic of a broader yet historically distinct phenomenon, I frame my principal argument in terms of the emergence of a self-made immortality regime.

This entailed individuals actively working to secure the lasting value of posthumous recognition, as the Schmitt example so clearly demonstrates. In this regime public figures like Ferker invested in a range of media forms to make their own monuments, largely independent of the established consecrative authorities of church and state. Insofar as this premiered self-exertion and opened for a range of Do-It-Yourself practices for claiming immortality, it constituted a particularly entrepreneurial approach to the production of posthumous renown. Through parodying these practices, Schmitt’s text helps us grasp how far the operative logic of such a regime had become a given part of the commemorative landscape by the opening decades of the twentieth century.7

How, when, and why was this new regime of secular memory established? Here I turn back to the early nineteenth century to explore the specific conditions that brought this self-made approach to immortality into being. I do so by considering the self-monumentalizing practices via which individuals sought to capture the memorial attention of future publics. Situated at the intersection of a modern conception of history, the appearance of national pantheons, and a newly-established celebrity culture, I show how these

7 While Schmitt’s Buribunks were the product of a specific cultural setting in late Wilhelmine Germany, it is a central part of my argument that the practices he satirized were part of a wider phenomenon. It is hence possible to identify elements of the strategies, material practices, and media forms outlined in Schmitt’s text in a diverse range of cases from the late eighteenth century to the present. Certainly, from Goethe’s attempts to create his personal archive as a form of “private institutionalization” in early nineteenth-century Weimar to Andy Warhol’s sealing of 300,000 of his personal possessions into cardboard boxes as Time Capsules (1974), and from pianist Percy Grainger’s founding of an autobiographical museum explicitly intended to secure “fame-after-death” in interwar Melbourne to today’s online services of “legacy resources” peddling the allure of “digital immortality,” notable similarities can be posited in the ways these contextually disparate instances of monument-making sought to preserve the individual life for future publics.

practices proved a response to significant discursive and material developments in the commemorative sphere of the Romantic period. By bringing into focus this wider constellation of history, pantheon, and celebrity, I argue this period witnessed the birth of distinctively modern ways for the individual to make immortality.

In positing the notion of self-monumentalizing as my object of study, it might be objected that there is nothing particularly new about such a phenomenon. Have humans not always sought to make monuments to themselves in some shape or form? Horace had certainly seemed to express such a sentiment over two thousand years ago when he cast his own works as a monument more lasting than bronze.8 Similarly, Bauman’s notion of “immortality strategies” as a generalized instance of “death-avoidance” appeared to make this desire for personal immortality a constituent part of human existence, beyond any particularities of time and space.9 But rather than essentializing the urge to posthumous renown as a perennial, transhistorical matter in this way, I claim that the type of post-Enlightenment project exemplified by Schmitt’s Ferker can be distinguished from these earlier posterity concerns. In short, I argue that self-monumentalizing practices and the wider logic of self-made immortality these embodied are historically-specific phenomena, which emerged first towards the end of the eighteenth century and remain with us in variously changing guises today.

A principal part of what was distinctively modern with these practices can be framed in terms of who might partake in such efforts to claim their own immortality and how they might go about doing so. This is sharply captured in the discussion of death value Jeremy Bentham was working on shortly before his death in 1832, where he posited that “every man would be his own monument.”10 While Bentham attempted to realize this vision in a strikingly literal manner, a growing range of nineteenth-century figures—chiefly male initially, as his formulation belied—strove to dictate the version of themselves to be commemorated by future publics: from sitting for life masks and framing

---


homes as museums, to organizing personal archives and appointing prospective biographers.\textsuperscript{11} What such varied instances demonstrate is the emergence of a set of shared practices and a media repertoire for the production of self-made immortality. Taken together these exemplified the material expressions of what Schmitt’s text had characterized as an imposition of the “will to power onto historiography in the making.”\textsuperscript{12} These practices proved a markedly assertive means for individuals to confront the pressing problems of posterity posed in this period, as I show over the course of this study.

\textbf{Reconfiguring celebrity and monument}

By focusing on these practices for materializing claims upon future renown I provide a new account of the making of immortality in the early nineteenth century. Though much research over the past few decades has examined this period’s “cult of commemorations,” little attention has been directed towards the convergence of self-fashioning and monumentality embodied in the legacy projects I examine here.\textsuperscript{13} Indeed, while a number of recent studies have turned to explore the “afterlives” of various texts and reputations, it is striking how far the distinction between present and posthumous renown circulating in this Romantic period has been upheld in the prevailing research division of these

\textsuperscript{11} Despite the suggestion of Alois Riegl that most creators throughout the history of “deliberate monuments” did not “intend to leave evidence of their artistic and cultural life to future generations,” it was precisely this type of legacy project that became more widespread in this period. Indeed, over the course of the nineteenth century a broader array of figures than those traditionally associated with posthumous acclaim (i.e. royalty, nobility, military and political leaders) began to invest in a range of increasingly shared practices to claim what Riegl characterized as “deliberate commemorative value.” Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development” [1903], in \textit{Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage}, ed. Nicholas Stanley Price, M. Kirkby Talley Jr, and Alessandro Melucco Vaccaro (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 1996), 72, 77–78.

\textsuperscript{12} Schmitt, “Die Buribunken,” 242 (italics added).


For examples of more specific consideration of the new commemorative practices that came into being with modern history, see Joseph Clark, \textit{Commemorating the Dead in Revolutionary France: Revolution and Remembrance, 1789–1799} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), and Ben-Amos Avner, \textit{Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789–1996} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), esp. 17–53.
forms of recognition. Where the fashioning of living reputations has chiefly been explored by historians of celebrity culture, the making and remaking of longer afterlives has been considered by scholars of cultural memory and canon-formation, in a dichotomy of attention recently encapsulated in the phrase “from self-fashioning to cultural memory.”

Such a distinction would have been remarkably familiar to the early nineteenth-century figures examined in this study. This period witnessed a range of attempts to demarcate popular acclaim among contemporaries from the lasting value of the canon. Faced with the overwhelming array of claims enabled by industrial culture and the new form of renown this made possible, commentators encountered the pressing problem of creating priority to avert overload. How was lasting value to be determined in an age of mechanical reproduction and mass-media celebrity? Later described as “the first great fame theorist of the modern age,” the critic William Hazlitt (1778–1830) formulated a typical solution to this question by maintaining that celebrity and

---


17 This outline draws on Mole, Byron’s Romantic Celebrity, 1–18.

the canon were fundamentally separate modes of recognition. As he formulated this in 1818, in an oft-quoted citation worth repeating at length insofar as it proves a central leitmotif in this study:

Fame is the recompense not of the living, but of the dead. The temple of fame stands upon the grave: the flame that burns upon its altars is kindled from the ashes of great men. Fame itself is immortal, but it is not begot till the breath of genius is extinguished. For fame is not popularity, the shout of the multitude, the idle buzz of fashion, the venal puff, the soothing flattery of favour or friendship; but it is the spirit of a man surviving himself in the minds and thoughts of other men, undying and imperishable.

Here celebrity and monument were made incompatible regimes of value. Arguing that proper fame was a necessarily posthumous and retrospective concern (“the recompense … of the dead”), Hazlitt effected a temporal and qualitative divide between the two forms of renown: proclaiming lasting “fame” as superior to the fickle and merely ephemeral renown of celebrity (“the idle buzz of fashion”). Through bracketing it from this purportedly inferior contemporary form, he suggested lasting value would be determined by the “test of time” characteristic of the broader Romantic preoccupation with posterity. In doing so, he produced a forceful dichotomy between precisely self-fashioning in the present and the subsequent making of cultural memory.

While previous scholarship has tended to naturalize and reproduce this binary schema, I problematize Hazlitt’s division of celebrity and monument. I do so by highlighting how these modes came to interact in new ways when future recognition was so clearly in the making and the target of energetic efforts on behalf of living claimants. With posthumous value increasingly becoming a site of urgent aspiration in this period, I show how public figures began to borrow from the emergent practices of celebrity culture to make their own monuments. Within such a space the boundaries of future “fame” and present “popularity” insisted upon by Hazlitt and fellow proponents of the Romantic posterity doctrine seemed neither as rigid nor as binding as the quotation above suggested.

In shifting perspective from commemoration as a retrospective activity to a prospective concern—as something to be planned for, aspired to, worked towards, and practically materialized—I therefore offer new insights about the

21 In short, this Romantic posterity doctrine comprised the lesson that present neglect might be compensated by future (posthumous) recognition. For the principal features of this doctrine, itself both a key starting point and a recurring point of reference for my study, see Andrew Bennett, _Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity_ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). I discuss how this investigation relates to Bennett’s work below (19–23).
broader frame in which claims to lasting value were produced in this period. I do this through asking the following questions in relation to the three early nineteenth-century legacy projects that form the core of this study: (1) who was seeking to make their own monument and in what particular contexts did they do so? What did this suggest about access to posthumous renown at this specific time? (2) How were these prospective claims upon immortality materialized? What media forms were employed and what commemorative affordances were these taken to offer? (3) What was the wider historical significance of these self-monumentalizing practices?

Excavating immortality: theoretical and methodological starting points

My principal analytical tool in approaching this object of study is an *immortality regime*. I use this term to capture the underlying grammar which shaped how the early-nineteenth-century cases I consider were able to make their own monuments. More exactly, I take the term to encompass the discursive, material, and unspoken assumptions at work in the production of this recognition at a specific point in time. I therefore regard it as axiomatic that there are particular ideas, norms, protocols, and institutions governing how it is possible to claim and make posthumous renown within any given regime. Individuals might have become more likely to stake their own claims upon immortality in this period, but they still did so in a broader collective framework.

By turning to “regime” to isolate the workings of such frames, I exploit the dual connotations long since attached to this word: as gesturing towards a system of governance and control (as in the *ancien régime*) and an habitual way of doing things (as in a fitness or dietary regime).\(^{22}\) Insofar as it

\(^{22}\) That the coexistence of these meanings of the word has a reasonably long history is apparent from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which shows how the term’s original sense of “the regulation of aspects of life that affect a person’s health or welfare” from c. 1475 came to be accompanied from 1792 by the explicitly political sense in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution—as a “method or system of rule, governance or control.” “regime, n.” *OED Online*. July 2018. Oxford University Press: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/161266?redirectedFrom=regime (accessed 22 September 2018).

The way I understand the term is broadly coalescent with the general definition employed within the specific field of International Relations, where Stephen D. Krasner has defined regimes as “sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area.” While emphasizing the formal over the informal and showing little interest in material forms, this focus on a *set of governing codes and procedures* provides a useful frame for how I conceive of the notion of an immortality regime. Stephen D. Krasner, “Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables,” in *International Regimes*, ed. Stephen D. Krasner (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1983), 2.
encapsulates both these senses, the term signals how particular practices embody larger relations of power. While this coinciding of the political and the practically-prescribed has been foregrounded in the Foucault-inspired research I draw upon in coining “immortality regime,” it was also used in a similar manner by one of the central actors I discuss in this study, Jeremy Bentham, who had referred to the “régime of publicity” in describing an emerging system of political accountability. Though I deploy it as an analytical concept—as “an artificial construct whose value lies in its heuristic potential” to borrow from François Hartog—this is not without a certain empirical resonance.

Underpinning my adoption of this term is another empirical concern of the nineteenth century: the project of political economy. Zygmunt Bauman posited that a “[p]olitical economy of immortality” might exist, but I pursue his suggestion in greater depth by using this perspective to analyze the making of posthumous renown precisely when such a framework of analysis was being established. While much recent research has shown how political economy emerged in this period as a distinctive concern and became implicated in the wider interactions of Romantic cultural exchange, it is rather with the theoretical impetus of this inheritance I engage. I do so principally by drawing upon the work of Bauman and more recent sociologically-inspired scholars who have insisted memory production be examined from this perspective, since it is invariably “complex, contested, social and shaped by

23 Several studies focused upon elucidating various modern types of regime have built upon and expanded Foucault’s work in this regard, insofar as he had highlighted this notion of governing codes and practices in his delineation of distinct “regimes of truth.” Notable instances include Mitchell Dean, Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1999) and Dror Wahrman, The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

24 See Bentham’s use of the word in the following: “[s]till, however, the régime of publicity—very imperfect as yet, and newly tolerated,— without being established by law, has not had time to produce all the good effects to which it will give birth.” (The newly-imported modern resonance to the term was suggested by the retaining of the French diacritics in its spelling.) Jeremy Bentham, “Of Publicity,” An Essay on Political Tactics [1791] in The Works of Jeremy Bentham, Published under the Superintendence of his Executor, John Bowring, 11 vols., (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1838–43), 2:311.

25 Indeed, in discussing his own use and operationalizing of this term—i.e. “a regime of historicity”—Hartog argued that the regime concept is fundamentally similar to that of “Weber’s ideal type”; a point I concur with. François Hartog, Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time [2003], trans. Saskia Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), xvi.

26 Bauman, Mortality, 53.

power relations,” in Matthew Allen’s formulation. Looking at what shapes how immortality is made, I borrow from both sociological and materialist frameworks to grasp the emergence of self-monumentalizing practices.

The political economy of immortality
I consider the making of immortality as inextricably connected to broader systemic questions of how lasting value is produced. My central assumption in doing so is that any claim to posthumous renown is necessarily implicated in the historically-specific regimes operative at a given time. This means that the practices examined in my empirical cases cannot simply be analyzed in isolation to be made legible, but need to be situated in relation to wider protocols governing the production of immortality. More specifically, I assume three particular tenets that can be pieced together from Bauman’s associative account of immortality’s political economy, which I now highlight and explain more closely.

Firstly, that there is a distinctive politics of access at work. This stems from an understanding of immortality as a form of recognition both stratified and unequally distributed. Its allocation was therefore “socially managed” according to the norms of the dominant group wielding power at any given time, as Bauman claimed. While privileged groups might lay claim to this status and expect to be remembered, the vast majority will be effaced “from memory like a footprint in the sand.” This captures particularly sharply how far access to immortality is differential and the degree to which such inequalities are structured by the prevailing hierarchies of the social order. More generally, it opens for a way of thinking about the practicalities of making this renown that is foundational to my approach in this study. If immortality is socially regulated and produced in this way, who had the authority to govern access? Which actors and institutions were endowed with the consecrative authority to determine inclusion and exclusion? According to

29 Bauman, Mortality, 53.
30 As Bauman explained this, in a situation where “some people may hope to be ‘less mortal’ than others,” “[c]ommoners die leaving little trace on the surface of the earth and but a momentary scar on the minds and hearts of survivors.” Bauman, Mortality, 54.
which selection criteria were such judgements made, and how might these have been contested?

Secondly, that questions of *materiality* are integral to the production of this renown. Though Bauman’s sweeping account provided few specific details about the practical workings of consecrative authority, he suggestively referred to the role of “professional immortality brokers” in mediating “between individual accomplishments and their public memory.” A significant part of these brokers’ function was to “mint the coins of lasting value, administer their hoards and attach value tags of immortality to the lives destined to last.”31 In drawing attention to the production and supply of these artefacts of commemorative worth, Bauman’s observation aligns closely with a recent turn within memory studies to consider “the dirt of the capital under the fingernails of its gravediggers and memorial masons,” in Allen’s neat terms.32 This research has emphasized that the making of memory cannot be separated from the social and political relations involved in its production. Such a focus upon “questions of capital, power, and labour,” to borrow Anna Reading’s formulation, is also pertinent for my approach to self-monumentalizing.33 What type of consecrative work was involved in becoming one’s own immortality broker? What sort of raw materials and investments were required to produce self-made immortality? And what norms and commitments were implicated in the making of such props of lasting value?

Thirdly, that these social and material dimensions intersect to create a specific *politics of things*.34 The particular forms authorized to produce

32 Allen, “The Poverty of Memory,” 371. This shift towards a materialist framework is largely the result of a critique of the prevailing focus upon the symbolically-mediated in the field of memory studies. Reading has thus “unearthed” the material basis of cloud memory as a means of challenging “utopian or technocratic accounts that emphasized the abundance, ubiquity and connectivity of digital memory.” Allen likewise presented a comparable line of argument in demonstrating how the production of memorial cultures in the wake of the 2005 London bombings was dependent on various types of labour, both formal and informal. Cf. Reading, “Seeing Red,” 749–50; Allen, *The Labour of Memory*.
34 In using such a phrase—the “politics of things”—I lean on what has long since become a classic text within the study of materiality: Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). The work of Bruno Latour has also been paradigmatic in this regard, and proves a spectral presence here insofar as the agency of things is alluded to: see, for example, Bruno Latour, “From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik: or How to Make Things Public,” in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), 4–31. More specifically, I also build upon recent research emphasizing the materiality of nineteenth-century memorial practices, as variously inspired by the emergence of “thing theory” and the rich space of subject-object relations this has opened for investigation. See Bill Brown (ed.), *Things* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Judith Pascoe, *The Hummingbird Cabinet: A Rare and Curious History of Romantic Collectors* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006); Deborah Lutz, *Relics of Death in Victorian Literature*.
immortality are necessarily those which have been legitimated to do so. Referring to the infrastructure for producing this type of lasting renown, Bauman insisted it was “ultimately the current socially approved division of things and qualities into durable and transient which charts the possible roads to immortality.” What mattered was not simply the elevating of things to the privileged status of permanence, but also that the criteria for recognizing this transcendence be widely accepted. To be effective as bearers of timeless worth these “value tags” need to be acknowledged as such.

The media forms of immortality in effect are therefore inextricably related to the wider politics of access. For what is to count as a “token of immortality” is invariably resolved by those with greatest hold over the working of consecrative authority. This connection between a specific thing and broader relations of power is formative for my understanding of the emerging media repertoire of self-made immortality. Since beyond highlighting the established order of things as socially-governed, it also suggests how a material form could embody a particular set of assumptions about authority and value—and conversely, that these might be challenged and contested with the introduction of alternative forms. It is from this starting point that the emancipatory potential of self-monumentalizing begins to come into focus.

Taken together these three dimensions comprise the distinctive regime-perspective I employ to approach the making of Romantic immortality. This provides a wide-ranging tool of analysis to calibrate the relations between the individual instance of self-monumentalizing I examine in each of my case studies and the broader collective frame in which these came into being. It further helps me consider how such regimes might prove both enabling and disabling for the nineteenth-century figures attempting to make their own monuments I investigate. These could be enabling insofar as new possibilities were opened up, and new practices established that challenged the constraints of existing arrangements; yet also disabling, insofar as only certain forms, practices, and principles were conceivable and authorized, while others remained excluded or illegible. As Hartog pointedly noted, within a given regime “certain behaviours, certain actions, and certain forms […] are more possible than others.”

It is from this perspective that I argue the emergence of self-monumentalizing practices was symptomatic of a new immortality regime in this period. Viewed this way, a statement such as Bentham’s concerning every man his own monument prompts a range of critical implications. Bringing to light what was at stake in such attempts to alter the period’s predominant

---

35 Bauman, Mortality, 57.
36 Hartog, Regimes of Historicity, xvi–xvii.
political economy of immortality, this framework allows me to pinpoint the subversive foundations of self-made immortality.

Looking beyond words: contexts and approaches

Where previous research has touched upon questions concerning the production of posthumous renown it has chiefly done so from a literary perspective. A range of studies have thus explored how Romantic poets sought to secure posthumous recognition by writing and publishing themselves into the framework of the canon. Andrew Bennett and Lucy Newlyn have shown how such poets deferred to the future appeal of the canon as a means of countering contemporary neglect; while more recently, Michael Gamer has proposed the notion of “self-canonization” to capture the practical efforts made to rework texts into forms appropriate for this canon. These works have provided me with various points of thematic inspiration, and their findings can be used to illuminate aspects of the immortality regime I bring into focus here. But the broader regime level I pursue means my priorities differ in significant ways from those of these particular studies, as I now turn to explain.

A central strand of argument this literary research has presented is the emergence of what Bennett termed the Romantic “cult of posterity.” Here Bennett and Newlyn demonstrated that an ideal of future reception came to predominate among (especially male) Romantic poets, and that this was a result of significant changes in judgement prompted by the appearance of industrial printing and a mass public from the end of the eighteenth century. Faced with the degraded popular taste of this newly democratized readership, these poets were portrayed as deferring to the ethereal prospect of future canonization. This account is useful insofar as it suggests something of the broader conditions that made possible an increasing preoccupation with canonical value in this period. Yet in contrasting the desire of these poets for canonicity with more popular forms of recognition, these studies reproduce the division between celebrity and monument that I seek to challenge. By bracketing authorial immortality from mass-mediated renown in this way,


38 Bennett, Romantic Poets, 1–8. A quick note on terminology and how I characterize Bennett’s argument here. He refers throughout his work to the notion of a Romantic “culture of posterity” in outlining how these poets came to write for an idealized future public. But he also uses the more pointed notion of a “cult of posterity,” on occasion: i.e. in talking of “Shelley’s cult of posterity” (7) and of Byron’s “traducing the cult of posterity” (195). When referring to his arguments I use this latter formulation of “cult” rather than “culture,” since it captures more of the necromantic associations central to this period’s canonizing concerns.

they effectively reify Hazlitt’s earlier suggestion that these were incommensurate regimes of value.\textsuperscript{40} Where the cult of posterity reproduced an image of the otherworldly poet turning away from contemporary renown and waiting for future validation, it is a markedly different version of celebrity-monument interactions I bring into focus with the instance of Romantic self-monumentalizing.

Gamer’s recent study of self-canonization sought to amend at least parts of this otherworldly characterization. Placing literary canonizing in relation to the business of poetry he showed how these poets could take a very practical interest in the material shape of their works, and the bibliographic practices that would make these public. Instead of Bennett and Newlyn’s idealized poet writing for posterity, Gamer proposed an alternative image of the writer engaged in the commercial sphere of Romantic book production. Such an emphasis upon “the \textit{tactics} of literary production and reproduction” suggests at least some complication of the divide insisted upon by Hazlitt: making poets “interested economic agents” in the present and showing how they “shaped their collections for the immediate market.”\textsuperscript{41}

But if this made monument and celebrity closer concerns, it is striking how far this study devoted to “questions of posthumous fame” precluded any reference to temporality. Most notably absent was history, and the wider concerns with the conditions for being remembered and forgotten that emerged in this period. Indeed, while Gamer’s account of poetic publishing might have touched upon the present renown of celebrity, his particular focus meant that neither of the other two broader conditions for self-monumentalizing—history and pantheon—warranted consideration in his literary study. Although he showed \textit{how} these poets sought to write themselves into the canon, Gamer thus provided precious little sense as to \textit{why} this might have proved a pressing preoccupation at this time.

\textbf{Multi-media canonization}

While I build upon such research, I also shift ground methodologically in a way that highlights the particular limits of self-canonization as an analytical category for approaching the making of immortality. The disciplinary emphasis of this work has limited its scope in two significant ways, both of which inform the particular shifts I enact here.

The first element I problematize is the privileging of the book and textual remains as media forms. Although Gamer paid close attention to the commercial forces shaping the material production of the “classic” work, he

\textsuperscript{40} For the central place reserved for Hazlitt in Bennett’s argument, especially the suggestion that “Hazlitt is the single most determined and most comprehensive theorist of posterity from the period,” see Bennett, \textit{Romantic Poets}, 4, 61–64 (61). For the significance of Hazlitt to Newlyn on this point, see Newlyn, \textit{Reading, Writing, and Romanticism}, 280–84.

\textsuperscript{41} Gamer, \textit{Romanticism, Self-Canonization}, 9–10.
nonetheless deployed an exclusively textcentric view of canonization—just as Bennett’s and Newlyn’s emphasis upon Hazlitt’s version of “fame” concentrated entirely upon the textual immortality of “a bookish afterlife.”

But in striking contrast to such an emphasis, recent research on the material history of reception has shown the centrality of extratextual forms. As these studies have illustrated the practices of canonization that became widespread in the nineteenth century utilized physical places, bodies, and things, just as much as the medium of the book, and could involve travelling, seeing, sharing, and collecting in addition to simply reading. Rather than the narrow focus on the book that predominates in existing accounts of self-canonization, I draw upon this wider conception of canonicity in considering self-monumentalizing as a multi-media phenomenon. In this sense my study builds upon Paul Westover’s suggestive claim that Romantic canonicity needs to be rethought in terms of the diverse ways in which authorial identities were constructed and sustained in this period beyond the medium of the text.

My second shift is in looking outside a literary prism. Bringing into focus the wider array of media forms used in making lasting value prompts pointed questions about disciplinary frameworks, especially the particular lens through which previous studies have viewed attempts to secure posthumous renown. Where Westover’s exploration of a wide-ranging necromantic complex was concerned with a broad set of material practices, his study was still determinedly literary in emphasis, just as the accounts of self-

---

42 As his definition of lasting fame suggested, Hazlitt had adhered to an exclusively textual model of immortality. This mode of canonization was variously reiterated by the emphasis on just “reading” and “writing” in the title of Newlyn’s study, and Bennett’s declared interest in “the textual afterlife” and “a bookish afterlife.” Bennett, Romantic Poets, 1.


A similar point about the importance of non-textual forms of canonization can be made from the perspective of Art History and the History of Sculpture. For an important collection of essays upon this theme, see Richard Wrigley and Matthew Craske (ed.), Pantheons: Transformations of a Monumental Idea (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

canonization outlined above proved unreservedly textual in scope. While such research has contributed much to our understanding of Romantic canonization, the effect of a concertedly disciplinary frame has been to restrict the historical potential of this line of enquiry. By focusing upon the literary sphere in considering posthumous renown, these studies consecrate the figure of the “author” (itself an historical construct of this period) at the expense of making connections with similar practices in other fields apart from literature. Looking solely at literature has precluded looking for similar things elsewhere.

I challenge this by insisting that the constellation of conditions prompting self-monumentalizing was a broader concern. Instead of isolating this preoccupation with future reception within the singular framework of a subsequent academic discipline, I explore it across a range of cultural production. Like the wider cultural phenomenon of celebrity with which it is implicated, I therefore approach the emergence of the wider immortality regime that shaped these practices as something that necessarily “overflows modern disciplinary boundaries.” Identifying self-made immortality beyond the literary and outside the text, I also insist this new cultural presence had implications at a considerable remove from the emerging institutions of “literature.”

Competing immortality regimes in Romantic Britain

The immortality regime I identify in this study came into being in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. To substantiate this claim I now provide a closer consideration of the specific conditions governing how this form of renown was produced in this period. A significant driver for self-made

---

45 As Westover explained, his “primary materials have remained literary texts and, more specifically, texts produced for and by literary tourists.” He proceeded to provide “some justification” for this “choice to foreground literary figures,” which while perfectly reasonable given the specific terms of his investigation are ones I challenge and look beyond in this study. Westover, *Necromanticism*, 9. Bennett went one step further in insisting upon the priority of the literary here, suggesting it was specifically in Romantic poetry that an imagined relationship with the future was “most clearly promulgated and sustained.” Bennett, *Romantic Poets*, 7.

46 This argument about the authorial figure was famously posited by Michel Foucault, but recently examined in depth as an historical phenomenon in relation to the emergence of the professional author over the course of the nineteenth century in Richard Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). For Foucault’s claim that the consecrated figure of the “author” came into being in this early nineteenth-century period, see Foucault, “What is an Author?” [1969] in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1991), 101–20.

47 I borrow this phrase from Tom Mole’s recent argument that approaching the history of celebrity culture is necessarily an interdisciplinary concern, insofar as its “cultural pervasiveness—in literature and the theatre, music and visual culture, fashion and boxing—overflows modern disciplinary boundaries.” Mole, “Introduction,” *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture*, 2.
immortality was the perceived iniquities of the existing regime, which I bring into focus here with the instance of Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–92). Characterizing the making of Reynolds’s immortality through the ideal type of monumental monopoly, I use this as a foil to highlight the distinctive features of the self-made regime that emerged in response—exemplified below by Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832). Having made this contrast between Reynolds and Scott to articulate what made this new regime possible, I conclude this introductory chapter by elaborating upon the particular case studies chosen to form the empirical basis of this investigation.

Reynolds and monumental monopoly

When Reynolds died in February 1792 his close friends and peers promptly initiated various commemorative acts to consecrate his achievements. Within hours of his death Edmund Burke had written Reynolds’s obituary: eulogizing him as “one of the most memorable men of his time.” Burke and his fellow executors then proceeded to arrange for Reynolds’s body to lay in state at the Royal Academy, in order “that the last sad tribute to his memory might take place from that spot so often embellished by the effusions of his magic pencil.” Mourned at the site of his professional accomplishments he was then to be transferred to the nascent realm of officially-sanctioned immortality. An elaborate funeral procession had accordingly been staged from Somerset House to St. Paul’s Cathedral—carefully scripted according to the intricacies of social rank and hierarchy, and attended by a “great number of the most distinguished persons.” Following this “public solemnity conducted with [such] decorum and dignity,” Reynolds’s remains were finally interred within the Cathedral in close proximity to the “tomb of the famous Sir Christopher Wren.”

This hallowed sense of veneration devoted to Reynolds would be sustained through subsequent projects to create material artefacts of commemoration.

49 The characterization is Northcote’s, from whose extended description of Reynolds’s funeral I draw upon here: Northcote, Life, 2:290–98 (290). For more on the prolonged and often conflicted negotiations that had taken place as Reynold’s executors arranged to secure this unprecedented use of the RA rooms for his body to lie in state, see Richard Wendorf, “Burying Sir Joshua,” in After Sir Joshua: Essays on British Art and Cultural History (New York and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 25–47.
50 Northcote, Life, 2:295.
51 That this was a matter of the hallowed sanctification of a secular saint was suggested by the observations of Joseph Farington, framed in distinctly necromantic terms: cf. “Thus were deposited the venerable relics of Sir Joshua Reynolds, doubly hallowed by a nation’s respect, and by the tears of private friendship.” Joseph Farington, “Memoirs of the Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds, With Some Observations on his Talents and Character,” in The Literary Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Kt. Late President of the Royal Academy, 3 vols. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1819), 1:251 (italics added).
At a local level the members of Reynolds’s Club voted “unanimously that his portrait or bust should be placed in the club-room which he had so long enlivened,” while a more substantial and obviously public monument—the statue designed and sculpted by fellow Academician John Flaxman—was eventually installed under the dome at St. Paul’s in 1813.52 Beyond ensuring him centre stage at this emergent site of national memory, further efforts were made among his peers to produce a textual monument, leading to the publishing of his apprentice James Northcote’s Memoirs of Sir Joshua Reynolds (1813) and The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds (1818). In this way his former colleagues sought to realize the contemporary impression that his “fame as an artist, as a patronizer of the arts, and above all, as a good man, will long survive him!”53

Considered in terms of the political economy of immortality, a striking feature of these memorializing activities is how far they rested upon the design and labour of others. That Reynolds did not take a greater hand in directing his own legacy might seem at least somewhat surprising. After all, this was someone who had invested considerable energy throughout his career in managing his profile as an artist, who had helped make portraiture an essential medium of self-fashioning in the public sphere, and who had produced over thirty self-portraits charting his own image over half a century.54 Neither had he been unaware of the allure of posthumous fame, having spent the final year of his life campaigning for the erection of a monument in St Paul’s to commemorate his departed friend, Samuel Johnson.55 Yet in spite of his belief that “[d]istinction is what we all seek after,” and despite the “persevering industry” for which he was renowned, Reynolds made little efforts to shape the terms of his future commemoration beyond a vaguely-expressed desire to be buried at St. Paul’s.56 Unlike the Buribunks with which we opened this

---

53 The words of a “recent panegyrist” quoted by Northcote (who neglected to name this particular panegyrist, though he was most likely referring to Farington.) Northcote, Life, 2:297.
56 Reynolds’s comments about “distinction” here were cited in Leslie and Taylor, Life, 2:611. The contemporary judgement that in “professional application” he proved “an extraordinary example of persevering industry” was reported in Farington, “Memoirs,” 283. His wish to be buried in St Paul’s is mentioned in Wendorf, “After Sir Joshua,” 29.
chapter, he was thus far from preoccupied with particular plans to secure “himself a continued existence in the memory of humanity.”

The production of Reynolds’s immortality was symptomatic of the coming into being of an official regime of secular commemoration in this period. During the earlier parts of the eighteenth century the production of public monuments had been a notably haphazard affair: uncoordinated and subject to “the vagaries of private finance rather than systematic state subsidy,” as Philip Connell’s analysis of Westminster Abbey has shown. But by the closing decade of the century a more ordered, state-controlled system for the veneration of national heroes was emerging, as the idea of a public pantheon increasingly came to be institutionalized. While purportedly national in scope this new state pantheon had been a principally elite project: responding to the upheavals of the Revolutionary period with the attempt, in Eveline G. Bouwers’s terms, “to reproduce the socio-political stratifications of the pre-revolutionary world.” The modern pantheon therefore symbolized the workings of a highly restrictive immortality regime—one seeking not only to limit access but also to control how claims to this distinction could be represented. Insofar as the institutions endowed with the consecrative authority to produce national heroes were governed by socially-select elites (i.e. parliament and the Royal Academy), it effectively constituted a novel and centralized mode of monumental monopoly. Within such a closed system success was chiefly dependent upon peer recognition and attaining the right position within these hierarchical structures—rendering the actual making of immortality a subsequent concern for one’s surviving peers.

59 The emergence of this official immortality was an essentially transnational phenomenon, as Eveline G. Bouwers has convincingly argued. She thus suggests that the making of the Revolutionary Panthéon in Paris, the patriotic Pantheon at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul’s in London, the Walhalla in Regensburg, and attempts to renew the Pantheon in Rome were all products of a shared “European pantheonic imagination.” Eveline G. Bouwers, *Public Pantheons in Revolutionary Europe: Comparing Cultures of Remembrance, c. 1790–1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1.
60 Bouwers, *Public Pantheons*, 11.
This statuary monument encapsulated the logic of the state regime in various ways (figure 1.1). Firstly, its retrospective conception long after Reynolds’s death demonstrated the brokering of immortality by his former colleagues and friends. Just as he had previously coordinated monuments for Oliver Goldsmith and Samuel Johnson, so he expected his own would come
to be taken care of. Convinced of his position in the hierarchy of distinction he entrusted management of his legacy to the workings of this regime. Secondly, its installation at St. Paul’s pointed to the increasing significance of central sites of memory in the production of official immortality. While the role of the Cathedral as “Temple of British Fame” would be consolidated in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, Reynolds had helped initiate such a transformation with his concerted efforts “to furnish St. Paul’s with its natural furniture—monuments.” Finally, its design by the RA sculptor John Flaxman suggested the prominence of the Academy in controlling the appearance of material artefacts within the new regime. Fusing elite tropes of neo-classicism with cultural patriotism in making Reynolds an object of national veneration, Flaxman’s statue embodied the visual code of this emergent monopoly.

Scott’s self-monumentalizing

If we fast forward to the death of Sir Walter Scott in September 1832, we can observe within but a few decades the existence of a notably different set of principles for the making of lasting value. Framed sitting at home in his study at Abbotsford, the portrait below is broadly suggestive of the DIY approach to brokering immortality pursued by Scott.

---

62 Reynolds’s involvement in Johnson’s monument was mentioned above in n. 51. For more about his work in the production of Goldsmith’s monument, see Northcote, Life, 1:209.
63 Such campaigning was also intimately related to Reynolds’s professional concerns as a leader of the arts, with his desire “to give sculptors a fair field in which they might display their abilities.” Reynolds, cited in Leslie and Taylor, Life, 2:612. For an analysis of the emergence and consolidation of what would be a primarily military pantheon at St. Paul’s, see Hoock, “The British Military Pantheon,” 81–105 (82).
64 This, too, proved an element of monopolistic control that Reynolds had previously advocated. In the case of Johnson he thus proposed “that the disposition and everything related to the monuments should be under the direction of the Royal Academy.” Reynolds, cited in Leslie and Taylor, Life, 2:613.
In marked contrast to Reynolds, Scott displayed an increasingly active interest in the question of his legacy during his career. Seeking to shape the terms of his future reception he therefore pursued a carefully-chosen range of self-monumentalizing practices. Whereas Northcote assumed the role of writing Reynolds’s life retrospectively, Scott had appointed his own
biographer and taken a keen role in providing input and material for Lockhart’s vast seven-volume *Life.* Likewise, while Reynolds made little attempt to control the future ownership or appearance of his works, Scott had collaborated in the production of the definitive *Magnum Opus* edition of his novels, where he provided autobiographical introductory essays to frame the interpretation of his collected works. Certainly, this was a publishing project driven by pressing present concerns—as Scott endeavoured to write himself out of debt—yet it had even coincided with the start of his efforts to produce a daily journal of his authorly existence that was predicated upon its posthumous appearance. In doing so, he underlined the wider Romantic commitment to the “hereafter” that meant, as fellow author Robert Southey noted, “the *present* forms but the slightest part of his [i.e. the intellectual’s] existence.”

Adopting such strategies, Scott exemplified Southey’s maxim that “[h]e who would leave any durable monument behind him, must live in the past and look to the future.” Although Southey gestured principally towards the medium of the text, Scott had invested in a number of other media forms to monumentalize himself. That he turned to the past as a potent resource to fashion his durability would have been particularly obvious to the flow of literary pilgrims travelling to see the famed writer *in situ.* In part this was a matter of the neo-medieval “romance of a house” Scott had created for himself at Abbotsford, which effectively proved an attempt to build his own monument in stone. But it was also due to the range of historical objects he had collected and installed within the house that variously served to assert his own lasting value as an historical figure. This was clear in the staging of the portrait above, where Scott sat “reading the proclamation of Mary Queen of Scots” surrounded by artefacts of present and past worth (i.e. a vase from Lord Byron, the “purse of Rob Roy,” a brace “formerly the property of Napoleon”), and where “the bust of Shakespeare” was used to lend gravitas to his claims

---

65 He had thus appointed his son-in-law to write his biography, and provided him with access to the large amount of correspondence and autobiographical sketches that would eventually be included in J.G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott* (7 vols., 1837–38).
68 Southey letter to Grosvenor C. Bedford, 4:184.
upon future canonicity (figure 1.2). 71 Fashioning himself in the context of these venerated relics, he thus sought to instigate the memorializing process and make himself history. Insofar as this enacted the later injunction of Schmitt’s Ferker to “[b]e your own history,” Scott’s practices thereby typified the proactive approach to posthumous renown that forms my object of study here.

What was it that enabled this broad yet characteristic shift between Reynolds being prepared to entrust his memorial fate to others and Scott’s insistence upon making his own “value tags of immortality”? 72 Of course, one important part of this was the new politics of memory prompted by the creation of the state pantheon, whose exclusive basis generated innovative strategies of emulation and resistance. But the core underlying condition was the emergence of a modern sense of history in this period, which Scott had variously contributed to establishing and circulating in his output as historical novelist. 73 Here a distinctively new configuration of the relations of past, present, and future had taken shape following the coming into being of what J. G. A. Pocock described as the “image of a secular and historical future” in the late eighteenth century. 74 Given that the presence of history as this “collective singular” proved so significant in generating the impulse towards self-monumentalizing I examine, it is worth dwelling upon precisely how this came to do so. 75

Beyond this newly-secularized future, modern history also produced a strikingly new sense of the past. Once the future was conceived of as open, unbound, and essentially unpredictable in the way Pocock suggested, the value of the past as a guide to either present action or prospective development was radically diminished—in a tendency sharply intensified by the dramatic and unprecedented events of the French Revolution. 76 When the principles of

---

71 The notes made by the artist, Sir William Allan, detailing the various objects depicted here were included in the RA exhibition catalogue for that year: The Exhibition of the Royal Academy. The Sixty-Fourth (London: W. Clowes, 1832), 14. For the suggestion Scott himself was principally responsible for the curation of these things in the painting, cf. Nicola J. Watson, “Sir Walter Scott,” in Great Shakespeareans. Vol. 5: Scott, Dickens, Eliot, Hardy, ed. Adrian Poole (London: Continuum, 2011), 18.
72 The phrase is from Bauman, Mortality, 59.
75 For discussion of the emergence of history as “collective singular,” see Reinhart Koselleck, “Historia Magistra Vitae: The Dissolution of the Topos into the Perspective of a Modernized Historical Process,” in Futures Past, 33.
76 This point has been most forcefully argued by Koselleck, who contrasts this modern sense of the future as progress with both the comfortingly bound temporal schema of the Christian Final
historical movement, difference, and distance came to be normalized around the turn of the nineteenth century, the past increasingly came to be refashioned as a site of loss: a fragile, perishable entity ominously perched on the brink of disappearing. With the establishing of this modern understanding of time, the counterposing temporal markers of the self-made immortality regime I posit here were essentially in place: on the one hand, a sense of the future as constructible and effectively amenable to speculative commemorative bids; on the other hand, a newly-felt anxiety about all that was not being remembered from a rapidly receding past.

Where history generated a visceral fear of being forgotten that could provoke the type of entrepreneurial self-monumentalizing engaged in by Scott, the repertoire of an emergent celebrity culture proved a rich resource in this struggle to be remembered. Looking for innovative ways to make their own monuments, agents within this new memorial space could look towards the considerable array of published texts, images, objects, places, and public exhibitions competing for attention in the media ecology of this period as particularly concrete sources of inspiration. In this way the material practices for producing celebrity also came to be deployed in the pursuit of lasting renown. Alongside the politics of memory of the pantheon and the desire to secure a place in history, the representational protocols of celebrity therefore constituted a central precondition for the self-made immortality regime I outline here.

One final point before I expand upon the particular sources chosen for this study: in using this contrast of Reynolds and Scott to outline what made this regime possible, I do not wish to suggest that this was an exclusive transition from monumental monopoly to self-made immortality. Certainly, the spectacular commemoration staged by others after Scott’s death and his eventual enshrinement in Westminster Abbey readily demonstrated the


Alois Riegel encapsulated this latter point in 1903, when he discussed “modern historical perception” via the notion “that everything that once was can never be again.” Riegel, “The Modern Cult of Monuments,” 70.

For a sense of this diverse media ecology, see the various essays in Mole, Romanticism and Celebrity Culture.
subsequent co-existence—if not competition—of these regimes. But what comparison of these ideal types does highlight is the presence of a distinctive new regime by 1831 when Scott came to sit for this particular portrait.

Empirical material and disposition
I bring into focus the emergence of this regime by concentrating upon early nineteenth-century London. More specifically, I examine the legacy projects of three well-known but seldom connected figures within this particular setting: the philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), the architect Sir John Soane (1753–1837), and the painter Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786–1846). As we will come to see, where Bentham deployed the medium of the body and Soane the house museum, Haydon turned to the diary and the written life in attempting to command future reception and make immortality. By highlighting the multi-media efforts of these varied cultural producers to produce their own claims upon lasting value, I demonstrate the prevalence of self-monumentalizing beyond the emerging space of the literary canon.

The principal motivation for choosing these cases can be explained in terms of the specific milieu in which these projects were produced. I suggested above how the figure of Hazlitt provides a leitmotif, insofar as he diagnosed the various commemorative changes I explore and sought to theorize his reservations to the emerging practices of self-made immortality. Hazlitt also proves a revealing point of connection between my cases, variously interweaving these figures into the shared social space of later Georgian London. He had thus been a tenant upon Bentham’s estate at Westminster, from which position he had once sat with his friend Haydon, the aspiring artist, to admire Bentham’s physical appearance up close. He had similarly once been to dine at the home of the wealthy yet self-made establishment architect, Soane, seeking financial support for his new book project, in much the same way Haydon would also find himself approaching Soane’s favour. While hierarchically ordered what such interactions show is the participation of these figures within the same commemorative space.

Focusing upon this particular cultural setting enables consideration of a local economy of monumentalizing: of the circulation and exchange of assumptions, genres, and objects connected to legacy common among my examples. Conceived of in terms of Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of “habitus,” such an empirical focus makes it possible to analyze the shared dispositions,

80 Scott’s bust would eventually be installed in Poets’ Corner in the Abbey in 1897. The wider history of Scott’s commemoration over the course of the nineteenth century as a significantly transnational concern is considered in Rigney, Afterlives of Walter Scott. For a discussion of the huge Scott monument erected in Edinburgh in 1844, see Mole, What the Victorians Made of Romanticism, 145–63.
conventions, and practices that were at work as the principles of self-made immortality came into being in this period.81

Two further comments need be made about this selection of material. Firstly, there is the question of gender. As the central term forming the basis of my title for this study suggests, the emergence of a regime operating according to the principle of every man his own monument was very much a gendered concern—at least in the initial phases of its establishing that is in focus here. While there are certainly a few instances of female celebrities engaging in the type of future-orientated practices I consider, these remain the exception that prove the rule and it would not be until later in the nineteenth century that they became more widespread among women.82 Although Claire Brock has proposed that a distinct “feminization of fame” occurred with the emergence of modern celebrity, the spectacular attempts to materialize posthumous renown focused upon in this study were confined largely to males in a way that was broadly characteristic of the gender distribution of public commemoration in this Romantic period.83 The selection of three male case studies should therefore be understood as empirically-grounded and revealing as to the commemorative logic at work in this particular context, rather than in terms of the gender blindness identified by Greg Kacich in other research upon nineteenth-century historicism.84 Looking at the politics of monumental


82 One notable exception was the actress Sarah Siddons, who had written her own autobiography and commissioned her official biography towards the end of her life in the attempt to control her future renown. See McPherson, *Art and Celebrity in the Age of Reynolds and Siddons*, 187. The poet Felicia Hemans had also engaged in attempts to “self-anthologize” her works as a means of asserting its classic status. Cf. Westover, *Necromanticism*, 83. What these examples suggest is that this question of the gendering of self-made immortality is an interesting area for further historical research.

While beyond the scope of this investigation, such a line of enquiry might look at the legacy projects of two energetic museum-makers around the turn of the twentieth century as instances of how this regime became more inclusive for female claimants of posthumous recognition: the house museum of Isabella Gardner Stewart in Boston (opened in 1903), and the Hallwyl museum in Stockholm orchestrated and bequeathed by Countess Wilhelmina von Hallwyl (1920). For the Hallwyl museum, see Eva Helena Cassel-Pihl, *För en långt avlägsen framtid: En bok om Wilhelmina von Hallwyl* (Stockholm: Hallwylska museet, 2006).


things and their making also means recognizing the historically specific ways in which access to these has been restricted.

The second comment concerns the geographical specificity of these cases. The local interconnections I drew attention to above mean that this study could as well be characterized as focused on Regency London as much as Romantic Britain. Yet to take but the opening case of Schmitt from early twentieth-century Germany as an example, the workings of a self-made immortality regime were certainly apparent in a diverse range of (modern) contexts. Just as Bouwers’s recent work has emphasized the pan-European character of pantheon projects in the early nineteenth century, the particular conditions that enabled the emergence of self-monumentalizing were far from confined to any single national context. Though focused upon Britain I therefore claim the results of this study are indicative of a larger phenomenon beyond the specific cases considered here, and one with broader traction than simply early nineteenth-century London.

Comprised of three case studies on Bentham, Soane, and Haydon, this study demonstrates how a constellation of media forms we now take for granted assumed a central place in this emergent regime. In the following chapter I use the example of Bentham to consider how the statuary figure was made into a commemorative resource for the individual claimant upon immortality. Looking at a wider pantheonic context for the making of immortal bodies, I position Bentham’s Auto-Icon project as a distinctively self-made response to a pressing new politics of memory in this Romantic period. In chapter 3 I turn to Soane’s house museum as a means of exploring how things came to be used, collected, and framed in novel ways within this broader memorial sphere. Focusing upon the particular ways he put together and sought to preserve his collection, I examine the sense in which Soane transformed his house into a self-made archive. Finally, I analyze the making of Haydon’s posthumously-published memoirs in chapter 4 to show how the genre of autobiography converged with the DIY approach to immortality that was characteristic of this regime. Taken together these cases allow us to see something of the process via which this new regime came to be established. Reflecting upon this we can start to grasp the historical roots of self-monumentalizing individuals beyond the confines of our Instagram-saturated present.

Figure 2.2 The choreographed remains of Jeremy Bentham: Henry Hall Pickering, Jeremy Bentham (1832). Lithograph by Weld Taylor. CC BY 4.0/ Wellcome Collection.
2. “Every man his own statue”: Bentham’s body as DIY monument

**Nelson’s apotheosis**

On the ninth of January 1806 Admiral Lord Nelson was consecrated within the newly-established space of the British military pantheon. The description provided by his contemporary biographer, John Fairburn, demonstrated how far Nelson’s elevation to official immortality had been an intricately stage-managed affair. This was further conveyed by the sheer wordiness of Fairburn’s title, with its offering of “a correct account of [Nelson’s] body laying in State in Greenwich, the procession by water and land, with the funeral service, and final interment of the body in a truly magnificent state coffin, at St. Paul’s Cathedral.”

Nelson’s funeral had thus provided a prolonged public spectacle: a centrally organized enactment of value that focused commemorative attention upon his body and exploited an array of props to enhance the production of “immortal honours.”

The first act of this spectacle involved the extended public exhibition of Nelson’s body. In line with the “funeral of a hero,” these arrangements “for the public to view the remains of the immortal Nelson” had entailed an impressive level of pomp, particularly regarding the practicalities of display.

The body had accordingly been placed in a “magnificent exterior coffin” made variously from the mast of one of his ships, “black cloth,” and “white silk,” before being installed upon an elaborately decorated “platform” at Greenwich Hospital. Following this staging of the coffin, Nelson’s body was transported up the river in a barge “covered with black velvet, and adorned with black feathers,” where it was transferred to a custom-made “funeral car, decorated

---

86 Fairburn, *Funeral*, 100.
87 Fairburn, *Funeral*, 74, 100.
88 Fairburn, *Funeral*, 74–75.
with escutcheons, bannerolls, and emblematical devices” for the final stage of the procession to St Paul’s.  

The second act then focused upon the interment of the body within the Cathedral—that site of the new form of national commemoration constituted by the emerging state pantheon. Here the specifics of Nelson’s burial had been entirely state-sanctioned and dictated: with the particular “place appointed by our Gracious Sovereign, as the appropriate receptacle of the relics of a Hero, whose unexampled worth deserved to have a place apart from the others, and consecrated by itself.” This sense of the sanctification of a man “apart” was reinforced by the physical dramaturgy of the service. The place of interment had been illuminated by a large black frame holding “nearly 200 patent lamps,” which helped heighten what Fairburn termed “the splendid solemnity of the scene.” Such lighting arrangements also played a part in the denouement when Nelson’s body was to be lowered down towards the grave (see figure 2.3). As Fairburn recounted this moment, which he deemed “the most impressive part of the spectacle”:

The coffin was uncovered, and the coronet placed on it […] The whole space of the platform was filled with those who had moved in the procession […] the degree of light was sufficient to give effect to the splendour and the magnificence of the scene, but not to afford a distinct view of its actual limits, so that the mind insensibly was impressed with that image of sublimity which belongs to infinity.

He therefore grasped these staging techniques precisely as they had been conceived: that is, as a performance of consecration and the making of an immortal.

Once Nelson’s body had been buried his immortal status was to be maintained by other means. In the immediate aftermath of the funeral the wagon which had borne his coffin was “exhibited for the gratification for those who might not have had a view of it on the day of the grand national procession,” before it would be remediated and memorialized in an array of popular reproductions circulating after the event. In the longer term, the installation of a statuary monument by Royal Academy sculptor John Flaxman, Lord Nelson (1808–18) ensured that a representation of Nelson’s body would remain on public display in the pantheonic space of the Cathedral. State-commissioned and sponsored, Flaxman’s monument thereby provided

---

89 Fairburn, *Funeral*, 78, 89.
90 Fairburn, *Funeral*, 86.
91 Fairburn, *Funeral*, 93–94.
92 Fairburn, *Funeral*, 94.
an official marker to commemorate Nelson’s “transcendant [sic] merit” as a national icon.\textsuperscript{94}


\textbf{Bentham’s self-directed death show}

A quarter of a century later a markedly different type of commemorative event centred upon the body was staged in London. As the press reports made clear, the public dissection of Jeremy Bentham’s cadaver at the Webb-Street School of Anatomy and Medicine on Saturday the ninth of June 1832 proved a comparably dramatic occasion. When Dr. Southwood Smith had prepared to deliver a lecture over his friend’s remains, a thunderstorm had shaken the

\textsuperscript{94} This phrase about transcendence is borrowed from Fairburn, \textit{Funeral}, 84.
building and the oratory was performed against a backdrop of lightning.95 The event had also been as carefully organized as Nelson’s, with invitation cards designed and distributed to those “friends, disciples, and admirers of the deceased philosopher” who were to attend.96 But the crucial point of contrast is that it was Bentham himself who had orchestrated the practical machinations for this corporeal spectacle—as a prospective concern. Where Nelson had been but the passive recipient of the elaborate consecrative pageantry ordered by the State, Bentham prescribed in meticulous detail precisely what was to happen with his remains upon his death. He had thus endeavoured to direct his own posthumous publicity project.

The first part of which was concerned with demonstrating the public value of dissection. Bentham had accordingly used an appendix to his will to dictate how his body should “be used as the means of illustrating a series of lectures” for demonstrating what was described as “the situation structure & functions of the different organs [and] the arrangement & distributions of the vessels.”97 Beyond communicating “highly important knowledge” about the workings of the body this was intended “to show that the primitive horror at dissection originates in ignorance & is kept up by misconception.”98 After a long life engaged in projects directed towards practical improvement, Bentham hereby scripted his final public intervention in the cause of utility and reform.

But like Nelson’s, this was a death show comprised of two parts: the action moving from the limp, dissected body in the lecture hall to the carefully-clothed effigy of the monument by which he was to be “perpetually preserved.”99 Where public dissection proved the “transitory” and “anatomical” part of his project, the second part dealt with what Bentham called the “permanent” and “conservative” dimension of his plans to determine the future public condition of his body.100 He had therefore also instructed that following the dissection his skeleton was to be pieced together and reattached to his head, which was to have been preserved according to the New Zealand embalming techniques that so fascinated him.101 Thus reassembled, his body would be dressed in his customary attire and stored in

---

95 “None who were present can ever forget that impressive scene,” as William Johnson Fox noted in reporting upon the event. W.J. Fox, “On the Character and Philosophy of the Late Jeremy Bentham,” *Monthly Repository* vol. 6 (July 1832): 450.
97 Jeremy Bentham, “‘B’ Auto-Icon, Queens Square Place Westminster, 13th of April 1830,” (specific instructions annexed to Bentham’s will, as drafted by Southwood Smith but authorized by Bentham) in *Bentham’s Auto-Icon and Related Writings*, 16.
98 Bentham, “‘B’ Auto-Icon,” 16.
99 Bentham, “‘B’ Auto-Icon,” 16.
“an appropriate box or case” to enable his future commemoration on behalf of friends and disciples.102 Bentham termed this novel form of corporeal self-monument an “Auto-Icon.” In the final text he was working on shortly before his death, he used this notion to imagine a reformed future in which—contra the radical exclusivity of Nelson’s apotheosis—every man may be his own statue.103

Framing the Auto-Icon in terms of self-made immortality

This contrast between Nelson’s and Bentham’s distinctive pathways to immortality—their differing logics, protocols, and materialities—is pivotal for my argument about the historical emergence of the DIY monument. I make the case for situating Bentham’s Auto-Icon project in the broader context of practices for making immortality in the early nineteenth century. Using Nelson as an emblematic example of the regime of monumental monopoly, I counterpose Bentham’s efforts to make his own monument and to theorize the notion of an Auto-Icon as a subversive attempt to challenge the strictures of this official regime. Looking in close detail at the discursive and material ways in which Bentham critiqued the recently-established protocols of this state pantheon, I provide a new reading of the Auto-Icon as a striking instance of the nascent self-made immortality regime that is my principal concern in this study. Insofar as Bentham exploited his body as the basis of his own monument, I argue he made posthumous recognition a prospective site of entrepreneurial endeavor, in a manner characteristic of the workings of this alternative regime.

A key starting point in developing this line of argument is treating Bentham’s project as a considered intervention in the broader memorial politics of the era. This entails sidestepping a pronounced tendency in the longer reception history of the Auto-Icon to regard it as the idiosyncratic product of what a contemporary commentator dismissed as “the absurdities of his death bed dreams.”104 Reducing Bentham’s commemorative energies to the whimsical last wishes of an “eccentric” effectively renders his project as uniquely peculiar and thereby beyond parallel or context.105 Positioning my

104 This particular phrase is that of Edinburgh antiquary William Barclay Turnbull, who had come into contact with one of the few examples of the Auto-Icon pamphlet in 1842. Cited in Marmoy, “The ‘Auto-Icon’ of Jeremy Bentham,” 79.
105 An early proponent of this view was John Timbs, *English Eccentrics and Eccentricities* [1866] (London: Chatto and Windus, Piccadilly, 1877), 166–69. This tendency to focus upon the singular character of Bentham’s project has been reproduced in a range of recent studies, as Amy. L. Gates has noted. The Auto-Icon has thus been characterized as “absurd,” “bizarre,” “whimsical,” and “provocative.” Amy L. Gates, “Fixing Memory: The Effigial Forms of Felicia
analysis against such a reading I build upon the recent work of Amy L. Gates, who, in comparing the memorializing potential of the Auto-Icon to the mnemonic power of Felicia Hemans’s poetry, has productively shown one way in which Bentham might be contextualized here.106 While Gates approached this chiefly from a literary perspective, I adopt a wider view of the Auto-Icon’s commemorative contexts to bring into focus the larger system governing the making of immortality.107 Analyzing Bentham’s project in relation to Nelson’s apotheosis among other parts of this broader contextual frame enables an array of new insights about practices for producing lasting renown in this period.

What was Bentham doing in making the body the basis for his own monument? To which specific problems did he conceive of this as a solution? In what contexts did the emancipatory force of every man his own statue have bearing? I pursue a series of contextualizing manoeuvres to examine these questions. Firstly, I position Bentham’s project as part of a wider critique of the practices of the state regime for producing immortality. Secondly, I historicize the critical claims of the Auto-Icon in relation to the genre of the every man his own manual: a wider context of individualizing that Bentham gestured towards but which has yet to be explored in any depth in existing scholarship. Thirdly, using the DIY perspective implied by these manuals as an analytical frame, I focus upon the individual body as a monumental resource for enabling the production of a specifically self-made monument. Finally, I turn to consider in close detail the arrangements left by Bentham for the use to be made of the Auto-Icon in structuring his future commemoration.

Taken together, this allows me to present an in-depth account of the ways in which Bentham sought to make his own monument, while highlighting how

---


106 Gates, “Fixing Memory,” 58, 70. Two further studies that provide at least some form of a contextualizing discussion are the following by James E. Crimmins and Philip Schofield, although these remain more suggestive than substantial. While Crimmins gestured towards the broader cultural and intellectual contexts in which Bentham’s project might be understood (though doing little to develop these in depth), Schofield usefully outlined the sense in which it was symptomatic of Bentham’s wider philosophical and political concerns (though not looking beyond the scope of the philosopher’s own oeuvre in framing this context). Crimmins, “Introduction,” in Bentham’s Auto-Icon and Related Writings, ix–lxvii; Schofield, Utility and Democracy: The Political Thought of Jeremy Bentham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 337–42.

107 Such a literary emphasis is broadly in line with the broader field of canonization studies in which Gates positions her research. This perspective can be captured in the following formulation of her approach, when she refers to “viewing Bentham’s preservation project through the literary lens of Hemans’s work.” Gates, “Fixing Memory,” 70.
his project proved emblematic of the broader emergence of self-made immortality. The Auto-Icon may well have been peculiar in its provocations, but it was also indicative of a wider configuration of discursive and material conditions in this period’s commemorative sphere.

Rejecting state immortality

Bentham had been sharply critical of the prevailing protocols for producing immortality. As part of his broader programme of political radicalism, he had reserved specific criticism for the material basis of the making of monuments, presented in his final tract *Auto-Icon; or Farther Uses of the Dead to the Living* (1832). This critique included a general utilitarian distaste for the unnecessary “expense” deemed to be involved in the creation of such artefacts. But it also involved outlining what he judged to be the vested interests at work within this system of production: that is, “the kings-in-arms, the heralds-at-arms, in chorus with the saints, sextons, grave-diggers, undertakers, masons, and sculptors, with the Judges of Doctors’ Commons, and the Archbishops of York and Canterbury,” as he satirically characterized these forces. Subverting the consecrative instances of state immortality exemplified in the spectacle of Nelson’s funeral, Bentham’s vision for monumental reform imagined a future in which there “would no longer be needed monuments of stone or marble.”

Bentham’s criticisms of the media operations of state immortality was part of a wider critique of this regime among his contemporaries. Pointing towards this broader context of dissenting voices, I use discussion of William Godwin and William Hazlitt to bring into focus one of the central problems that Bentham’s Auto-Icon, and the notion of self-made immortality more generally, proved a response to. Namely, the question of how to approach posthumous reputation in an era when the material and appraisive protocols for establishing lasting worth had been laid open to challenge.

Godwin, Hazlitt, and the critique of state pageantry

As an instance of this broader monumental critique, William Godwin’s *Essay on Sepulchres* (1809) provides a pertinent point of departure—not least since it was a text Bentham was most likely familiar with as part of a wider move

---

109 Bentham, *Auto-Icon*, 16. He had likewise referred to the role of “undertaker, lawyer, priest” in this context, noting how “all join in the depredation” (1). This was in keeping with the broader critique of establishment power and corruption he made throughout his career, particularly the targeting of legal and ecclesiastical institutions. For a clear recent overview of Bentham’s thought, see Schofield, *Utility and Democracy*.
to theorize the recently emerged sphere of secular memory. Discussed in recent research as a striking example of a broader early nineteenth-century appeal for commemorative reform, the aspect of Godwin’s text I draw attention to here is the particular focus upon *media form* in his criticism of the State regime for making immortality.

Godwin’s *Essay* constituted a proposal for rethinking the basis of national memorial practices. It rested principally upon his objections to prevailing practices for materializing the commemorative presence of the illustrious dead. These objections resulted in two overlapping arguments about the media operations involved in producing posthumous renown. On the one hand, he dismissed the production of “ample and sumptuous monuments.” The effect of such extravagances, Godwin claimed, was the “diverting our thoughts to the skill of the sculptor, or the vain-glory and ostentation of the great man’s descendants.” Rather than such distracting diversions, he advocated a media form of “simplicity” for the making of monuments: one “that should lead us by a strait road to the great man himself.”

On the other hand, and given this scepticism towards the elaborate in monumental design, Godwin discarded those centralized sites of national

---

111 The *Essay* had thus appeared in Southwood Smith’s earlier article on the uses of the dead to the living referred to by Bentham in the Auto-Icon treatise (i.e. “Dr Southwood Smith, has, by an article in … the *Westminster Review*, rendered my speaking useless.”): Bentham, *Auto-Icon*, 2. Southwood Smith discussed Godwin’s notion of an intimate memorial contact with the bodies of the dead in this 1824 article, while explicitly acknowledging the source of these ideas in the published tract of the funeral oration he had delivered over Bentham’s body where he directed his readers to “a beautiful little Essay on Sepulchres, by William Godwin.” Thomas Southwood Smith, “Uses of the Dead to the Living,” *Westminster Review* vol. 2 (July–October 1824), 80–81; Southwood Smith, *A Lecture Delivered over the Remains of Jeremy Bentham*, 70.


memory where the “illustrious which this island has produced” were collected and displayed for public commemoration.\(^{116}\) As he forcefully explained, the terms of his project thus “impelled” him:

\[
[…]\] to look forward to the time, when Westminster Abbey, and St Paul’s at London, and St Peter’s at Rome, shall be prostrated on the earth, and nothing but two yards of perpendicular soil shall be interposed, between the great man, and the skies to which his inherent temper unavoidably prompted him to aspire.\(^{117}\)

The plans he sketched of a reformed system for managing memory thereby granted no role to the canonical sites of the state immortality regime. This amounted to a radical critique of these existing institutions. Rather than simply working around or subverting these sites, he fantasized as to their destruction: that they should be “prostrated on the earth” and hence denied the consecrative authority to make immortals. Godwin thus imagined a future regime entirely distinct from the media forms and practices of the recently emerged monumental monopoly.

The rejection of “ostentation” at the core of this reworking of national commemoration was also a statement about the increased access a more modest media form made possible. Instead of conventional commemorative artefacts like “monumental brass,” “towers,” “palaces,” or “temples,” Godwin suggested the use of a “very slight and cheap memorial”: either “a white cross of wood” to mark rural grave sites, or in urban settings a “horizontal stone on the level of the pavement, or a mural tablet, where the grave is inclosed within a building.”\(^{118}\) What mattered in this system was not the visual depiction of the dead, but rather the necromantic mode of communion which was made possible by close contact with the presence of the buried body.\(^{119}\) Using these simple markers offered a way of enabling this form of commemoration across the entire geographical span of the nation, beyond the central sites of the metropolis alone.\(^{120}\)

In addition to an explicitly utilitarian rationale, this shift to a “slight and cheap” form of posthumous representation was also closely connected to the wider political force of Godwin’s vision for reform. In sharp contrast to the commemoration of the select few immortal bodies of the elite on display at central sites such as St Paul’s, he advocated the flattening out and

\(^{118}\) Godwin, *Essay*, 7, 24–25. As Mole has demonstrated, the notion of a commemorative tablet in urban environments would later be actualized in the blue plaque scheme. Mole, “Romantic Memorials in the Victorian City.”
\(^{119}\) On the eighteenth-century notion of “ideal presence” that such communion rested upon, see Westover, *Necromanticism*, 17–30.
geographical distribution of the pantheon. In this way it might become a more representative collection of the nation’s illustrious dead, as well as being more accessible for the commemorative attention of the population at large.\textsuperscript{121} This undermining of elite memory production was further reinforced by the practical system Godwin suggested to produce such a reformed national canon of memory. Rather than the centralized authority of the state pantheon, he proposed that the practical operating and maintaining of this system could be managed at a local level—either by volunteers or the parish curate.\textsuperscript{122} In this way, Godwin’s plan not only broadened access to national immortality, it also envisioned a decentralized model of its production.

If Godwin’s \textit{Essay} constituted a searing critique of the workings of monumental monopoly, such opposition was similarly witnessed in the criticism posed by Bentham’s one-time tenant, William Hazlitt. Hazlitt’s \textit{The Spirit of the Age} (1825) has certainly long been recognized as a critical project preoccupied with questions of canonicity and the conditions for sustaining lasting value.\textsuperscript{123} But as with Bentham’s treatise and Godwin’s \textit{Essay}, it was also a work specifically engaged with contemporary media practices in the making of posthumous reputation.

Hazlitt’s criticisms of the workings of state immortality were especially clear in his discussion of Lord Byron’s death—which had unexpectedly and dramatically forced its way into his profile of the poet. We can immediately note the scathing indictment of “the idle contests” relating to the “place of Lord Byron’s internment, whether in Westminster Abbey or his own family-vault,” which proved indicative of Hazlitt’s scepticism towards official protocols for the enactment of public commemoration.\textsuperscript{124} This distance was yet more apparent in his ridiculing of the material apparatus of public display that accompanied the death arrangements of such prominent public figures. As he disparagingly remarked, in a clear demonstration of the rejection of these state sanctioned practices:

\begin{footnotes}
\begin{enumerate}
\item For a recent discussion of the establishing of a “distributed pantheon” over the course of the nineteenth century, see Mole, \textit{What the Victorians Made of Romanticism}, 145–63.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotes}
A king must have a coronation—a nobleman a funeral-procession.—The man is nothing without the pageant.\textsuperscript{125}

Instead of such ostentatious forms of posthumous exhibition, Hazlitt had insisted that immortality was to be produced and sustained in different ways. This was evident in his comments regarding the workings of Byron’s future renown:

The poet’s cemetery is the human mind, in which he sows the seeds of never-ending thought—his monument is to be found in his works[.]\textsuperscript{126}

Just as Godwin had renounced the central sites of state immortality, Hazlitt thus dismissed “the pageant” and the elaborate accompaniments deployed to produce immortality in this regime of \textit{monumental monopoly}. In his austere conception of lasting fame as “the spirit of a man surviving himself in the minds and thoughts of other men,” there was no role whatsoever for the material props of memorialization.\textsuperscript{127}

Where Godwin’s system minimized the question of bodily representation in favour of the importance of place and locality, Hazlitt went further in proposing an entirely \textit{disembodied} vision of the operations of canonization. Indeed, the rejection of the significance of the various trappings of state immortality noted above was paralleled by his dismissal of the preoccupations of an emergent celebrity culture with visual appearance and personality.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{125} Hazlitt, “Lord Byron,” 168.

\textsuperscript{126} Hazlitt, “Lord Byron,” 168.

\textsuperscript{127} In this sense, new light can be cast upon Hazlitt’s oft-cited definition of “fame.” While scholars such as Bennett are surely right in reading this as a defensive response to the emergence of a mass reading public and popular celebrity in this period, it can further be interpreted as a critical judgement upon existing practices for producing immortality, particularly in terms of castigating the specific media employed to do so. Hazlitt, “On the Living Poets,” 283.

\textsuperscript{128} This was so at least in terms of evaluating the \textit{dead}; in other contexts, notably his production of “contemporary portraits” in \textit{The Spirit of the Age}, Hazlitt could still participate in and
Thus in discussing the machinations of Byron’s canonization, he emphasized that death allowed for the escaping from these material elements of contemporary systems of renown. Enabling the stripping away of such features, he explained, death made “the drossy particles fall off, the irritable, the personal, the gross, and mingle with the dust.”

As an alternative to these physical markers as media of memory, Hazlitt insisted on the singular importance of “the works” in enabling the process of canonizing and the reproduction of posthumous fame. Rather than the sculptural monuments of the official regime, what mattered in Hazlitt’s system was the text as a medium to preserve and convey ideas.

**Trusting in the test of time**

These criticisms of the media workings of *monumental monopoly* proposed by Bentham, Godwin and Hazlitt were part of a wider contemporary preoccupation with matters pertaining to the making of immortality. The problem underlying these concerns was, in broad terms, one of cultural memory: as prompted by the expansion and intensification of secular commemoration following the French Revolution. On the one hand, this period of Revolutionary and Napoleonic warfare had led to an increased awareness and fear of the prospect of memorial oblivion, which in turn generated a newly-urgent desire to secure both individual and collective memory. On the other hand, the emergence of contested forms of fame and recognition with the establishing of a modern celebrity culture meant that the protocols for posthumous renown were increasingly exposed to scrutiny. In short, there was a pressing new posterity problem in this period.

---

130 While it might be suggested that his comments here were meant to apply solely to literary canonization, he employed the same principles in the discussions of claims to lasting value conducted in relation to a broader range of cultural figures elsewhere in his writings: from philosophers such as Godwin and Bentham to artists such as Haydon. Hazlitt, “On the Living Poets,” 283; Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, 8, 30.
131 This urge for continued memory is neatly captured in the epigraph chosen by Godwin for the frontispiece of his essay: “‘Not one of these should perish.’ The Bible.” Likewise, his pertinent expression of the impulse underpinning his project: *i.e.* “to rescue from impending oblivion.” Godwin, *Essay on Sepulchres*, 1, 27. As Westover noted, this upsurge in concern with memory was significantly connected to recent upheavals in France, which variously dramatized “the fragility of history.” Westover, *Necromanticism*, 2. For a penetrating study that examines this “fragility” in depth by connecting it to broader shifts in the understanding of time in this period, see Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present*.
132 Of course, this Romantic concern with posterity has been widely discussed previously: with Bennett’s *cult of posterity* a notable example alongside the work of Lucy Newlyn. But taking a more expansive view than these literary studies’ focus on Romantic poetry, I contend that this preoccupation with posthumous renown was a far wider preoccupation. See Bennett, *Romantic Poets*; Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*. 

---

reproduce this visual economy of the famous. For recent discussions of this celebrity culture as an emergent cultural formation, see Higgins, *Romantic Genius* and the essays in Mole, *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture*. 

This opening up of consecrative authority, and the situation of appraisive uncertainty it gave rise to, prompted a series of pressing questions. Who was to be canonized? On what basis? How was this status to be materialized and preserved? And how were such claims to lasting value to be regulated over time? Among a range of alternative suggestions for the managing of posthumous recognition, Godwin and Hazlitt had each proposed their own distinctive solution to this problem. Though these proposals had involved markedly different media forms, they still shared an important assumption about consecrative judgement and temporality: that canonical value could necessarily only be determined in the future.

While vague as to who should be entitled to make such judgements, Godwin insisted that entrance to his “table of the Illustrious Dead” ought to be managed according to “a liberal rule” rather than any more exclusive selection criteria. However, if this openness towards marking the memory of even those of “doubtful fame” was part of a broadening of access to immortality, he also claimed that the potential for excess and overload generated by this “liberal scale” would be counteracted by the workings of time. The memorials to men of “sterling greatness” were accordingly expected to endure, while the remaining majority “shall be reduced to their true standard, and brought down to their genuine numbers.” An abstracted figure of “posterity” would play the central role in deciding upon and ordering those memories which, in Godwin’s stern formulation, “must perish, and ought to perish.”

This suggestion that the appraisive authority to determine properly monumental status could only be exercised in the longer term by “posterity” was taken yet further by Hazlitt. In what amounted to a radical critique of contemporary monument-making projects, he posited the primacy of “the judgement of posterity” in resolving questions of lasting value. Hazlitt thus referred to “the honours which time alone can give” and “the highest excellence” which could only be “sanctioned by the highest authority—that of time.” Although this “test of time” doctrine has a far longer history and was a prominent feature in the Romantic cultural landscape more generally, it assumed a particular pointedness in this context of the making of immortality.

---

133 Such questions had received perhaps most urgent practical expression in late eighteenth-century Paris, when it came to the creation of the revolutionary Panthéon. Here Marat had scornfully dismissed “the ridiculous spectacle of an assembly of vile and inept low-lifes setting themselves up as judges of immortality.” Marat, L’Ami du peuple (5 April, 1791). Cited in Mona Ozouf, “The Pantheon: The École Normale of the Dead,” in Realms of Memory, 3:342.


138 For more on this longer history of the “test of time,” see Bennett, *Romantic Poets*, 29–37.
Such a position had important implications for the practical operations of canon–formation. Firstly, by privileging the accumulated collective and impersonal weight of “successive generations” over time, Hazlitt reduced the authoritative force of canonical judgement in the present—or as he phrased it, of any “one individual” or “any one generation”—to something decidedly contingent.\(^\text{139}\) Secondly, and subsequently, he insisted that significant caution needed to be exercised when appraising contemporary or recently dead figures. Since it was not possible for these to have accrued the same weight of “reverence,” as that sanctioned by time, they could not be spoken of in the same terms as long-established canonical figures such as “Milton and Shakespeare.” Ultimately, the logic of deferred judgement operationalized by this posterity principle made the very notion of producing immortality and monumentality in the present a questionable prospect—a premature project, as Hazlitt termed it, risking “untried ventures” and “false bottoms.”\(^\text{140}\)

As a response to the far-reaching contemporary problem of how authoritative judgements concerning lasting value were to be made, the Romantic posterity doctrine was invariably opposed to the projects of self-

monumentalizing explored in this study. Appointing the abstract and impersonal notion of “time” as the ultimate site of consecrative authority, this doctrine placed contemporary figures in an essentially passive role in relation to their own future reputations. Indeed, for both Godwin and Hazlitt commemoration and monument-making were necessarily retrospective and certainly not prospective activities. According to this logic, the most basic prerequisite for being considered for access to immortal status was to be dead, since death provided what Hazlitt described as “a sort of natural canonization.”\(^\text{141}\) On this basis, both were entirely opposed to the notion that an individual might anticipate their own immortality.

This rejection of such anticipatory efforts had been explicitly formulated. In discussing Horace’s famed claim to have made a monument more lasting than bronze, Godwin recalled being offended by “the assuming tone and arrogance of the man, who could bring himself to speak in this style of his own works,” before settling on his later view that such boasts were “too great for modesty and decorum.”\(^\text{142}\) Hazlitt took an ever firmer stance on this matter, insisting that “he would be great in the eyes of others, must first learn to be nothing in his own.”\(^\text{143}\) He therefore judged that cultural producers ought to

---


\(^{140}\) Hazlitt, “On the Living Poets,” 287. This was a caution again previously expressed by Marat in the context of the French Panthéon: “How can they [i.e. the assembly] be so stupid as to believe that the present generation, much less the future races of mankind, will subscribe to their pronouncements?” Cited in Ozouf, “The Pantheon,” 3:342.


\(^{142}\) Godwin, Essay, 14.

focus attention upon achieving lasting fame through their work, but “patiently and calmly,” making no efforts “to forestal [sic] [their] own immortality.” Furthermore, any such efforts to claim immortality were likely to prove counterproductive, since “he who is always trying to lay violent hands on reputation, will not secure the best and most lasting.”

Viewed from this perspective, it was neither possible to plan for the media form of your own future monument nor to consider how you might seek to consecrate yourself as a figure of future veneration. In Hazlitt’s terms, both such efforts constituted the “violent” attempt to usurp and preempt future judgement. Turning to posterity as the ultimate site of consecrative judgement necessarily precluded the basic premise of self-monumentalizing.

Although Godwin and Hazlitt presented critiques of the media workings of State immortality broadly similar to Bentham’s, their responses to the problem of posterity were therefore far removed from the solution suggested by the Auto-Icon and self-made immortality more generally. While critics of monumental monopoly, both firmly rejected the potential of the self-made monument: indeed, they denied the very possibility of actively pursuing and anticipating posthumous fame. Bentham, by contrast, would adopt a markedly different approach to this problem—as we now turn to consider in closer detail.

Every man his own and the individualist manual

Bentham’s Auto-Icon tract posed a critique of monumental monopoly with a very particular ideological register: as a vision of reform it was principally focused upon an individualization of immortality and the making of legacy. In both the perspective from which he framed this critique—broadly in line with his wider challenges to the elite-driven legal, political, and social practices of Georgian Britain—and the specific proposals suggested for reforming the making of monuments, Bentham’s reform scheme was distinct from the accounts of Godwin and Hazlitt examined above. While they had left it to the future to determine lasting value, Bentham advocated a position where every individual might seek to claim their own monumentality.

To highlight this individualizing angle as the central frame for understanding the Auto-Icon as a critical project, I recontextualize Bentham’s critique here. Following a specific clue in Bentham’s tract not previously explored in detail, I situate his text in relation to the broader every man his own genre that formed a distinctive part of the popular reading of the eighteenth century.

Auto and the individualizing of monument-making

To the degree that the ideological character of Bentham’s memorial project has been addressed in existing literature, it has chiefly been in terms of its

---

democratizing impulse. In a recent discussion, Gates suggested that Bentham was making a democratic intervention in relation to contemporary debates about the politics of memory and seeking to “extend the franchise of memorialization.” While this could be taken yet further and contextualized in terms of Bentham’s various commitments to political and legal reform along similar lines elsewhere in his writings, Gates is certainly not mistaken in identifying this aspect of his project. If we turn to the Auto-Icon pamphlet, we can see how Bentham presented the broad access to monumentality offered by his scheme in precisely these terms:

If at the common expense poor and rich were Iconized, the beautiful commandment of Jesus would be obeyed; they would indeed “meet together,” they would be placed on the same level.

Likewise, he insisted his reformed system would be open to “the two sexes”: emphasizing that “[h]e or she would occupy his or her place without dispute or doubt.” But rather than interpreting this solely as an instance of democratization, I argue it is the individualizing dimension of Bentham’s proposal that is principally important. Just as in his broader system of thought where his arguments for democracy were a logical consequence of, and secondary to, his philosophical commitment to individualism—in which it was the right of each individual to determine their own route to happiness, and thus to choose pushpin over poetry if they so pleased—so too in the making of monuments it was the primacy of the individual that was of paramount concern.

This emphasis on monument-making as an individual enterprise was immediately apparent from the very terms chosen by Bentham to entitle his project: the Auto-icon. As part of his wider linguistic project of coining new terms to characterize emergent phenomena, the choice of this particular word was both deliberate and apposite as a description of his goals for monumental reform. In drawing the reader’s attention to his use of “auto,” he explained that it was a term that had recently become “familiar to English ears by its use in autobiography, […] autograph, &c.” Such a connection between the Auto-icon and monument-making as an act of individual self-representation was further underlined by his positioning of his scheme as part of a wider

146 Philip Schofield makes precisely this point in suggesting that Bentham’s Auto-Icon project “continued the critique in which he had been engaged for almost thirty years” in attacking the “sinister interest” of the legal, political and religious establishments. Schofield, Utility and Democracy, 342.
147 Bentham, Auto-Icon, 3.
148 Bentham, Auto-Icon, 4.
149 Bentham, Auto-Icon, 2.
historical process of expanding individualism, which he identified across a number of fields of activity in the following terms:

As in the progress of time, instruction has been given to make “every man his own broker,” or “every man his own lawyer”: so now may every man be his own statue. Every man is his best biographer.

Although not discussed in any depth in previous research, I suggest that the two references Bentham included here form part of a context that is entirely central in grasping and understanding the character of his proposal for monumental reform. Before turning to a closer consideration of the specific titles mentioned above—Thomas Mortimer’s Every Man His Own Broker (1761) and Giles Jacob’s Every Man His Own Lawyer (1736)—I first introduce the principal characteristics of the broader genre of manuals that exemplified.

**Every man his own as advice manual**

Despite an almost bewildering range of activities being dealt with in this format over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these every man his own texts were governed by certain specific conventions. A brief sample of some of these titles quickly makes apparent the diverse range of fields—practical, domestic, even professional—which became targets for the type of individualist, anti-institutional assumptions these manuals produced: from the early instance of Every Man His Own Gauger (1695) to the later Every Man His Own Butler (1839); and from the satirically-inclined Every Man His Own Law-Maker; or The Englishman’s Complete Guide to Parliamentary Reform (1785) to the more earthbound Every Man His Own Cattle Doctor: or a Practical Treatise on the Diseases of Horned Cattle and Sheep, (1810).

That such volumes often enjoyed a popular readership and a considerable degree of commercial success is suggested by the number of editions that were published of certain of these titles. As Francis Clater, author of this volume on cattle-care proudly noted, his earlier manual Every Man His Own Farrier (1786) “had gone through seventeen or eighteen impressions” within but

---

151 Given the parallels between this earlier genre of every man his own manuals and the contemporary interest in self-help volumes, it is surprising that so little scholarly attention has been directed towards these earlier texts. Penelope J. Corfield mentions a number of them in passing in her study of the changing history of professional authority in Britain—i.e. Every Man His Own Lawyer (1736), Every Man His Own Proctor (1786) and Every Man His Own Physician (1787)—but is typical of other works making similar use of such sources, in that the texts are treated as incidental examples and not part of a specific genre with its own logic and assumptions. Penelope J. Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain, 1700–1850* (London: Routledge, 1995), 63, 65, 69.
twenty-seven years. 152 Such popular success also meant that publishers adapted this format to the market for female conduct manuals, as demonstrated by *The Female Physician: or, Every Woman Her Own Doctress* (1770) and *Every Woman Her Own House-Keeper; or, The Ladies’ Library* (1796).

The central drive underpinning all these texts was the making available of particular bodies of knowledge for as broad a public as possible. The aforementioned *Every Man His Own Gauger* was thus advertised as part of a series of improving texts to “help the meanest Capacity to be able to Discourse on all subjects whatsoever” and, its author boasted, constituted a guide accessible for even “the most Ignorant, who can but read English, and tell twenty in Figures.” 153 This popular pedagogical ambition was manifested in both the style and the marketing strategies of such books, as well as the particular structure according to which they were ordered. These works were therefore deliberately presented as written in as simple a language as possible, and were sold relatively cheaply as single volumes. Furthermore, they were ordered in such a way as to break down entire fields of knowledge, most notably through the provision of an exhaustive range of directions and instructions, which, if carefully followed by the individual user, would guarantee success in a given enterprise. They thereby constituted self-help manuals to enable DIY practices, to translate them into the terms of the present.

In the sense that these prescriptive guides presumed and reproduced an ideal of the self-improving individual, they can be related to a particularly Protestant-inspired notion of popular enlightenment that circulated widely in the eighteenth century—in which the democratizing potential of mantras such as the “priesthood of all believers” was coupled with optimistic notions of moral perfectibility. 154 But in propagating the broad competences and potential for improvement of this self-improving individual, these manuals could also embody a distinct and pronounced critique of emerging professional authorities.

This ambivalence towards authority was especially apparent in the comments of a young Benjamin Franklin, whose *Autobiography* would later become synonymous with this popular didacticism for self-help and moral improvement. On the one hand, in the comments he made referring to the successful circulation of one of these guides he had published—*Every Man His Own Doctor*—he had insisted that its principal “Use and Benefit” was the

---


making available of important practical knowledge to those who “live at too great a Distance from good Physicians.”155 Yet on the other hand, in an advert printed for this and another volume he was selling, Franklin had joked about the existence of a third such work: “Every Man his own Lawyer, Every Man his own Doctor, (Note, in a short time will be published, Every Man his own Priest.)”156 As such a comment implied, there was often a decidedly anti-clerical set of assumptions at work in these guides.

**Every man his own immortality broker**

If we turn back to the specific volumes within this genre mentioned by Bentham, we can note the complex negotiations with notions of authority evident in these texts (quite apart from the tension, still present in self-help literature today, that proceeds from the emancipation of the individual being dependent upon following a specific set of authoritative instructions and techniques.) Jacob’s *Every Man His Own Lawyer* is an example of a text that sought to balance the encouraging of a self-help ethos with continued respect for professional authorities. So while pledging to enable “all Manners of Persons” to “know how to defend Themselves and their Estates and Fortunes, In all Cases whatsoever,” and thereby allowing them to “in some measure be their own advisers,” he was anxious to explain that his work was “not designated to defame or abate the profession of the law.”157

Mortimer’s *Every Man His Own Broker*, on the other hand, adopted a far more confrontational approach, presenting itself as a sharp critique of the institution of the Stock Exchange. This critical intent to expose the abuses of the existing system was evident from the title-page, which emphasized that the book included an unmasking of various insider secrets—with the “Mystery and Iniquity of Stock-Jobbing laid before the Public in a New and Impartial Light.”158

More specifically, Mortimer attempted to counter the monopolistic control over the stock market exerted by scheming and unscrupulous brokers, especially the clique of “gentleman brokers” who were planning to introduce a fee-based association granting access to the Exchange “for the privilege of

---

excluding their poor brethren.”

In this particular context he conceived of his manual as deliberately “printed of such a size, as to be convenient for the pocket”—and “giving full directions how to transact this business without the assistance of a broker”—in order that it become a practical tool in breaking down these exploitative practices of monopoly. Mortimer thus sought to empower the individual via his self-help instructions as a means of challenging the existing system. Having followed his method and instructions, “the gentleman, and merchant will have no occasion for Stock-broker,” but would rather be able to broker and manage their own investments.

It was certainly no coincidence that Bentham chose to include just Jacob’s and Mortimer’s works as illustrative examples in framing his Auto-Icon tract. As in various ways, the connotations of these particular texts touched upon several of the principal assumptions according to which Bentham ordered his scheme for an alternative monumental system. In terms of Jacob’s manual for legal self-help, the notion of self-representation was foregrounded, which—from the perspective of Bentham’s proposal for producing monumentality—lent itself directly to his suggestion that each individual might represent themselves in the face of posterity and future appraisals of their reputations. Two distinctive notions of representation became closely aligned in the claim that “every man may be his own statue,” insofar as the legal sense of the word—of formally representing one’s claim to future acclaim—was accompanied by the literal sense of using one’s body to visually represent oneself.

Such a move to bypass and eliminate the role of intermediaries in staking a claim on posthumous value was further supported by reference to Mortimer’s more biting and satirical critique of the workings of the Stock Exchange in *Every Man His Own Broker*. Where Mortimer had sought to provide the practical details to enable anyone to broker their own financial investment, Bentham suggested a framework in which each individual might broker their own monumentality—and thereby their future worth—by their own efforts alone. Following Mortimer’s example, the advocating of individual self-improvement and self-exertion became a way of challenging the monopolistic practices of the emerging state pantheon that had immortalized Nelson.

Situating Bentham’s proposal in relation to this wider genre helps us see more vividly the particular presuppositions his project was built upon. By reading his notion of an Auto-Icon in this context, it becomes clear how far Bentham’s calls for an individualization of immortality coincided with the broader critique of established authorities as the exercising of “sinister interests” made throughout his wider legal, political and social writings.

159 Mortimer, *Every Man His Own Broker*, xiii–xiv.
160 Mortimer, *Every Man His Own Broker*, vi, xxv.
161 Mortimer, *Every Man His Own Broker*, xv.
Viewed this way, his application of the principles of these manuals to the field of monumentality provides a striking instance of the case being made for an immortality regime based on the industry and efforts of individuals, rather than the regulatory measures and protocols of existing institutions. As will become clear when we consider the specific plans he made for his own legacy project, it thus became a matter of working to build your own monument.

In this sense, there are notable historical parallels between the self-made immortality regime that I argue Bentham exemplified in the early nineteenth century and the notion of the “DIY celebrity” recently introduced to characterize self-made celebrities in the digital present. In both cases an attempt to assert individual control over the production of renown is apparent, one that sidesteps—if not directly undermines—the gatekeeping functions of the predominant institutions of power and their standard media forms. Rather than a system for producing recognition managed by the established authorities, both these instances point towards the initiation of an alternative order placing greater emphasis upon the entrepreneurial energies and the authority of the individual producer. Where DIY celebrities today have exploited online channels to pursue public recognition and forms of acclaim previously produced by the mainstream media (i.e. film, tv, radio and print journalism), these early nineteenth-century immortality-seekers pursued new ways to make their own monuments.

This perspective thus offers a pertinent frame with which to isolate the specific workings of the system put forward by Bentham for the making of self-made immortality. Examining in turn the various dimensions of producing lasting value, the second half of this chapter will highlight the various ways in which the logic of Bentham’s Auto-Icon can be understood as aligned with this distinctively DIY ethos.

Bentham’s Auto-Icon as a performance of self-consecration

The existence of competing protocols for determining immortality had contributed to wider reflections about the workings and effect of such authority, particularly regarding the emergence of state immortality. In the following section I focus upon exploring the Auto-Icon as an essentially DIY response to this situation. Using continued comparison with the test of time doctrine propounded by Godwin and Hazlitt, I argue that Bentham advocated a radically individualized form of self-consecration.

At first sight there was considerable shared ground between Godwin, Hazlitt, and Bentham in terms of the doubts cast upon the ability of their

contemporaries to determine lasting value. Bentham thus fully echoed Hazlitt’s scepticism towards present verdicts on the granting of this form of recognition. More specifically, he directed his ire towards the memorial energy and veneration devoted to various of his political enemies in the establishing of “Commemoration Clubs,” which were a notable feature of the political and commemorative culture of the early nineteenth century. As he forcefully decried:

And what are Pitt’s,—what Fox’s claims to merit clubs, or public gratitude. Pitt, with his os rotundum mainly assisted George III in loading the inhabitants of the British empire with so many hundred millions of debt, (not to speak of the loads under which so many other nations groan!) and consigning to untimely death so many thousands of his fellow-creatures. And Fox,—what did he?

Beyond such specific points of criticism directed against the commemorative worth of Fox and Pitt, Bentham had also issued a broader critique of these organizations. This is worth quoting in full for what it reveals about his own appraisive principles for judging what was worthy of being remembered, and thereby preserved:

These clubs, with no other cement than a fraternity of party interest,—a partnership in political favour, could not live long. Bubble is succeeded by bubble. To the human race in general,—to their own country in any determinate way, or for any considerable length of time, of what service were these heroes of the day? Their lights still gleam in the socket,—a little while, and both of them will be extinguished. Their Auto-Icons, if preserved, would have no other than a sort of historical value,—whose foundation would be notoriety rather than beneficence.

What we can see here is a particularly utilitarian take on Hazlitt’s view as to the character of lasting value, where the continued survival and presence of a particular name was connected to “beneficence” and being of “service,” while the simply “notorious” were soon to be forgotten. Indeed, Bentham came to reproduce such a notion in relation to those who poured scorn upon his schemes for improvement, speaking of “the oblivion which they so well merit,—an oblivion which so well befits them.” Like Hazlitt before him,

163 These emergent organizations have received surprisingly little scholarly attention. For some consideration of this early nineteenth-century context, see N. B. Penny, “The Whig Cult of Fox in Early Nineteenth-Century Sculpture,” *Past & Present* 70 (1976): 94–105. For an engaging discussion of a later instance of this phenomenon from the perspective of Cultural Memory Studies, focused on the commemoration of Robert Burns, see Rigney, “Embodied communities,” 71–101.


166 This is taken from a formulation about anticipated objections to the Auto-icon that exemplified this point about “oblivion” in greater detail. Bentham, *Auto-Icon*, 2.
this seemed to imply a distinct faith that the workings of the test of time would help to mitigate the flaws of contemporary judgement, which otherwise produced mere “bubbles” rather than permanent worth.

But while Godwin and Hazlitt both sought to offset these flaws via an abstracted notion of posterity, Bentham had pursued a radically different solution to this pressing problem of consecrative authority. Instead of trusting entirely in the judgement of future generations, he advocated a proposal rooted in the individualist and anti-establishment principles of the every man his own genre outlined above.

**Consecration for future veneration**

Bentham thus enacted his own consecration textually prior to his posthumous plans to embody this notion in becoming his own icon. The most striking instance was when he elaborated upon his future commemoration as a revered, canonized figure. Asking his readers to “put on for a moment the wings of imagination, [and] transport thyself to future ages,” he envisioned the following “waking dream”:

Conceive the old philosopher preserved in some safe repository, to which the name of sacred might be applied, were it not so open to abuse, as well as already so much abused,—what might not be the pilgrimages made to him!

Accompaniments to the *quasi* sacred Auto-Icon, (if by the adverb, the attribute sacred may be rendered endurable,) accompaniments of it, his unedited and unfinished manuscripts, lodged in an appropriate case of shelves. Why not to this monument, as well as to an old stone-coffin, or an old tombstone? In this far-famed receptacle, there would be no want of matter of wonder and admiration. Of miraculousness as well as of sanctity, it would repel with scorn the name.

Pilgrims, the votaries of the greatest-happiness principle. Hadji? No, but as above, Quasi-Hadji might each pilgrim be yeleped [*sic*] from and after his return.

Why not to this receptacle as well as to Mahomet’s? Is not Bentham as good as Mahomet was? In this or that, however distant, age, will he not have done as much good as Mahomet will have done evil to mankind?167

Several points can be raised about this passage, which is open to various possible interpretations. One line of argument is that this was a sharp piece of anti-clericalism, entirely of a piece with Bentham’s materialist critique of revealed religion and his utilitarian-inspired criticism of the privileges of established religious authorities. Thus we can note throughout the problematizing and the vexed use of the term “sacred” and the distance he seeks to establish from “miraculousness,” as well as the forceful objection to the evils effected by “Mahomet.” Read from such a perspective this scene readily appears a piece of anti-religious satire: in which Bentham conceived

---

of himself as a saint to cast scorn upon and ridicule extant practices of religious pilgrimage. Understood this way making himself a saint was as much a joke as it was satire.

But while religious critique is part of what was at stake here, it is far from the whole story. Certainly, there is an important sense in which this was not simply a joke at the expense of religion but also a candid practical description of what Bentham was engaged in by building his own monument. That it was more than just a whimsical imagining was suggested by the extent of his commitment to realizing this end for his body, and the fact his Auto-Icon subsequently came into being. Interpreted in such a light—as demonstration of his consecrating claims for the Auto-Icon—this outlining of himself as a “quasi sacred” object for the “wonder and admiration” of “Pilgrims” provides a revealing insight into his principal memorial aspirations with this project: namely, anointing himself to secular sainthood for future publics.

Enacting his own sanctity in this way Bentham drew upon practices of secular veneration established in the eighteenth century, and which assumed increasing prominence in the post-Revolutionary period. His awareness of this pantheonic context was evident in the approval shown for the Parisian museum that employed “a pigmy Mont Parnasse” for “preserving men of letters in honourable remembrance,” with a miniature Voltaire at “the summit of the eminence.” Ultimately at stake in the wider fashioning of a culte des grande hommes this exemplified was what Avner Ben-Amos has termed “the transfer of the sacred”: a radical shift from the Christian, monarchical principles of the ancien régime to the secular values of the new revolutionary nation. In thinking about the role of public commemoration within such a

168 Bentham’s editor and friend, John Bowring, reinforced the centrality of this project with his comments about the Auto-Icon pamphlet, where he noted “the special interest which Bentham took in it, and the fact, that it occupied the last literary hours of his existence.” See “Note by the Editor,” Bentham, Auto-Icon, 1. Gates makes a similar point to this end: “The result of 63 years of planning, the Auto-Icon project was no joke to Bentham, or not merely a joke.” Gates, “Fixing Memory,” 66.


170 Bentham, Auto-Icon, 6. His broad familiarity with this French context of sanctifying grande hommes was further witnessed by the presence of his own bust among the collection of living greats produced by the Republican sculptor David d’Angers, whom he had sat for in Paris in 1825. This bust and the portrait medallion it gave rise to can be seen in Catherine Fuller (ed.), The Old Radical: Representations of Jeremy Bentham (London: UCL, 1998), 39–41. For more on David’s project of creating a personal pantheon, see Jacques De Caso, David D’Angers: Sculptural Communication in the Age of Romanticism, trans. Dorothy Johnson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

171 Ben-Amos, Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 17. Cf. also Thomas W. Laqueur, The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015), 197–98. For more about this cult of great men in eighteenth-century France and the way this would be transformed into the birth of the Panthéon, see Ozouf,
shift, we can recall Godwin’s insistence that “the vivid recollection of things past” was intimately connected to the possibility of “the boldest improvements in future.” Characterizing “the reformers, the instructors, and improvers of their contemporaries” as “genuine heroes of the times that have been,” he simultaneously made these figures objects of commemorative attention and the present a scene of “historical enchantment.” Through elevating its heroes for continued veneration, the wider memorial culture of the early nineteenth century thus rendered the past a striking new source of secular value.

Bentham certainly agreed about the potency of this value. His Auto-Icon treatise had, after all, been framed as an elaboration of the benefits of the dead to the living. But in envisioning his body as site of future pilgrimage he was adhering to a markedly different logic than that witnessed in either Godwin’s Essay or the projects of European pantheon-making more generally. By imagining his survival in this way he was staking a claim on his own place within this particular space of reverence—asserting the security of his position among Godwin’s secular canon of the “Illustrious Dead of All Ages.” He thus chose not to “put up with the postponement of […] claims to lasting fame” prescribed by the likes of Hazlitt, and instead assumed individual responsibility for brokering his own immortality. Following the variously charged terms of his project—Auto and Icon—Bentham engaged in pointed practices of self-consecration.

This concerted refusal to abide to the boundaries of the test of time when laying claim to secular sanctity was further evident in the way he incorporated such an assumption of lasting value into his self-fashioning as a “Founder”—the herald of the greatest-happiness principle—and the concurrent framing of his followers as “Disciples.” Hazlitt recalled how his landlord had

---


172 Godwin, Essay, 6.

173 Godwin, Essay, 6. The pertinent notion of “historical enchantment” is borrowed from Laqueur The Work of the Dead, 197.

174 The characterization of pantheon-making as a wider European phenomenon is taken from Bouwers, Public Pantheons in Revolutionary Europe, 1–11 (1).

175 Godwin, Essay, 22.


178 He had used these sanctifying terms in his will: “Bentham’s Last Will, 30 May 1832,” 8. Similarly in a dream he recorded as a young man, he had “dreamt […] that [he] was a founder of a sect; of course a personage of great sanctity and importance.” “Manuscript of “Bentham's Dream” [1781]. Cited in James E. Crimmins, Secular Utilitarianism: Social Science and the Critique of Religion in the Thought of Jeremy Bentham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 314.
provided tours around the garden to those who visited him at home at Queen Square Place, noting that:

He [i.e. Bentham] has been heard to say (without any appearance of pride or affectation) that “he should like to live the remaining years of his life, a year at a time at the end of the next six or eight centuries, to see the effect which his writings would by that time have had upon the world.”\textsuperscript{179}

While Hazlitt certainly doubted the weight of these claims to continued renown, this form of public display suggests just how convinced Bentham was of his own canonicity. The particular logic of self-consecrating operative here was spelled out by a contemporary reviewer, who, in discussing “his making so certain of the future,” had tellingly spoken of “the mode he took for anticipating it [i.e. his posthumous fame], and for summoning it beforehand into his presence.”\textsuperscript{180} By adopting this vantage point of the future, as the reviewer well understood, Bentham was busily engaged in preempting the consecrative verdict of posterity. Looking forward to “this or that, however distant, age,” his projected veneration as a secular icon was thereby a means of demonstrating the force of his immortal status in the present. For as Hazlitt and other proponents of the Romantic posterity doctrine had suggested, continued survival was the ultimate proof of worth. Rather than simply a critique of religion, this vision of the enshrined “old philosopher” was also a powerful DIY statement of canonical value.

**Self-consecration in broader perspective**

To grasp the distinctive novelty of Bentham’s self-consecration, we need to position this gesture in a wider context for the making of secular immortality. Several recent studies have touched upon the practices of enshrinement that emerged in the latter part of the eighteenth century to produce the significant individual as locus of value.\textsuperscript{181} In particular, Clara Tuite has suggested it was precisely in this period that the notion of secular divinity assumed a greater significance: not least insofar as the modern celebrity rhetoric of “stars” came


\textsuperscript{181} Pertinent examples include Tricia A. Lootens’s examination of the far-reaching presence of religious canons in the fashioning of literary sanctity in Victorian processes of canon-formation: Péter Dávidházi’s exploration of the range of religious practices appropriated and brought to bear in the Romantic deification of Shakespeare; and Thomas W. Lacqueur’s recent highlighting—following a long line of previous scholars—the creation of secular saints at the core of the Pantheon project in Revolutionary Paris. Tricia A. Lootens, *Lost Saints: Silence, Gender, and Victorian Literary Canonization* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996); Péter Dávidházi, *The Romantic Cult of Shakespeare: Literary Reception in Anthropological Perspective* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998); Laqueur *The Work of the Dead.*
into being in tandem with a secularization of cosmology—and all that this implied in terms of an elevation into other realms of (heavenly) value. Where modern celebrities such as Byron thus came to be seen as secular divines by their publics, Paul Westover has also pointed to the secularization of pilgrimage practices—and the sanctification of the writer—that occurred with the emergence of literary tourism and the necromantic practices associated with the relics and resting places of dead authors. And certainly, there was a notably necromantic emphasis to Bentham’s outlining of his future status as a site of pilgrimage, just as his presence had often been sought out by admiring visitors to his home during his lifetime.

But while the making of celebrity stardom, the pantheonizing of national heroes, and the expansion of literary pilgrimage all variously involved the sanctification of mortal bodies, the instance of Bentham staging his own future veneration ultimately proves an example of something different. What Bentham was engaged in was the staking of a claim upon commemorative value by performing his own consecration to “quasi sacred” status. Principally distinct from the systems for producing both celebrity stars and literary idols, his Auto-Icon project thus exemplified an individual actively working to establish his own sanctity and immortal status.

The practices of self-consecration this entailed are a central component of the self-made immortality regime I identify in this study. Rather than leaving the determining of legacy to the iniquities of contemporary judgement or the radically uncertain appraisal of future generations, it was hereby a question of seizing the consecrative authority to broker one’s own claims to posthumous renown. Rather than being at the mercy of “party interest” or “posterity,” that is to say, the lasting worth of immortality had been brought within the remit of every man his own.

Insofar as consecration was refashioned as a DIY matter for the individual, this presented a clear challenge to the workings of both State immortality and the test of time as alternative systems for managing how such claims were to be regulated. If self-consecration overturned the temporal divide of the Romantic posterity doctrine—in which future fame was removed from the immediate pull of present celebrity and made a matter of “postponement”—it also opened a new space for the active efforts of memorial work targeting the prospective goal of lasting value. Instead of patiently and submissively waiting for the uncertain judgement of others, “the race of everlasting renown” had thus become a pressing contemporary concern—despite the force of

---

183 Westover, Necromanticism. See also Watson, The Literary Tourist, and Matthews, Poetical Remains for studies similarly concerned with such material practices of posthumous reception.
Hazlitt’s principled objections against this.\textsuperscript{184} Within this emergent regime of self-made immortality, posthumous renown was now a matter of individual self-exertion and the making of calculated “preparations.”\textsuperscript{185}

Making the self-made statue

A key element of the work involved in claiming immortality was in planning and designing one’s own monument. Having assumed the authority to make such a claim, how was it then to be embodied and made available for wider publics? What particular media form might best capture this future commemorative attention?

Bentham’s proposal suggested these claims upon prospective renown should be embodied by the body itself. Like DIY celebrity in the present, the material basis of his project thus critiqued existing arrangements for producing renown while putting forward an alternative route as a workaround. For not only did the Auto-Icon subvert the representational forms of State immortality, it was also closely aligned with the emancipatory, individualizing logic of the \textit{every man his own} genre. I expand upon these arguments now by situating Bentham’s specific material practices for making his own monument in relation to the wider media-historical context within which his Auto-Icon emerged. In doing so, I develop the particular interpretation of his project as a \textit{self-made monument}.

From sculptural representation to self-image

The early nineteenth century witnessed a wider preoccupation with the efficacy of the material traces of the past in communicating with the present.\textsuperscript{186} Building on Joseph Addison’s earlier discussion in \textit{Dialogues Upon the Usefulness of Ancient Medals} (1721), this gave rise to a debate in which reservations were expressed about the value of past monumental forms as historical sources. How much use was the depiction of a body, it was asked, if there were no accompanying textual sources to expand upon this form?\textsuperscript{187}

\textsuperscript{184} This apposite phrase, “the race of everlasting renown,” is borrowed from Hazlitt, and can be found alongside his particular objections to any attempts to seize a head start in this race. Hazlitt, “On the Living Poets,” 286.

\textsuperscript{185} This pointed notion of making “preparations for immortality” was used in the review article of Bentham’s Works cited above: “Art VIII. [review article]—\textit{Memoirs of Jeremy Bentham},” 514.

\textsuperscript{186} Shelley’s long-since canonized poem, “Ozymandias” (1818), provides perhaps the most readily available instance of this broader Romantic concern with the materiality and communicative potential (or limitations) of the past: \textit{Miscellaneous and Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley} (London: William Benbow, 1826), 100.

\textsuperscript{187} As Bruce Haley has shown, this was a re-working of the question previously posed in the eighteenth-century by Edward Gibbon, who had doubted the connection between a great man’s face as depicted in a monument and this man’s ideas or character earlier suggested by Addison.
Among these broader reflections about the communicative potential of visual representations of the human figure, a more specific scepticism about the role of statuary monuments in the present also emerged. Indeed, as we noted above, Godwin’s critique of elaborate sculptural forms had led him to propose an alternative system of commemoration that—in its use of standardized markers and tablets—evaded the question of bodily and personalized representation altogether. In his general concern with the political economy of immortality, and the varying costs of different modes of dealing with the dead, Bentham had also looked forward to a reformed future in which a different media form “would supersede the necessity of sculpture.”

Yet while sharing Godwin’s utilitarian objections to the ostentatious monument, Bentham’s critique rested on different grounds and therefore propagated a markedly different solution in representational terms, as we now turn to consider.

Bentham’s rejection of sculpture as a commemorative medium needs to be understood in light of his varied engagement with notions of representation. Throughout his lengthy career as thinker, reformer, and radical he had expressed a range of principled objections to practices of representation in its various guises: from how to make representative assemblies more accountable to the general interest, to the dangerous effects of “fictitious entities”—i.e. words not connected to actually existing things in politics and law—that could be exploited by the sinister interest of the ruling elite. In the broadest sense, the shared feature which united these points of critique was a suspicion towards the motivations of others in seeking to represent the interests of a particular individual. Given the propensity of these individuals to know their own interests best, why not allow them to represent themselves as far as possible?

For discussion of this wider context, see Bruce Haley, *Living Forms: Romantics and the Monumental Figure* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), 3–4, passim.

---


189 As Bentham well understood, this was a term with a complex history in which various senses of the notion had long overlapped and competed. For a recent attempt to cast some light on this longer history, chiefly from the perspective of the history of political thought, see Monica Brito Vieira and David Runciman, *Representation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 5–28.

190 For Bentham’s attempt to monitor and reform political representation, where he had insisted on the principle of publicity to counter what he regarded as the inherent tendency of closed, unaccountable representative assemblies to work away from the general interest and towards the sinister interests of the ruling elite, see Bentham, “On Publicity” and, as part of a wider discussion of his political thought as a whole, Schofield, *Utility and Democracy*.

If we turn to the specific criticisms of established media forms for producing immortality made by Bentham, we can note precisely this individualizing line of argument against the claims of representation presented there too. As he thus explained:

In Geometry, identity is the source and standard of equality. In the Fine Arts, identity is the source and standard of similitude. What resemblance, what painting, what statue of a human being can be so like him, as, in the character of an Auto-Icon, he or she will be to himself or herself. Is not identity preferable to similitude?\footnote{Bentham, \textit{Auto-Icon}, 2–3.}

What this new form of monument made possible, in other words, was the closing of the gap between signifier and signified, representation and represented, so feared by Bentham for its propensity towards dangerous “fictions” open to elite abuse. He had further insisted on the particular advantage of the body over conventional memorial materials for laying claim to future renown. Given that “the head of each individual is peculiar to him,” the technology of Auto-Iconism offered the most effective way of capturing this “peculiarity” for posterity: “when properly preserved,” he argued, the head “is better than a statue.”\footnote{Bentham, \textit{Auto-Icon}, 2.} Where conventional forms like paintings and statues offered at best “similitude,” the precise mode of preservation in this reformed system would preclude the need for such representational media altogether—since “[a] man’s Auto-Icon is his own self.”\footnote{Bentham, \textit{Auto-Icon}, 10.}

In this sense, Bentham’s assertion of the individual body as monumental form proved a careful subversion of the visual codes and representational practices of the official immortality regime. This point can be made most forcefully by comparing the following two images: firstly, Flaxman’s \textit{Lord Nelson} on display within St. Paul’s Cathedral; secondly, Bentham’s preserved effigy in the Auto-Icon (figures 2.4 and 2.5).

\footnote{191 Bentham, \textit{Auto-Icon}, 2–3.}
\footnote{192 Bentham, \textit{Auto-Icon}, 2.}
\footnote{193 Bentham, \textit{Auto-Icon}, 10. Insofar as Auto-Iconism thus offered a means of preserving the particular identity of each human posthumously, Bentham’s choice of this form of monument can be related to his wider interest in material techniques for producing a society of distinct and accountable individuals. The Panopticon is the most obvious and widely-known instance of this, but he had also sketched a proposal for a universal tattooing system that would brand each individual with a distinctive mark to make them visually identifiable in the interests of legal and social accountability. For an insightful recent discussion of this latter project, see Sophie Coulombeau, “‘Men Whose Glory It Is To Be Known’: Godwin, Bentham, and the London Corresponding Society,” \textit{Nineteenth-Century Prose} 41:2 (2014): 281–83.}
The figure of Nelson made within the wider regime of monumental monopoly at St Paul’s was thus an elaborate and expensive piece of state symbolism: the depiction of his body buttressed by a range of allegorical figures and idealized in heroic mode.\(^\text{194}\) But the Auto-Icon refused both ostentation and symbolism in its consciously DIY mode of presentation. Just as Edward Onslow Ford’s later *Shelley Memorial* (1893) would be critiqued for refusing to idealize the dead poet, this presented a stripped-down image of corporeality—one focused upon the materiality of the body.\(^\text{195}\) What we see

\(^{194}\) For a detailed discussion and analysis of Flaxman’s monument, see Haley, *Living Forms*, 1–3.

here is simply Bentham’s actual body, preserved and clothed: his head ostensibly looking out at us from within his display case.196

Turning away from stone and marble, Bentham deployed a corporeal form of monument deliberately available to all as a means of undermining monumental monopoly. While reworking and displaying his bodily remains in this way was the concerted gesture of a utilitarian materialist, it also constituted a determined final refusal to be represented by others—even posthumously. As a media form producing “a man who is his own image,” Bentham’s Auto-Icon thereby sought to exert control over his own future presence.197 It was, in short, a form that allowed him to produce, and become, his own claim to immortality.

That he envisioned this as a workaround to compete with and undermine the established forms of posthumous renown was suggested by his posing of its commemorative appeal: “Why not to this monument, as well as an old stone-coffin, or an old tombstone?”198 Challenging the media workings of state immortality, the Auto-Icon not only preserved the body of its creator it also embodied the operations of an emergent self-made immortality regime.

Dressing monumental bodies

Rejecting the sculptural medium in favour of the preserved body, it might seem as though Bentham had boycotted representation altogether. After all, what his monument constituted was not a depiction of his body, but literally the body itself. But as we saw from the photo above, he was not simply arguing for this to be shown as a lifeless and naked corpse in the way that Ford’s Shelley Memorial would later provoke controversy for doing.199 Rather what he was proposing was a representational form that would preserve the body in its final appearance, and thereby display the living image of the body—which is perhaps why he was so interested in the glass eyes that were to be installed. As part of capturing the level of “identity” he aspired to with this form, Bentham had pointed to the importance of “costumes” and the material props of personhood.200 The Auto-Icon may have sidestepped establishment allegory and symbolism in its representational strategies, but it still retained space for self-fashioning beyond the grave.

196 Though Bentham had intended for his actual head to be used here, the failure of the embalming process meant that a wax replacement was eventually used. Cf. Marmoy, “The ‘Auto-Icon’ of Jeremy Bentham,” 77, 81–82.
197 Bentham, Auto-Icon, 2. Indeed, Kayman makes a similar point when he characterized the system of Auto-Iconism as “the grotesque and literal embodiment of Bentham’s theory of lawful language and the attempt to control the slippage of meaning, to resist the turn from body or ‘real entity’ to ‘fictitious entity’, that occurs when a person, event, text becomes a memory.” Kayman, “A Memorial for Jeremy Bentham,” 225.
198 Bentham, Auto-Icon, 15 (italics added).
199 Getsy, Body Doubles, 119–141.
200 Bentham, Auto-Icon, 4.
In designing the physical appearance of his own monument, Bentham turned to the wider culture of public exhibition of the early nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{201} That this was a media context he was firmly aware of was indicated by his reference in the tract to “[t]he wax-works in the vaults of Westminster Abbey—Mrs Salmon’s Museum in Fleet Street—yea, even Solomon in all his glory at the puppet-show.”\textsuperscript{202} As a means of considering the visual codes and material practices Bentham was borrowing from and appropriating in his project, I turn now to these wax funeral effigies that he mentioned on display at Westminster Abbey. Making comparison with such existing representations of immortality, I bring into focus the specific ideological resonances of the Auto-Icon as just a \textit{self-made} monument.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image}
\caption{The aristocratic pomp of \textit{ancien régime} display: Frances Teresa Stuart, Duchess of Richmond (1703), by Mrs. Goldsmith. Westminster Abbey, London. Wax effigy. © Dean and Chapter of Westminster.}
\end{figure}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Bentham, \textit{Auto-Icon}, 4.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The wax effigies of the Duchess of Richmond (1647–1702) and the Duchess of Buckingham (1679/82–1743) suggest the presence of at least some form of self-monumentalizing within an earlier courtly regime (figures 2.6 and 2.7). Both these royal figures had certainly taken a keen interest in the physical appearance of their prospective monuments to be placed within the Abbey, especially concerning their posthumous attire.\textsuperscript{203} This was particularly evident

\textsuperscript{203} The first of these, Frances Stuart, Duchess of Richmond, had added to her will shortly before her death instructions that her effigy be “as well done in Wax as can bee” and that it be “put in a presse by itselfe distinct from the other with cleare crowne glasse before it and dressed in my
in the latter case, where Catherine, Duchess of Buckingham had carefully supervised the production of the clothed effigy that was to represent her after her death, and had even lived with this object by her side for seven years before she died. As instances of what Jürgen Habermas termed the “representative publicness” of the ancien régime, in which power was publicly symbolized “before” the people, these effigies used the status symbols of coronation robes to memorialize and preserve the elite social position they had held while alive. With privileged access to Westminster Abbey, this was a conspicuous show of aristocratic status in line with Bauman’s general description of ruling class efforts to avoid the “anonymous formlessness of obscurity.”

By contrast, the final figure added to the Abbey waxworks in 1806 exemplified the workings of a markedly different culture of public visibility and renown. Introduced as a “counterattraction” to his tomb at St Paul’s, the physical appearance of Nelson’s effigy suggested both a more open notion of greatness and the presence of the visual protocols of celebrity culture in the modern public sphere (figure 2.8). Staging the model against a painted backdrop of wood thus emphasized his veneration was on account of his achievements and service to the nation, rather than simply his social status. Concerted efforts had also been made to source Nelson’s own clothes from his family to dress the figure, along with his various medals, distinctions and the prop of his sword. This emphasis upon original possessions witnessed the wider conviction that such material traces made possible intimate connection between publics and the celebrity individual, as the carefully-clothed bodies at Madame Tussaud’s and the thousands of items of

---


204 Indeed, Horace Walpole had scorned her “insensible pride” on this count, noting she had both “regulated the ceremony of her own burial, and dressed up the waxen figure of herself for Westminster.” This comment was made in a note Walpole added to his correspondence: “To Horace Mann, 14 March 1743,” in The Letters of Horace Walpole, Fourth Earl of Oxford, 16 vols, ed. Helen Paget Toynbee (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), 1:331.

205 Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society [1962], trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 8–9 (9). For an interesting recent study incorporating Habermas’ ideas into a discussion of the emergence of celebrity culture as a distinctive modern formation, see Tuite, Lord Byron and Scandalous Celebrity, esp. 9–10.

206 Bauman, Mortality, 58.

207 Altick used this term of “counterattraction” in suggesting the competitive character of public exhibitions at this time. As he captured this point, the Nelson effigy had “originated as a pawn in ecclesiastical show-business rivalry”. Altick, Shows of London, 436.

208 A complete description of these items of clothing can be found in Harvey and Mortimer, The Funeral Effigies of Westminster Abbey, 182–91.
Napoleoniana later displayed at The Napoleon Museum further attested.\textsuperscript{209} In this early nineteenth-century context, the visual and material practices of displaying monumental bodies readily overlapped with the representational protocols of more popular forms of public exhibition.

\textit{Figure 2.8} Capturing the aura of national greatness: Nelson (1806), by Catherine Andras, Westminster Abbey, London. Wax effigy. © Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

Like this Nelson effigy, Bentham’s Auto-Icon was to be displayed wearing his original clothes and accompanied by various identificatory props. He had thus specified in the detailed instructions left to his executor regarding the production of the monument that Southwood Smith “will cause the skeleton to be clad in one of the suits of black occasionally worn by me.” Beyond thereby dictating his posthumous attire, he had proceeded to direct that “[t]he Body so clothed” was to be placed “together with the Chair and Staff in my later years borne by me,” as part of the installation to be created for display. Insofar as he incorporated these representational protocols from popular visual culture into the design of his project, Bentham can be understood as poaching from these existing practices for the making and displaying of celebrated bodies.

But in appropriating such practices for the design of his Auto-Icon, Bentham was also engaged in transforming them: making these a part of the media practices of self-made immortality. While Nelson’s effigy proved an example of a monumental figure produced via the visual codes of an emergent celebrity culture, it was still an immortal body made retrospectively. Though his family might have been consulted in the pursuit of appropriate material props, this was nonetheless design work carried out by the artist commissioned to make the effigy by the church authorities only after his death. But for Bentham, this was rather a prospective concern: using these material practices for displaying renown to stage the spectacle of his bodily remains. Dressing himself in this way, he sought to produce his own intimacy effects for future publics.

The posthumous self-fashioning enabled by the Auto-Icon differed in a significant sense from the earlier examples of aristocratic self-monumentalizing seen above. This becomes especially clear if we consider the positioning of Bentham’s body, and the instructions he left for how his reassembled and re-clothed skeleton was to be arranged as an object for display. Here he had insisted that:

---

210 Bentham, “Bentham’s Last Will, 30 May 1832,” 8. He had previously produced slight variations on this formulation: specifying in 1830 that the Auto-Icon “is to be dressed in the clothes usually worn by Mr Bentham,” and in an earlier version of his will from 1824 he had requested that it may be “covered with the most decent suit of clothes, not being black or gray, which I may happen to leave at my decease.” Despite such differences these instances still confirm the broader point I am making here, about dictating the clothing of his future posthumous body. Bentham, “Codicil to Bentham’s Will, 29 March and 9 October 1824,” 6; Bentham, “‘B’ Auto-Icon,” 16.

211 Bentham, “Bentham’s Last Will, 30 May 1832,” 8.

212 In using this notion of poaching practices, I gesture towards recent work exploring the operations of a wider Romantic fandom. For a striking example of this, see Corin Throsby, “Byron, Commonplacing and Early Fan Culture,” in Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 227–44. This in turn rests upon scholarly efforts to reevaluate the cultural production of late modern fans: notably, Henry Jenkins, Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture, (New York: Routledge, 1992) and Matt Hills, Fan Cultures (London: Routledge, 2002).
The skeleton he will cause to be put together in such manner as that the whole figure may be seated in a Chair usually occupied by me when living in the attitude in which I am sitting when engaged in thought in the course of time employed in writing[].

Whereas the two Duchesses had accentuated the importance of their coronation robes and the regal authority these implied, Bentham had presented himself in the embodiment of a guise variously reproduced throughout his extensive writings: the industrious individual. Rather than the emphasis upon visualizing social status in these earlier courtly artefacts, he fashioned himself for the future busily at work—“engaged in thought” and “writing”—in much the same way that Nelson’s effigy had been staged against a martial backdrop. In this visual focus upon professional accomplishment, the Auto-Icon was thus a monumental form more closely aligned to the assertive individualism later championed by the likes of Samuel Smiles’s *Self-Help* (1859) than the court pageantry of earlier aristocratic display.

**The bodily monument as DIY design**

As we have seen, the Auto-Icon provided a monumental form in which each individual might represent themselves to posterity. In this sense, it constituted a means of posthumous self-representation that might be anticipated and planned for by the living—in marked contrast to the Romantic posterity principle exemplified here with Hazlitt. Beyond the enactment of self-consecration, Bentham thus also suggested there might be a significant degree of individual choice in the design and physical appearance of this monument. Indeed, in terms of “costumes” he had mentioned the space opened up for self-fashioning: “How shall Auto-Icons be clad?—in their ordinary dress—in their professional—in a fancy dress: of these there would be the option.” This logic of individual choice was similarly at work regarding bodily posture and props, as we saw above with the instance of Bentham’s own carefully-made instructions upon such matters. Not only could every individual become their own monument, they might also seek to clothe it and position it too.

I therefore characterize the Auto-Icon here as a *self-made monument*. I deliberately employ this term to refer simultaneously to the ideological inflection of Bentham’s project and the particular material practices that were deployed in its making. It was thus *self-made* in terms of the wider individualizing discourse of self-reliance and scepticism towards establishment authority mentioned above in relation to Smiles, but it was also literally *self-made* in terms of material production and personal design. As with the wider notion of self-made immortality that this proved an example of, I do not seek to separate and distinguish these two senses of the term.

---

213 “Bentham's Last Will, 30 May 1832,” 8.
Rather, it is a central element of my argument to suggest the degree to which these were necessarily interwoven.

This was especially clear in considering Bentham’s project in relation to existing practices for the making of monumentality. By subverting the established media forms of state immortality, Bentham was putting forward a self-made solution via the corporeal resources of the individual body. Similarly, in appropriating the representational protocols for the making and displaying of great bodies in the broader culture of public display, he enabled the DIY design of the self-made monument. In the operation of the wider regime this exemplified, the principles of the self-made were thereby encoded in the material forms and practices involved in producing these monuments.215

Staging the Auto-Icon

By making the individual body the basis for a system of posthumous representation, Bentham proposed a radical critique of existing arrangements for the production of monuments and claims to immortality. But in outlining how every man might become his own statue, he was not only focused upon thinking through the political economy of the monument as a material artefact. Envisaging in intricate detail how the Auto-Icon was to be put into use as a monumental object for continued commemoration, he was also concerned with the cultural practices he grasped as necessary to sustain posthumous renown into the future.

In a similar vein to the digital workings of DIY celebrity, he therefore sought to dictate both the substantive design of his own monument, and the specific ways in which it was to be made available for and received by particular publics—its distribution strategy and communication channels, in today’s terms. With these various efforts to structure the future practices connected with his own monument Bentham was partaking in a striking new phenomenon of self-commemoration. Like the practices of self-consecration and the making of the self-made monument, this formed an integral part of the new immortality regime I outline here.

Multi-media canonization

The centrality of practices in grasping media change has recently been accentuated, with media historian Lisa Gitelman’s insistence that protocols are at least as important as questions of media form or hardware a key

215 This parity was hinted at in a somewhat unlikely source from the Auto-Icon’s chequered reception history: Herman Melville’s Moby Dick, (1851). Melville had posited that “Bentham’s skeleton […] correctly conveys the idea of a burly-browed utilitarian old gentleman, with all Jeremy’s other leading personal characteristics.” Herman Melville, Moby-Dick: Or, The White Whale [1851] (Boston, Mass.: C.H. Simonds Company, 1892), 253.
example. This contributed to a move within Cultural Memory studies towards exploring the performances via which memory is actively produced and remade over time, as opposed to Pierre Nora’s more static focus on sites of memory and the making of physical monuments as a finite process. There has therefore been a shift in “the idea of canonicity from a more traditional concern with objects and figures of value to the modes of our engagement with them,” to borrow Ann Rigney’s terms.

While pertinent in relation to this earlier research fixation with lieux de mémoire, such a point would not have proved surprising to the early nineteenth-century actors engaged in initiating, directing, and participating in the “cult of commemorations” that emerged in this period. Although these historical actors did not explicitly speak in terms of memory production or communities of practice, they were sharply aware of the role of active participation in the making of public memory.

To take one example from the array of plans for new commemorative pantheons at the turn of the nineteenth century, Major John Cartwright’s scheme for naval commemoration The Trident (1802) suggested that the “mere spectacle” of monumental art, sculpture, and architecture was but “cold and lifeless” when considered apart from the “ceremonies” and “celebrations” that would assemble and energize “a people.” Faced with the “insufficiency” of the physical monument alone, Cartwright devoted an entire chapter of his proposal to the various “games”—i.e. the ceremonies, dances, processions, and proclamations—that should be adopted to realize the commemorative and nation-building potential of his proposed Naval Temple. As he bluntly summarized the thrust of this argument, “Monuments not effective without Festivals.”

Like Cartwright, Bentham was attuned to the significance of practices in the making and sustaining of public memory. He accordingly imagined his Auto-Icon being used in relation to a constellation of commemorative practices: from serving as a site of pilgrimage to being the basis of

---

216 Gitelman defines these protocols in terms of the socially-embedded norms and standards that govern how a particular technology is used at a given time. Lisa Gitelman, Always Already New: Media History and the Data of Culture (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), 7–10.
217 This historiographic argument is borrowed from Ann Rigney, see Rigney, “Embodied communities,” 77.
219 Rigney, “Embodied communities,” 76.
221 (Cartwright), The Trident, xiii. He elaborated upon this point about monuments forming the basis for a “theatre of display” in the introductory chapter to this tract, referring to “high and solemn services, to venerable ceremonies, and captivating celebrations.” (15)
commemorative clubs and an object of public veneration more generally. Especially interesting in this regard were the “Theatrical or Dramatic uses to which Auto-Iconism may be applied” where he outlined the appropriate “stage for the exhibition of an illustrious Auto-Icon.”222 Here he drew upon the established genre of “Dialogues of the Dead” and conceived of a type of theatrical exhibition called “Scenes in the Elysian Fields,” in which conversations between illustrious figures in the history of knowledge would be staged to provide public instruction.223 The topics of intellectual enquiry for these ranged widely, from “On Morals, Ethics, Deontology,” through “On Jurisprudence and Procedure” and “On Legislation,” to “Law as it ought to be” and “Mathematics.”224 While the cast of interlocutors was diverse, the name of Bentham featured liberally among the prestigious figures assembled to impart their wisdom.

This particular use amounted to a public statement of lasting value. By placing his body on stage alongside such already canonized names as Aristotle, Bacon, and Locke, Bentham was asserting a sense of equivalence for the future commemoration of his accomplishments. This was partly a matter of fashioning his own idealized inheritance, broadly akin to the “genealogical or aristocratical” practices of the “opulent families” of the elite he had mocked for their obsessions with displaying and proving “pedigree.”225 In this sense it was a notably self-made form of lineage he was forging among these illustrious heads, one resting upon intellectual effort and achievement rather than biological descent.

It was also a very literal enactment of an elevation to the canon. This was rendered vividly in his description of how these performances were to be structured:

Bentham, suppose for example: One interlocutor in each group advances to him, takes him by the hand, and welcomes him on his arrival, then presents him to the others successively, beginning with the most ancient, the introductor noticing, in regard to each, the principal improvements made by him in that same branch of art or science.226

Taken by the hand and made part of the group, Bentham thereby staged the performance of his future renown. In this sense, these scenes seem to align closely with the notion of self-canonization recently proposed by Michael

222 Bentham, Auto-Icon, 12.
225 Bentham, Auto-Icon, 5.
226 Bentham, Auto-Icon, 13.
Gamer to characterize the new Romantic practices of authors seeking to publish themselves into the prestigious space of an emerging literary canon.\textsuperscript{227}

But what was striking about this example beyond these self-canonizing authors was the degree to which it recycled wider display practices. While the Romantic authors considered by Gamer had pursued Hazlitt’s textual model of canonization, Bentham’s envisioning of posthumous recognition assumed an \textit{embodied} form that consciously borrowed from the workings of popular entertainment. Certainly, in imagining the visual spectacle of dead bodies interacting on stage to perform canonical value, these borrowings were especially practical in character: ranging from the machinations “of strings or wires” to make the monumental figures move on stage, to the actors playing the historical figures who were to be “habited in the costume of the nations and the times.”\textsuperscript{228}

Where this concern with authentic costume pointed towards the spectral backdrop of this proposal—the emerging commercial institution of Madame Tussaud’s travelling collection of waxwork icons—Bentham further discussed several other sources of inspiration from the shows of London for his theatrical conception. This included both the popular lectures of an earlier actor and playwright, George Alexander Stevens’s \textit{Lecture on Heads} (1764), which satirized interest in physiognomy by presenting a series of talking busts (see figure 2.9), and also Michael Faraday’s public exhibitions of science in his lectures at the Royal Institution (from 1825).\textsuperscript{229} Drawing on these practices of performing bodies, Bentham imagined the enactment of his own canonicity in a public setting shaped by the wider display culture of the early nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{230}

\textsuperscript{227} Gamer, \textit{Romanticism, Self-Canonization}.
\textsuperscript{228} Bentham, \textit{Auto-Icon}, 13.
\textsuperscript{229} Bentham, \textit{Auto-Icon}, 8, 13.
\textsuperscript{230} Bentham’s engagement with these practices of popular display was further evident in his reform scheme for a stage mechanism to be used in the education of pauper children in the workhouse. For a discussion of this in relation to his Panopticon project, see Jenny Hughes, “‘Sinking Stages.’ Jeremy Bentham and the Education of Pauper Children,” \textit{Poor Theatres: Theatre, Performance, Poverty}, University of Manchester, 18 July 2014: blog.poortheatres.manchester.ac.uk/sinking-stages-jeremy-bentham-and-the-education-of-pauper-children/ (accessed 22 September 2018).
Figure 2.9 Staging heads:
Etching by Thomas Rowlandson after G.M. Woodward.
CC0 1.0/ Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Bentham therefore combined practices of commercial entertainment and the pursuit of lasting fame in thinking about how his posthumous renown might be sustained. This is significant since it demonstrates the degree to which Hazlitt’s attempt to separate the media workings of “living reputation” and “lasting fame” was just that—an attempt—rather than any statement of fact as to how things actually were. The vision of preserved dead bodies on stage as part of a public performance of canonical value suggests how far celebrity and monument were intertwined in this period.

This overlapping was a wider feature of the public space of the early nineteenth century that belied Hazlitt’s normative efforts to divide these forms of renown. Such a tendency was especially clear at Madame Tussaud’s, where celebratory and commemorative protocols proved mutually constitutive in the displaying of exemplary bodies past and present. In a phrase revealing the porous boundaries between celebrity and monument, the guidebook to Tussaud’s travelling exhibition referred to the desire “to blend utility with amusement.”231 In this popular forum for exhibiting the great and the famous, entertainment and veneration were taken as inseparable. Where commercial ventures could borrow freely from the protocols of the state immortality regime, this worked in the other direction too, as the carefully-clothed wax effigy of Nelson in Westminster Abbey suggested. In similar vein, Bentham looked towards this broad spectrum of celebratory and commemorative protocols in imagining how his Auto-Icon should be used as a future object of value.

Just as with his reworking of the necromantic practices of literary pilgrimage and his clothing of the Auto-Icon, “Scenes in the Elysian Fields” saw Bentham appropriating established practices for the production of famous bodies. In doing so he transformed these and made them part of the emerging media repertoire of self-commemoration. Such practices had formerly been used in the making of immortality as a retrospective activity, where they were engaged in by subsequent actors at a remove from the object of memorial attention. But now they had been adapted to become tools for the staging of commemoration as a prospective concern. Insofar as this involved multi-media performances of canonization we have come some way from the textual anticipation of future readers in Gamer’s self-canonization. Turning to the resources of popular display and celebrity culture to structure the future use of his monument, Bentham exemplified a concern with publicizing posthumous renown outside the pages of the book.

231 Madame Tussaud, *Biographical and Descriptive Sketches of the Whole Length Composition Figures, and Other Works of Art, Forming the Unrivalled Exhibition of Madame Tussaud*, (Bristol: J. Bennett, 1823), 2.
Scripting commemoration

Beyond exploiting the resources of the theatre to imagine the continued use of his monument, Bentham had also taken more concrete steps to determine his future commemoration. If the vision of staged Auto-Icons saw him claim his place among the canon of the “illustrious,” the details in his will sought to dictate precisely how his preserved body was to be made public as an object of commemorative value. In this sense he worked hard to make himself part of future history.

This was evident in the specific arrangements he provided for the physical display of his Auto-Icon. Directing these instructions to Southwood Smith, the appointed creator of his monument, he thus explained that:

[...] for containing the whole apparatus he will cause to be prepared an appropriate box or case and will cause to be engraved in conspicuous characters on a plate to be affixed thereon and also on the labels on the glass cases in which the preparations of the soft parts of my body shall be contained as for example as in the manner used in the case of wine decanters my name at length with the letters ob: followed by the day of my decease[.].232

As a template for the future exhibition of his body as an “apparatus” of memory, there are several points of significance in such a description. In the broadest terms, this specifying of “an appropriate box or case” underscored the degree to which Bentham was insisting upon the museal dimension of his project (figure 2.10). Just as Stephen Bann long since posited the early nineteenth-century emergence of taxidermy as a response to the sense of loss produced by a modern historical consciousness, the Auto-Icon comes into focus as an attempt to counter the fear of being forgotten this entailed.233

Building on this musealizing aspect, we can further note the instructions he prescribed to make the contents of this display object as legible as possible for future viewers. That he commanded his name and dates to be engraved in conspicuous fashion served to accentuate this need for clarity in visual identification. While this might seem but the reiteration of an older tradition of neo-classical simplicity in the making of monumental epitaphs, such as Samuel Johnson’s An Essay upon Epitaphs (1740), they assumed a sharpened significance in an age of historicism. Faced with a heightened awareness of the fragility of the past, and the destructive potential of modern history registered by recent revolutionary upheavals, the impulse to record and preserve one’s name assumed an entirely different urgency in this Romantic period.234 Just like the embalmed body itself, this display case was therefore conceived of as a sort of “recording device” to enable survival.235

234 Cf. Fritzsche, Stranded in the Present.
That Bentham conceived of these inscription practices from the perspective of an historicist concern with archival preservation was evident from the analogy he used with the labelling of “wine decanters.” This was certainly a distinct field for the preservation of value, but it was one in which questions of age, order, legibility, and visibility were of priority in the operation of an effective storage system. In directing that his monument would be framed, named, and dated in this way, Bentham was labelling himself as an object of value, while simultaneously attempting to ensure he remain displayed and recognized as such in the future. By the stipulative force of these efforts at self-definition as an identifiable, datable individual, his named body was thereby to be made into history.

Understood this way, it is apposite that he expressed himself in terms of just engraving in these instructions for the naming and display of his monument. Addressing a sense of the apocalypse in the present, Robert Pogue Harrison recently referred to what happens when history “is perceived to have become a force of erasure rather than of inscription, of assault on the earth rather than humanization of the earth.” Responding to the threat of memorial oblivion in this earlier period, Bentham’s notion of self-inscription proved a concerted effort to counter historical erasure with continued remembrance: laying claim to at least some degree of permanence in the process. In this sense, dictating the display arrangements of the Auto-Icon can be grasped as his attempt to inscribe himself into the physical landscape of future commemoration.

He further sought to buttress his place in this landscape by scripting the particular practices of commemoration to be used in relation to his Auto-Icon. He therefore deployed the testamentary force of his will to dictate its use as an object of commemorative value:

If it should so happen that my previous friends and other Disciples should be disposed to meet together on some day or days of the year for the purpose of commemorating the Founder of the greatest happiness system of morals and legislation my executor will from time to time cause to be conveyed to the room in which they meet the said Box or case with the contents there to be stationed in such part of the room as to the assembled company shall seem meet[.]  

This was the prescription of a notably local form of commemoration. Precisely as with Godwin’s proposal for localized pilgrimages to the burial sites of the

---


237 Bentham, “Bentham’s Last Will, 30 May 1832,” 8. In an earlier draft from 1824 he had even sought to specify the seating arrangements for such occasions, requesting that his Auto-Icon “be placed, on the occasion of any such [commemorative] meeting, at one end of the table, after the manner in which, at a public meeting, a chairman is commonly seated”. Bentham “Codicil to Bentham’s Will, 29 March and 9 October 1824,” 6.
illustrious dead, Bentham eschewed the centralized institutions of the state pantheon in favour of a decentralized solution to the problems posed by posterity. While Godwin had been prepared to delegate practical management of his scheme to the discretion of future generations, Bentham endeavoured to dictate the practices that would sustain his posthumous reputation. He thus sought to control all aspects of this memorializing activity: from commanding the constitution of the publics which were to participate in his commemoration, to the specific setting and operation of these practices, and even the wider function they were to serve—a “beneficial purpose” he had described as “giving increase to that success” of his “labours in the service of mankind.”

To ensure the realization of these plans he commissioned a distinctive set of memorial rings, which bring together the various lines of argument explored here (figure 2.11). On the one hand, these objects were consciously conceived of as secular relics, described in his will as “a ring with my Effigie and some of my hair.” By using this silhouette profile of his image and a strand of his hair, Bentham was exploiting the wider protocols of celebrity and memorial culture to leave an authentic trace of himself to his “Disciples.” On the other hand, he invested these rings with the time capsule-like effects of promoting his recognition posthumously. In the carefully selected list of utilitarian-minded individuals set to receive such a ring, including John Stuart Mill and Francis Place, Bentham was reinforcing the bands of loyalty among those who were to commemorate the “Founder” and further his system.

Figure 2.11 Personalized agents of future commemoration: John Field, “Portrait Silhouette Memorial Ring of Jeremy Bentham” (1822). Photo: Tony Slade © UCL Digital Media.

239 Bentham, “Bentham’s Last Will, 30 May 1832,” 12.
Insofar as Bentham grasped the importance of future practices of commemoration to securing posthumous recognition, his position aligns with the insistence of recent research that memory sites work “only as long as they have the power to mobilize people into investing in them.” Yet while this research has been focused upon examining the forms of collective practices that mobilized various collective identities in larger memorial communities, the notion of self-commemoration considered here provides an example of something notably different. For what an individual like Bentham actively seeking to invest in future legacy pointed towards was a self-made process.

Bentham’s project to make his own immortality was thus far removed from the otherworldly turning away from an unappreciative present in pursuit of future fame exemplified by Bennett’s poetic cult of posterity. Instead of submitting to the uncertainty of future judgement, I have pointed to the Auto-Icon as an example of a more proactive response to the problems posed by posterity in this period, and one that actively exploited the media practices of popular culture. In this context, the energies divested in planning the practices of commemoration to sustain future renown were a vital investment.

Conclusion

In its twenty-first century setting in the main building of University College London, Bentham’s Auto-Icon occupies an ambivalent position in the memorial landscape of the present. A recent Bentham-inspired surveillance project placing a CCTV camera on the Auto-Icon suggested how far this nineteenth-century artefact has become a given in its institutional home. For those in the habit of simply walking past the display case, familiarity has bred indifference; Bentham’s preserved body is now but a mundane part of the surroundings. For those who do stop to stare at this carefully-staged corporeal spectacle, on the other hand, it is not hard to imagine their fascination coinciding with the verdict of that mid-nineteenth-century critic who curtly dismissed it as the work of “that defunct oddity Bentham.” Seen from this perspective the Auto-Icon has long since come to be seen as a monument principally to strangeness: testimony to the whimsical final wishes of an eccentric “oddity”—and thus something entirely apart.

240 Rigney, “Commemorating Burns,” 78.
241 For more details of this Panoptica project, operating under the mantra of “watching you watching Jeremy Bentham,” as well as the archived footage these comments are based upon, see: http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/panoptica/ (accessed September 22 2018).
243 This formulation is that of William Barclay Turnbull, the archivist, whose characterization of Bentham’s Auto-Icon tract as ”the absurdities of his death bed dreams” was referred to above. Cited in Marmoy, “The 'Auto-Icon' of Jeremy Bentham,” 79.
Despite this impression of apartness, though, Bentham’s project was formed in a distinctive historical context: constituting a specific response to a shared problem in the wider memorial politics of the early nineteenth century. I have characterized this context in terms of the workings of consecrative authority and the established protocols for producing immortality in this period. Bentham was accordingly part of a wider preoccupation with critiquing the media operations of the *monumental monopoly* of the newly-consolidated state immortality regime.

But in addressing this posterity problem, he offered a notably different vision of reform for the production of posthumous renown than those proposed by the likes of Godwin and Hazlitt. Rather than trusting in posterity or a locally-governed pantheon, the Auto-Icon incorporated the individualizing and entrepreneurial logic of the *every man his own* manual. Instead of established media forms and conventions, Bentham turned to the DIY production processes of the self-made monument and self-commemoration. In doing so—and by borrowing from the representational protocols of celebrity to make his own monument—his project demonstrated a radical subversion of the wider Romantic divide of the workings of present renown and future fame. Instead of waiting for the chance representations of others, Bentham advocated making one’s own immortality. He thus exemplified *self-made immortality*.

Bentham’s specific vision for commemorative reform and a future of Auto-Iconism was not realized in the longer run. Despite the penchant of various twentieth-century communist regimes for the embalming and public display of departed leaders, his outline for the preserving of bodies as secular icons seems to have had little traction in the broader systems for producing and mediating immortality that have since prevailed. However, a different story emerges if we consider the increasing number of nineteenth-century figures who actively planned to leave some impression of their bodily image behind in monumental form. Bentham’s insistence on the medium of the body for enabling individuals to shape their own monuments can therefore be understood in terms of the wider establishing of a self-made immortality regime. In such a regime, as I have suggested, individuals increasingly came to assume responsibility for brokering their own immortality and making their own material claims upon posthumous renown.

A particularly sharp instance of how bodily display became a key element of this regime was the legacy work of the painter J.M.W. Turner. Though he made no request for the preservation of his physical corpse, Turner had used his will to leave 1,000 £ for a statuary monument to represent himself. 244 In this way, a notably self-made man who had taken particular care to promote and market his own work throughout his career sought to provide for the

---

continued presence of his body into the future, via the financing of a self-made monument. Beyond this specific example there were also wider practices relating to the making of life masks and the displaying of one’s own monumental bust, which proved a broader feature of nineteenth-century memorial culture and evidenced a growing range of individuals investing in leaving behind an image of themselves for posterity. Now we turn our attention to how these material practices of self-made immortality took shape in a markedly different media form: the house museum.
Figure 3.1 Promoting immortality; the House and Museum of Sir John Soane: “View of the Entrance Front.” Soane, *Description* (1835). Lithograph. Photo CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. © Trustees of the British Museum.
“Perpetuating for the public my museum”: Soane’s house museum

Every man his own monument

Bentham was not alone in working to secure immortality. Though few among his contemporaries advocated for the specific measures of the Auto-Icon system, several of the principles underlying this vision had become established in the wider commemorative landscape by the mid-nineteenth century. This was suggested by a whimsical short text appearing in the popular press two decades after Bentham’s death, which both echoed his mantra for monumental reform and pithily expressed the basic problem his own memorial work had been so carefully designed to counter. Published in *Bentley’s Miscellany*, the satirical “Every Man His Own Monument” (1852) took as its starting point the central paradox of the expansion of secular memory that had taken place over the past half-century. Namely, that an increasing focus upon public commemoration and remembrance had also been accompanied by a newly sharpened sense of loss, and a corresponding awareness of all that was not being remembered in the process.

Judging there to be something “provoking” about the prospect of memorial oblivion this gave rise to, this article proceeded to expand upon what was so objectionable in this bleak sense of posthumous fate as but the individual body “crammed into an ugly damp corner anywhere.” In this scenario, it was suggested:

[w]e seem to suffer another loss—a loss after death too, as though by dying we forget the world, but when we are buried, the world returns the compliment and forgets us.\footnote{Postans, “Every Man His Own Monument,” 439.}

What the age of historicism had contributed to, in other words, was a heightened fear of the failure of the workings of public memory. With an ever-expanding range of names and public profiles “immortalised [sic]” in the commemorative sphere, what was to become of the widely-felt will to be remembered in posterity at an individual level?\footnote{Postans, “Every Man His Own Monument,” 439.}

\footnote{Postans, “Every Man His Own Monument,” 438.}
Rather than simply acquiescing in this tendency towards being lost and forgotten, the article’s author insisted that “few men ought to submit to oblivion tamely.” Indeed, adamant that the desire to achieve posthumous fame was universal, the author devoted the remainder of the article to a detailed evaluation of the various monumental strategies that might be employed to stake a case for this sort of renown. Foregrounding the entrepreneurial logic of the every man his own genre discussed in the previous chapter, the text thereby accentuated the imperative within this newly-formed commemorative space for every individual to work towards and make their own claims upon immortality.

A significant concern dictated by this individual responsibility was the selection of which material to invest in the planning of one’s own prospective monument. Like Bentham, the author of this piece had formulated a sharp critique of conventional media forms for making and sustaining lasting renown. Considering the central problem facing the individual claimant upon immortality—i.e. how “to roll down to posterity in safety”—the article suggested the following:

At first a portrait, or a bust, seems a ready mode of adding a few years to the natural term of life, and within the reach of common men. Besides, it gratifies one’s vanity in leaving our fame in the hands of a representative so exclusively personal. We leave our very smile behind us, as well as the cut of our coat and the tie of our neckcloth. But really this is a most deceitful case, and one which is more likely to swindle us out of our time and money than any other mode we know of. There is no security to be had in these sorts of trustees, for while they preserve one’s face, they are apt to forget our name. Go into any picture-dealer’s, or into that “charnel house” for deceased portraits, the marine store-shop, and look at that shadowy host of melancholy individuals in court suits, regimentals, bag wigs, and canonicals, and after that if you trust yourself to canvas or stone you deserve to be forgotten.

In this crowded market of competing memorial objects, it would be naïve simply to rely upon the efficacy of such established “modes” as the portrait or bust. Instead what mattered in this new regime was the seeking of alternative forms and other “sorts of trustees” better to secure posthumous identity. But what offered the best means of doing so? In what particular media might such legacy claims be entrusted, given the many forms of self-representation now available in a public sphere recently transformed by the emerging protocols of celebrity culture? How were the “contracts between individuals and posterity” deemed essential to future commemoration thus to be forged?
The house museum as self-made monument

In this chapter I bring into focus the medium of the house museum as a specific response to this broader posterity problem. Rather than Bentham’s attempts to utilize the individual body, I turn here to consider the monumentalizing affordances of the museum and things for the individual claimant upon immortality. I do so by exploring the memorial project of the architect and Bentham’s contemporary, Sir John Soane (1753–1837), whose home in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London, has been characterized by a recent scholar of the genre as “the first house museum.”

Where Bentham entrusted his claims upon future commemoration to the named display case of the Auto-Icon, Soane had worked tirelessly to establish the eponymous museum that housed his collection, his architectural works and achievements, his archive of personal and business records, and numerous representations of his own image that were to prevent him being forgotten. While the Auto-Icon was literally a product of contemporary embalming techniques, Soane’s use of a constellation of objects and their physical configuration in his house museum suggested a markedly different way of preserving himself for future publics and avoiding memorial oblivion. It is as another means of producing a self-made monument that I approach and analyze his museum in this chapter: characterizing it as a mnemonic technology for framing, embalming, and displaying the traces of an individual life—and thereby a means of countering the uncertain fate of future judgement.

Recent research upon the emergence of the writer’s home as a public institution has shown it was in the nineteenth century that the house came to assume greater significance as a site of identity production. In this period the notion that the house could be used as a “medium of expression” and a technique for producing narratives akin to that of writing fiction became


251 Given their many similarities, it is surprising no sustained scholarly comparison of Bentham’s and Soane’s legacy projects has been attempted. A recent opinion piece gestured towards the potential of such an analysis with the following observation: “Jeremy Bentham, the founder of utilitarianism, and the architect Sir John Soane, who were almost exact contemporaries, though never friends, both ensured for themselves an odd kind of immortality: the former arranged for his body to be preserved for posterity, while the latter conceived an extraordinary physical continuation for his mind.” Harry Eyres, “Sir John Soane’s divine clutter,” Financial Times, 9 April 2011: www.ft.com/content/97ba6954-6166-11e0-a315-00144feab49a (accessed 22 September 2018).

widely established. But while drawing attention to its potential as a means of self-fashioning in relation to contemporary publics, this research also suggested that the writer’s house became a medium of remembrance largely as a process of subsequent memory-making activities thereafter, when later generations came to transform these homes into monuments. Insofar as self-presentation and memorialization were posited as temporally distinct and separate phases, the prevailing analytical schema “from self-fashioning to cultural memory” therefore echoed Hazlitt’s distinction between present and future renown.

It is the degree to which Soane confounded this divide by consciously building a self-made monument that makes him a compelling case for my principal concerns here. For in musealizing his own house as a site of memory he conflated these two processes and worked to fashion his future immortality. Though he may prove an extreme example it was this self-monumentalizing inclination that would gain broader traction over the course of the century, as the practices of making personal museums and archives to preserve the individual life came to be naturalized.

I position and discuss Soane’s project in the wider commemorative frame outlined above. That he sought to create his own monument and that his museum thereby assumed a particularly autobiographical character is entirely commonplace in the substantial body of Soane-centred scholarship long since devoted to his house. But that there was a broader consecrative context in which his attempts to make his own immortality might be positioned is

253 Walter Scott thus made the connection between his historical novels and the “romance of a house” he was making at Abbotsford—a house Anne Rigney described as “an expression of himself in alternative medium.” Rigney, “Abbotsford: Dislocation and Cultural Remembrance,” in Writers’ Houses and the Making of Memory, 80. For discussion of the writer’s house as a “medium of expression,” see the introductory essay to this collection: Hendrix, “Writers’ Houses as Media of Expression and Remembrance,” 1–11.

254 Hendrix conceded that this distinction could occasionally be elided: as in referring, say, to those “interested in erecting monuments to their own creativity, or even inclined to fuse the creative process and the building of monuments to oneself.” But for the most part he maintained this divide between the house “as a technique of self-fashioning and as a mnemonic device.” Hendrix, “Writers’ Houses as Media of Expression and Remembrance,” 5. 6.

255 As a pointed instance of the naturalization of this urge, Westover outlined how Romantic authors became increasingly preoccupied with “their potential fates as tourist attractions.” Westover, Necromanticism, 10.

something only hinted at in such studies. I pursue this line of approach by considering in close detail how he sought to make and ensure the survival of his museum as a self-made monument.

What material practices did Soane borrow, use, and appropriate in making the house museum a means of authoring and displaying his life? What strategies were employed in seeking to preserve this autobiographical frame and guarantee his future commemoration? What was the significance of Soane’s efforts to make and claim his own immortality in the wider context of monumental monopoly and a newly-formed state pantheon? Addressing these questions, I situate Soane’s museum alongside Bentham’s Auto-Icon as a characteristic instance of self-made immortality in this Romantic period.

Soane’s strategies of self-commemoration

The first image on the following page shows one of the drawings made for the Pitt cenotaph Soane was commissioned to design as part of the new National Debt Redemption Office at Old Jewry in 1818 (figure 3.2). With its grand top-lit dome Soane created a theatrical space in which to display Richard Westmacott’s statue of the recently deceased statesman, in what was effectively a “Pitt shrine.” Although partly a personal gesture, since Pitt had been both patron and benefactor to Soane, this was more significantly an act of public memorializing in this new era of state-sponsored immortality.


A further starting point here is Furján’s suggestion that the public dimension of his project “allowed Soane to immortalize himself without reliance on aristocracy or family to revere and carry on his name, and in this he was a surprisingly modern figure, able to create his own monument.” But this pertinent observation was neither elaborate upon nor related to a wider perspective beyond Soane’s museum itself. This was a tension notable throughout her otherwise perceptive discussion of his museum, since she claimed it was “both singular and illustrative in its relation to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century,” yet dwelled decidedly more on its singularity. Furján, Glorious Visions, 8, 157.

258 The characterization of the cenotaph in terms of enshrining is borrowed from John Summerson, “Sir John Soane and the Furniture of Death,” 138.
Figure 3.2 Soane’s design for a cenotaph to enshrine Pitt:
“Further alternative designs for the Pitt Cenotaph, 9–12 April, 1818.”
Watercolour on paper. By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum.
Where Bentham had been scathing of Pitt’s entitlement to lasting renown, Soane was instrumental in providing something of the physical basis for his continued commemoration. In part this reflected Soane’s privileged position at the centre of the metropolitan artistic elite. As architect to the Bank of England and Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy, he had in various ways designed the new public façade of the British state. But beyond

---

building the nation, he had also played a more specific part in the making of the *monumental monopoly* of state immortality established following the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. In providing the material frame for this monument to Pitt produced by his fellow Academician, Westmacott, Soane was performing the role of what Bauman termed the professional immortality broker, *i.e.* “those who mint the coins of lasting value.” 260 As establishment architect he helped build something of the physical infrastructure for this new pantheon of official immortals.

If we turn to the second image, we can see an illustration of another top-lit dome space designed by Soane and one similarly used for the theatrical display of a sculptural monument (figure 3.3). Yet while the portrait bust at the centre of this scene was likewise produced by an RA sculptor (Flaxman), its underlying logic was at a considerable remove from the workings of *monumental monopoly* evident in the Pitt cenotaph. Although deploying the same visual codes of official immortality noted previously in relation to Flaxman’s *Nelson*, the frame of the house museum created substantially different memorial connotations for this particular bust. Rather than the state-sanctioned space of the pantheon, this was Soane’s attempt to stage his own legacy. Via this deployment of objects he sought to make his name durable by his own efforts alone.

Taken from the *Description* he had personally written and coordinated for his museum, this illustration shows the prominent position of Soane’s bust within the physical space he had fashioned to enable his future commemoration. Just like the self-made monument he earlier designed at Dulwich Picture Gallery (1814) for his friends Noel Desenfans and Sir Francis Bourgeois, this was a deliberate attempt to circumvent the operations of the state immortality regime and make public his legacy on his own terms. 261 Instead of trusting in the uncertain future judgement of either the established authorities or an abstract posterity, he turned to his professional skills and built his own claims upon immortality at the permanent site of his house museum. Like Bentham, he therefore responded to this period’s pressing posterity problem by becoming his own immortality broker—*independent from the established institutions of consecrative authority.*

---

261 Indeed, while—or perhaps because—Soane had risen from “humble social origins” to become an establishment figure, he maintained an antagonistic relationship with institutional authority throughout his career. This was most sharply apparent in the bitter conflict he had become embroiled in with his colleagues at the Royal Academy, concerning critical comments Soane made about a fellow Academician’s work in his Professorial lectures in 1810. Though eventually resolved this feud saw Soane suspend his lectures until 1813, and pointed more broadly towards the defiant notion of individualism he adhered to when presented with the Academy’s assumed monopoly over critical judgement. There was thus a significant parallel between the way in which Soane engaged with these institutions during his professional career, and his approach towards making his own immortality. For a comprehensive account of Soane’s controversy with the RA, see David Watkin, *Sir John Soane: Enlightenment Thought and the Royal Academy Lectures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 65–97 (66).
Placing an image of himself in a privileged position in his self-titled museum, Soane’s project was a striking demonstration of the commemorative logic with which we opened this chapter: proving the embodiment of an individual claim to immortality. But how did he seek to make this gesture permanent and secure the survival of his museum? What specific steps did he take to ensure it would be used as he had envisioned? I address these questions by highlighting the various strategies pursued by Soane in directing and staging his own prospective commemoration. In the close attention paid to the protocols of his house’s future operation as a self-made monument, I argue that Soane was engaged in pointed practices of self-commemoration.

The archive as DIY commemoration

“Put thy house in order for thou shalt surely Die.” He recorded these stern words in his diary in March 1831, in a pertinent formulation capturing the imperative to shape and order the material traces of legacy that was evident throughout his museum project. In this particular diary entrance, he was especially concerned with editing and removal—“sorting and destroying papers!” as he phrased it—though he was thereby just as preoccupied with what he would leave behind.²⁶² For what all this memorial labour invested in the fashioning of his museum as a personal archive suggested was that Soane was acutely conscious in using the things of his life to tell a particular story about himself to future publics.

But this will to form the appropriate version of himself for posterity via his papers, house and possessions was not simply a matter of self-portraiture per se—of leaving behind a self-image to be pieced together and consumed by later visitors to the museum.²⁶³ He had also employed these physical items in actively seeking future publicity for himself and his house. Shortly before his death he had therefore created what would later be characterized as “time capsules”: that is, three sealed repositories of archival materials variously locked away in his dressing room, drawers, and bathtub (see figure 3.4), complete with clear and binding instructions that they were not to be opened until 1866, 1886, and 1896—all on the anniversary of his wife’s death.²⁶⁴ When these later came to be opened by the museum’s curator in accordance with these instructions, the results were largely puzzling; their contents a

²⁶² Soane’s personal diary, March 31, 1831. SM Archive SNB 205.
curious mixture of Soane’s personal records, correspondence, and various other items of paper miscellanea widely circulating in this period. Besides such papers these repositories also included a diverse collection of objects, from false teeth and lottery tickets to an inkstand and a lock of hair belonging to a certain Mrs. Davison. These had all been packed together in the storage spaces of the repositories with but little “regard to order or classification,” to use the terms of the curator’s report detailing these contents.

Figure 3.4 Innovative archiving; Soane’s bathtub as time capsule: Author’s photo. By courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum.

What was Soane doing in so assiduously compiling such an apparently random and disordered set of things in these time capsules? Why did he put such “worthless” items together in this way and dictate that they be opened and made public in such a manner? Developing Susan Palmer’s characterization of this as an attempt to exert “control from beyond the grave,” I suggest these repositories were a carefully calculated strategy to capture and

265 For more specific details about the contents of these repositories, as well as a useful discussion, see Susan Palmer, “The Mystery of the Sealed Repositories,” in Death and Memory: Soane and the Architecture of Legacy (London: Pimpernel Press, 2015), 39–47.
266 SM Archives Curatorial Papers Bonomi Box 1/ List of items in sealed receptacle, 1866.
267 This is how the contents had been characterized by Joseph Bonomi, the curator who opened this first capsule in 1866: SM Archives Curatorial Papers Bonomi Box 1/ List of items in sealed receptacle, 1866.
engage the commemorative attention of the future. By scripting the future opening of these archival holdings, Soane was effectively arranging posthumous publicity events for his museum in much the same way he had promoted it during his lifetime. And by making such specific demands about the circumstances in which the repositories were to be opened he was seeking, in much the same way Bentham did with his Auto-Icon, to shape the conditions of his posthumous reception. Insofar as the material traces of his life to be unveiled at these events so obviously sought to prompt speculation about possible meaning, Soane’s archival games here implicated these future publics in the interpretation of this life.

Soane thus deployed these sealed repositories as part of a promotional strategy to market his museum and help secure his own niche in the commemorative space of the future—thirty, fifty, and sixty years after he had enclosed their diverse contents. As a means of safeguarding and promoting his posthumous renown, this was broadly characteristic of the self-monumentalizing logic underpinning his museum project as a whole. On the one hand, in terms of the labour and the exertions he had invested in creating and using his archival resources so, this was an entrepreneurial approach to the making of immortality: one in line with his business acumen and energies as a self-made man, and coalescent with the DIY ethos of monument-making we witnessed previously in Bentham’s Auto-Icon project. On the other hand, if connected to this resourcefulness, in his concerted use of paper miscellanea and the paraphernalia of everyday life as part of these practices, Soane pointed to the use of surprising new media forms in the attempt to ensure posthumous recognition.

The instance of these repositories constitutes a pertinent frame with which to make sense of Soane’s wider project, as we will see over the course of this chapter. In authoring—and authorizing—the museum to make such future interventions on behalf of his prospective immortality, he was overturning Hazlitt’s insistence that the disinterested pursuit of fame was the sole “passport to immortality.” Using the materials readily to hand Soane instead worked to fashion a self-issued passport to future renown.

---

268 Palmer, “The Mystery of the Sealed Repositories,” 45. Thomas has also interpreted these capsules as deliberate acts of “archival sabotage,” insofar as the studied miscellany of their contents disrupts the conventional order of the public museum and its logic of meaning-making and ascription: Thomas, “A strange and mixed assemblage.”

269 Most notably via the series of evenings he hosted in 1825 to showcase his acquisition of the Belzoni sarcophagus, an event which saw Soane exploiting an ancient monument as a means of buttressing present celebrity. For an account of these three events, see Helen Dorey, “Sir John Soane’s Acquisition of the Sarcophagus of Seti I,” The Georgian Group Journal (1991): 26–35.

Legislation to secure future renown

These time capsules show how Soane used his archival resources as a basis for posthumous promotion. But the efficacy of such a strategy was still dependent upon the continued existence of his house museum as a public site. Where he produced these archives as part of his final efforts to “put his house in order” and shape future commemoration, he had been more generally preoccupied with identifying an appropriate means of sealing in the contents of his collection and controlling how his museum was to be received by posterity. As we will see, the legislative strategy pursued by Soane to preserve the museum and its contents was a particularly pointed one at a time when self-made immortality was emerging as a subversive response to the centralized instance of the state pantheon.

He had announced his plans to bequeath his house and collection to the nation as a concluding note to his final Royal Academy lecture in 1833.271 Here he stated that the “sanction” of parliament was necessary for his intention “of perpetuating for the public my museum and library in Lincoln’s Inn Fields.” Describing his museum in terms that underlined its self-made character—as “a collection of works of art which has not been formed without exertion or obtained without expense”—Soane outlined the process that would transform it into a public space. Once the Bill had been passed to make possible this bequest, he explained, a transfer of property would take place from the individual to the nation:

> When this is accomplished, that collection which is now my absolute property, I shall hold only as a trustee for the country; and when I can no longer give my personal care to its protection and enlargement, that duty will devolve on others who will exercise this trust under such regulations as will ensure the perpetuation of those national advantages to the promotion of which I have dedicated a large portion of an active and anxious life.272

What it enabled him to do, in other words, was personally finance the “perpetuation” of the museum he had so painstakingly built to comprise a monument to his own life, works and accomplishments. The specific terms of the Act therefore came to include a focus upon the management of Soane’s investment of “Thirty Thousand Pounds” to endow the museum, as well as a range of practical conditions for the future operations of the house as a public institution.273

---

271 He had first begun exploring this question with his legal adviser as early as 1824. Cf. Darley, *John Soane*, 300–01.
272 Soane, “Lecture XII” [closing address, read by RA secretary Mr Howard, 21 March 1833], in *Sir John Soane: Enlightenment Thought and the Royal Academy Lectures*, 667.
273 An Act for settling and preserving Sir John Soane’s Museum, Library, and Works of Art, in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, in the County of Middlesex, for the Benefit of the Public, and for establishing a sufficient Endowment for the due Maintenance of the same, [20 April 1833],
Soane thereby used this legislation to secure the posthumous survival of his house museum. While the parliamentary debates before the passing of the Act focused upon whether this was a benevolent gift to the nation (as Soane and his supporters claimed) or an unnatural subversion of the laws of inheritance (as his son maintained), I pursue an alternative reading. Viewed in terms of the political economy of immortality this appears rather a particularly DIY form of investment in future legacy.

The first point supporting this is that Soane was using part of his own considerable fortune to pay for the continued existence of his self-made monument. This is entirely obvious yet worth highlighting, since it constitutes the central thrust of what he was doing in the various work, planning, and energies committed towards securing this legislation. In this sense he was effectively employing his wealth to pay for the possibility of future commemoration—insofar as what was to be “preserved and maintained” with his museum was the dense web of memorial affiliation and claims to achievement he had forged throughout the house. In terms of what Jay Winter has recently characterized as the “business of remembering,” it was thus a vivid example of an entrepreneurial attempt to acquire lasting renown: a self-made man bidding to buy his own public legacy.

The second, related point is that Soane sought to buttress the claims to lasting value embodied in his museum via the consecrative authority of the establishment. The introductory text of the Act suggested this was a matter of necessity—that he would be “unable, without the aid of Parliament, to carry … his intentions into effect”—and in a sense this was correct (legally to be able to establish such a trust). But the broader effect of this legislation was not only that Soane had managed to attain the assent of “the King’s most excellent Majesty, … the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled” for the preservation of his museum, but also that both the RA and parliament were obliged to play a continued part in overseeing the

---


house’s future functioning as a public institution. What Soane had accomplished, in short, was the appropriation of the authority of the central institutions of the official immortality regime to sustain his own claims to lasting renown.

Although this State had been relatively disinclined to acknowledge Soane’s public services as an architect while he was alive, it had now been cajoled into standing as future guarantor for his individual immortality. It was therefore hardly surprising he proclaimed that “the hour which records this Assent will be amongst the happiest of my life.” For this Act becoming law meant he could rest assured that the self-made monument he had so carefully crafted was to be preserved—its survival underwritten by the administrative powers of the state.

Rather than simply bequeathing a gift to the nation, Soane’s acquiring of parliamentary assent for his museum becomes legible as a calculated act to safeguard legacy and reinforce his claims upon future commemoration. Insofar as he borrowed from the authority of the state to insist that his publicly-instituted legacy was to be on an individual basis—upheld upon his terms—this strategy to preserve his museum was closely aligned with the individualist logic embodied by Bentham’s Auto-Icon.

**Keeping things together**

Employing this legislative strategy Soane was not simply concerned with the future ownership of his house per se. In his attempts to exert control over the posthumous reception of his self-made monument he also sought to preserve the exact details of his collection and museal vision in situ. While this would later become a generic feature of the house museum, this demand for precise

---

276 In terms of Parliament’s proposed future involvement the Act dictated that the Trustees were to be held accountable, and that accounts of the Museum were to be presented to both Houses of Parliament “annually.” The Royal Academy, on the other hand, was made responsible for “the appointment of new or future Curators” for the Museum. *An Act for settling and preserving Sir John Soane’s Museum*, 106, 110.

277 When Soane was eventually knighted in 1831 this was perceived as an embarrassingly belated recognition. This is suggested by the response of Soane’s solicitor, John Bicknell, to this announcement: “I like half justice better than none at all and therefore I was pleased to see that the King had done you even half, and tardy, justice.” Cited in Darley, *John Soane*, 299.

278 His claim to legacy via his own efforts and machinations had thereby been successfully transformed into a public institution, as wrt large in the lawbook of the nation. This point was also made in a perceptive article by Timothy Hyde, who noted that “[t]he law requires that Sir John Soane be famous […] This regulation compels the conservation of the artefacts of Soane’s career.” Timothy Hyde, “Some Evidence of Libel, Criticism, and Publicity in the Architectural Career of Sir John Soane,” *Perspecta* 37 (2005): 144.

preservation emerged in very specific circumstances that help make sense of Soane’s efforts to keep the things of his project together.\textsuperscript{280}

So why labour to ensure the placement of his collection remain untouched in posterity? To grasp this we need first consider how Soane conceived of his museum as a creative project. This is most readily captured in the introduction of his final \textit{Description} (1835), where he had referred to:

\begin{quote}
[...] the natural desire of leaving these works of Art subject as little as possible to the chance of their being removed from the positions relatively assigned to them; they having been arranged as studies for my own mind[.]
\end{quote}\textsuperscript{281}

Beyond suggesting it as a means of countering the destructive risk posed by “chance,” this is striking for its characterization of the museum’s formation as the result of studies of Soane’s mind. This connects to the associative museal paradigm of the virtuoso collector, with Soane casting himself in the Prospero-like role of director pulling the strings; variously assigning objects their rightful places throughout the house and investing them with meaning in the process.\textsuperscript{282} Insofar as what mattered in such a museum was not so much the substantive contents of the collection but the wider creative vision of the founding-master that held it together, this was a representational system that implied a very particular notion of authorship.\textsuperscript{283} In the sense that their authors were engaged in fashioning an overarching whole from an assemblage of things, there are clear parallels between these personal museums and other forms of intellectual property in this period such as the literary work.\textsuperscript{284}

Like the emerging institution of authorship, a central problem for the individual collector was what would happen to this vision once its creator was no longer alive to defend it.\textsuperscript{285} While poets such as Wordsworth and Southey had advocated for perpetual copyright as a means of protecting “posthumous remuneration” from commercial publishers, the early nineteenth-century

\begin{footnotes}
\item[280] For a recent historical overview of this genre, see Linda Young, \textit{Historic House Museums in the United States and the United Kingdom: A History} (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).
\item[282] As Clive Wainwright explained of this type of collection more generally, “each object fitted into the collector’s mental model of his collection [...] His brain alone stored the invisible yet vital cross-references that linked one object or group of objects with one another.” Clive Wainwright, \textit{The Romantic Interior: The British Collector at Home 1750–1850} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 8.
\item[283] This much was suggested by the very naming conventions used for such museums, in which the name of the creator loomed large (e.g. Sir John Soane’s museum).
\item[284] Indeed, in broad terms Bentham had raised the question of property rights in relation to the self-made monument. With the emergence of Auto-Iconism, he suggested, “[a] spick and span new subject-matter of property is brought for the first time into existence.” Bentham, \textit{Auto-Icon}, 10–11.
\item[285] For a useful discussion of this issue of copyright in perpetuity, see Bennett, \textit{Romantic Poets}, 41–42.
\end{footnotes}
personal museum was faced with a markedly different sort of threat: the emergence of the national museum as an authoritative site of display in this period.

This issue had been sharply raised by the example of Charles Townley, whose collection had been subsumed into that of the British Museum upon his death in 1805.\(^{286}\) It had similarly been a concern in the shaping of that earlier self-made monument Soane worked upon: the Dulwich Picture Gallery. Here Sir Francis Bourgeois had explicitly rejected bequeathing his (and Noel Desenfans’s) pictures to the British Museum on anti-establishment grounds. Having been shown the Museum’s “rules,” Bourgeois concluded that:

> [...] the Governors exercised an Aristocracy which He did not approve of, in the right of putting up, & taking down, & getting rid of any thing they might choose, for instance he said they have the right of disposing a picture for a stove.\(^{287}\)

It was to avoid such a fate and ensure that the collection “go down whole to Posterity” that the Dulwich project had been initiated.\(^{288}\) In a revealing expression of the anti-monopolistic inclinations of a self-made immortality regime, the arbitrary curatorial impulses of an aristocratically-governed national museum were unfavourably contrasted with the individual will to determine such matters.

This desire to retain curatorial control and the spectral fear of the British Museum with which it was linked was also central for the framing of Soane’s bequest. As both the parliamentary debates concerning his Bill and the eventual text of the legislation demonstrate, the option of relocating his collection to the British Museum as “The Soane Collection” was widely discussed as an alternative option for it to be “separately and distinctly preserved.”\(^{289}\) His response to this was apparent in the evidence he provided to gauge his soundness of mind in making his bequest. Here Soane expressed his principal fears as to the future of his collection: that either the British

\(^{286}\) The example of Townley, and the distinctive losses of meaning attendant upon the transferal of an individual collection to the institutional and art-historical narrative frame of the British Museum, is perceptively discussed by Wolfgang Ernst: Ernst, “Frames at Work: Museological Imagination and Historical Discourse in Neoclassical Britain,” *The Art Bulletin* 75:3 (1999): 495–497.


\(^{288}\) Bourgeois had further insisted that a principal aim for the Gallery had been that “if Mr Desenfans [his co-bequeather] could put his Head out of the Grave He might be able to see them [ie the collection of pictures] as much as possible in the same state as he left them in.” Allen, “The Last Testament of Sir Francis Bourgeois.”

\(^{289}\) After careful discussion in the Commons, it was agreed that this alternative would be inserted as a *voluntary* clause in the text of the Act. It was to be left, as Lord John Russell insisted, “to the discretion of Sir John Soane.” *An Act for settling and preserving Sir John Soane’s Museum*, 110; see also “Sir John Soane’s Museum,” HC Deb 1st April 1833.
Museum would but exhibit the best of his pictures and place the rest in storage, or that his most prized items would be bought by prestigious foreign collectors such as the Emperor of Russia and dispersed abroad.\footnote{As Darley phrased it, this fear that his collection be scattered abroad encompassed “the Belzoni sarcophagus to the Emperor of Russia, his Hogarths to the King of Holland and his coins to the King of Bavaria.” Darley, \textit{John Soane}, 302, 345.}

It was amidst these varying pressures threatening the disbanding of his collection—and the disintegration of identity this seemed to entail—that Soane demanded the integrity of his museum be preserved.\footnote{In a revealing illustration of the connection Soane made between the creative vision of a personal collection and the notion of intellectual property, he had rejected taking over ownership of the collections of John Saunders and John Sainsbury since both came with their own posterity principle attached—i.e. the condition that these collections remain connected with the name of the original collector. This suggests both that such bequeathing practices were becoming more widespread, and that anxieties about competing claims existed within the collecting space of this self-made regime. Cf. Susan Feinberg Millenson, \textit{Sir John Soane’s Museum} (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987), 86–88.} A principal condition of the state-sanctioned bequest was therefore that the “Museum and Library and Works of Art should be kept together,” and that the:

\[
[...]
\text{Trustees and their successors shall not (except in case of absolute necessity) suffer the arrangements in which the said Museum or Collection or Library shall respectively be left by the said Sir John Soane at the time of his decease to be altered.}\footnote{An Act for settling and preserving \textit{Sir John Soane’s Museum}, 102.}
\]

What this unaltered clause provided was the time capsule effect of leaving things exactly as Soane had intended. Rather than being “scattered when their authors died” or “individually lost, from their union with the national one”—as his friend Barbara Hofland had regretted the disappearance of other such museums—Soane’s legal and financial strategy meant he retained authorial control over the vision his house would present to posterity.\footnote{B.H. in, Soane, \textit{Description} (1835), 46.}

This clause thereby sealed the entire contents of the museum in much the same way Bentham had embalmed his body to preserve his distinctive individual identity. Instead of being subsumed into the markedly different museal paradigm of history in the state museum, Soane exploited the authority of the state to protect the individual vision he had authored in his collection. Making it a matter of law that his vision be preserved, this effectively transformed the house into a privileged form of personal archive; one in which \textit{his} curatorial logic created meaning and order, rather than that of the state or anyone else. He thus sought to make himself into history on his own terms.
Dictating terms, directing space

It was not only via the financial aspect of his bequest and this unaltered clause that Soane sought to control the future use made of his museum as monument. He further engaged in a range of planning activities geared towards directing how this material creation of his “studies for his own mind” was to be experienced, received, and interpreted by future publics. Indeed, both the extent and the depth of these plans were broadly indicative of the urgency with which he attempted to dictate the practices of his future commemoration.

Beyond the clause mentioned above, Soane’s Act made many practical commands about how the physical condition of his house was to be preserved as the basis for its operation as a public institution. This covered such concerns as might have been expected from a professional architect, such as the maintaining of “a fund … for the purposes of keeping the said house, offices, and premises comprising the said Museum in repair.” But it also included a preoccupation with determining the survival of the site as an integrated whole. This was evident in the security-oriented terms governing the conduct of its future staff. Here he dictated that the curator “shall always be in attendance … on such days as the said house and Museum shall be open for public inspection.”

If the staff were to assume a protective role against outside threats to the collection, precautions were similarly taken to safeguard the museum from potential abuse at the hands of these protectors. A condition of employment for the curator was therefore the provision of a “One Thousand Pounds” bond beforehand, to guarantee that “no part of the said Museum … or offices shall be taken away from the said Museum, or lost or embezzled.” Moreover, as a further means of insuring the integrity of the collection, each new curator was to complete and submit to the Trustees within a month of starting their employment the following task:

[…] [to] make out and subscribe with his own name a full and complete catalogue or schedule of all such Books, Manuscripts, Prints, Drawings, Pictures, Models, and various Works of Art, and other things, as shall be placed under his charge[.]

In this carefully crafted system of accountability, Soane lay a framework to ensure that his unaltered clause would be practically maintained. In doing so, he worked to protect the authorial vision of his collection.

A similar claim can be made in relation to the institutional arrangements made to shape the future public visiting experience of the museum. Here Soane had used the legislation to provide specific details about how his

294 Another such instance was the allocation of financing towards “the expense of insuring against damage by fire.” An Act for settling and preserving Sir John Soane’s Museum, 104.
295 An Act for settling and preserving Sir John Soane’s Museum, 104.
296 An Act for settling and preserving Sir John Soane’s Museum, 105.
collection was to be made publicly available. The Act stated that “free access”
to the house was to be given “at least on two days in every week throughout
the months of April, May, and June,” while “Amateurs and Students in
Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture” were to be granted admission at the
discretion of the Trustees “for consulting and inspecting and benefiting by the
said Collection.”

Insofar as he sought to control access to the museum Soane was concerned
with its future use as a public institution at the level of physical property. He
attempted to control, in other words, precisely who could enter the house, at
what times they might do so, and upon what basis, in much the same way
Bentham had left instructions for the commemorative uses to be made of his
Auto-Icon. In this sense he was directing his future commemoration at a very
practical level.

But in addition to physical access, Soane also made efforts to direct the
spatial experience and the interpretation of his collection on behalf of these
prospective publics. For just as he had dictated that future curators were to
make a catalogue of the museum’s contents, he had himself made successive
efforts textually to protect and preserve his collection in the various
Descriptions he had written in 1830, 1832 and 1835. These particular texts
can be understood in precisely the same way as these prospective future
catalogues: as the provision of an authoritative inventory of the collection, and
a blueprint of the specific constellation of display arrangements that Soane
wished preserved in the space of the house museum.

But they also did much more than this. Rather than simply describing the
material whole of the museum as a reference document for posterity, Soane’s
Descriptions served in significant ways to produce his museum as an entity
for public participation. The texts thus outlined an ideal route through the
house, as John Elsner has suggested, “taking the reader on a carefully
orchestrated journey that is in itself an argument for the significance of
Soane’s collection as a distinct entity.” His Description thereby served as a
means of guiding the visitor’s attention to particular aspects of the museum
and shaping interpretation of these features. As he had expressed this function
in the opening outline of his ambitions to be a “useful guide to those who visit
the House and Museum”:

[...] it is obvious, that in so extensive and various a Collection, some objects
of great interest may require that the eye should be expressly directed at them.

297 An Act for settling and preserving Sir John Soane’s Museum, 102.
298 For a detailed recent analysis of these guides, see Danielle S. Willkens, “Reading Words and
Images in the Description(s) of Sir John Soane’s Museum,” Architectural Histories 4:1 (2016):
1–22.
Without such guidance, many of the smaller Models and Sculptures might be overlooked, by those who will delight in tracing the happy conception and delicate workmanship, when thus led to them as subjects for consideration.\textsuperscript{300}

The curatorial text therefore performed a \textit{generative} function in relation to the future reception of the collection. For not only did he try to “lead” his future publics to particular parts of his museum “for consideration,” he also sought to dictate just which of these parts were to be deemed as “objects of great interest.”\textsuperscript{301}

In attempting to control the future reception of his museum in this way, Soane was seeking to perpetuate his role as virtuoso collector and assume posthumous curatorial authority in the dictating of meaning throughout his house. In a museum founded upon and held together by his personal vision, it was to be \textit{his} voice that instructed and guided his future visitors; \textit{his} focusing of their attention to the collection which weaved together his personal memorial narratives; \textit{his} frame of understanding that was to predominate, over a collection that, as we will shortly see, made special efforts to foreground and monumentalize \textit{his} architectural output and achievements.

While the legislative Act directed the physical framework for his museum’s future survival, it was the final 1835 \textit{Description} that was to direct and preserve the authoritative interpretation of his creation. Here it is apposite for us to note, finally, that it was Soane’s dissatisfaction with John Britton’s earlier attempt (1827) to provide a “descriptive account” for his museum that prompted him to pen his own version of a museum guide: a text whose DIY credentials were boldly proclaimed on its very title page, “\textit{written by himself.”}\textsuperscript{302} Refusing to be controlled and curated by someone else, he therefore worked to write his own story of the collection—and paid to produce and distribute this himself.

In this sense, Soane’s \textit{Description} was characteristic of the wider set of strategies I have examined in this section as instances of \textit{self-commemoration}. Through pursuing parliamentary protection, financing its future existence as a public institution, directing curatorial control over its use and contents, and

\textsuperscript{300} Soane, “Exordium,” \textit{Description} (1835), vii.

\textsuperscript{301} Here we can note the instances throughout the \textit{Description} where Soane’s curatorial voice directed attention to the various representations of his own work on display in the museum. In the Picture Room he pointed out the Gandy composite painting of his work, \textit{Architectural Visions of Early Fancy}, which he described as “wild effusions of a mind glowing with an ardent and enthusiastic desire to attain professional distinction, in the gay morning of youth.” He then puffed these works by including reference to the public attention they had received: “Some of the buildings represented by these views have been noticed in various critical works: among which, the ‘Pursuits of literature’ has the following … [etc].” Soane thus used this text not only to shape interpretation of his work but also to monumentalize its critical recognition. Soane, \textit{Description} (1835), 18.

\textsuperscript{302} i.e. John Britton, \textit{The Union of Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting} (London: Burton Street, 1827); for Soane’s utterance framing his text: Soane, \textit{Description} (1835), title page (italics added).
promoting it via the staging of archival revelations, Soane invested his entrepreneurial energies in securing the survival of his personal museum. In working to direct his legacy in such a DIY manner, he was bridging the temporal gap between self-fashioning in the present and the practices of commemoration necessary to sustain his renown in the future. While Hazlitt and subsequent research has tended to insist these were distinct concerns, Soane—like Bentham—made considerable efforts towards controlling the future use to be made of his self-made monument. Making these efforts in a wider consecrative context characterized by the exclusive hierarchy of monumental monopoly and a sharp awareness of the uncertain judgement of posterity, Soane’s attempts to ensure his future commemoration thus exemplified the imperatives of self-made immortality.

Self-collecting and the self-made archive

Like Bentham, Soane had demonstrated a sharp awareness of the significance of practices for sustaining commemorative attention in the future. In this sense, and following the parallel with the online workings of DIY celebrity today, he sought to exert control over how his house museum was to be made available for and received by future publics. He therefore defined the communication channels for the media content he had so carefully created with his museum project. But what was this substantive content? What was it more specifically he was working to preserve and communicate to these publics as the basis of his future commemoration? How did he design his house museum to serve as his own monument?

I approach these questions in the following part of this chapter by considering the media affordances of the house museum as a monumental form. While bringing into focus the contents of Soane’s collection, I direct my attention principally upon the particular ways he was putting together and framing this as an object for future display. Opening with a discussion of how he exhibited his own works as an integral part of his museum, I use this archival logic of self-collecting as a lens to make sense of the various books of newspaper clippings Soane had worked to compile. While apparently at a considerable remove in terms of material and status, I argue both these forms—the painting on display, the press clipping pasted in a book—provide significant instances of Soane’s strategies of self-monumentalizing. Through making his museum in this way, he was attempting to preserve his professional achievements for future publics.

Self-collection as display strategy

The museum’s function as a self-made monument was clear from the presence of his architectural works throughout the house. While the collection’s autobiographical basis is obvious and has been widely-noted in previous studies, this was not simply a matter of fashioning narratives of personal
In the close attention paid to how his own works were to be positioned and displayed within the wider context of the museum, Soane was also intensely preoccupied with establishing an appropriate—and permanent—frame for the continued existence of his architectural creations. Just as techniques of taxidermy emerged around this time for the preserving of exact specimens from the natural world, Soane used his house museum as a technology to preserve his professional output. Curating and framing his work in this way, he sought to ensure the possibility of its future reception.

As a site structured according to this specific principle of self-collection, the museum incorporated a wide assembly of Soane’s architecture in various media forms. This ranged from the model of the proposal for the Board of Trade and Privy Council Offices above the fireplace in the Dining Room, to the paintings of his works on show throughout the house, and the many of his drawings and sketches in the office archives. Perhaps most striking among these was the composite painting by his draughtsman, J.M. Gandy: *Public and Private Buildings Executed by Sir John Soane between 1780 and 1815* (1818). Here Gandy had produced an imaginary assemblage of the hundred or so commissions Soane was most proud of from this thirty-five year period of his career (figure 3.5). In a manner broadly similar to the anthologizing effects of the museum as a whole, this image compiled and depicted his architectural creations within a singular frame, effectively hoarding and stockpiling these achievements in a single Soane-shaped space.

---

303 For an interesting recent discussion that positions the self-fashioning of Soane’s museum in the wider Romantic context she characterizes as “the portraitive mode”, see Elizabeth A. Fay, *Fashioning Faces: The Portraitive Mode in British Romanticism* (Hanover and London: University of New Hampshire Press, 2010), 182–89.


305 This notion of “self-collection” has recently been used by Michael Gamer, who examined it exclusively as a “literary activity.” I discuss the example of Soane here in relation to Gamer’s analysis below (128). Gamer, *Romanticism, Self-Canonization*, 20–29.
Figure 3.5 Resourceful self-collecting; Soane’s oeuvre encased and memorialized: Joseph Michael Gandy, *Public and Private Buildings Executed by Sir John Soane between 1780 and 1815* (1818). Watercolour on paper. © Sir John Soane’s Museum.
In collecting together Soane’s designs, this form of representation exploited the earlier Italian genre of *capriccio* that had integrated elements of architectural fantasy to depict existing buildings and works. A notable producer of such paintings whose work also featured in Soane’s collection was Giovanni Paolo Panini (1691–1765). Panini’s pair of works *Ancient Rome* and *Modern Rome* (1757) made a visual anthology of the city’s most famous monuments by re-collecting these in the imagined gallery space of a painting. Extracting these various objects of veneration from their original contexts and compiling them as a series of paintings within a grandiose frame, Panini re-fashioned these into a distinctive and cohesive whole. This genre thereby made it possible for the celebrated architectural and artistic sites of the city to be brought together and made public in new ways.

But it did so for very particular publics. The specific provenance of Panini’s works here makes clear the distinct ideological inflections of this new trend in making and acquiring such mobile monuments. Commissioned by the departing French ambassador, the duc de Choiseul, these pictures were part of an expanding market for Grand Tour souvenirs among the eighteenth-century dilettanti. This was not simply a matter of bringing home various material traces of Rome, but also a question of principally young and aristocratic men seeking to insert *themselves* into this experience of tourism. Elizabeth A. Fay thus referred to the Grand Tour portrait as “the young gentleman’s certificate of taste”: something to be taken home and proudly displayed as proof of prestige. This helps to explain the presence in Panini’s painting of various well-attired young men in camaraderie among the various works (figure 3.6).

It further casts light upon the depiction of the *virtuoso* collector Charles Townley painted by Johan Zoffany (1782), insofar as Townley and his acquaintances were portrayed surrounded by the prestigious items of his collection (figure 3.7). In this sense, these paintings of imaginary museums served as tools of elite distinction and self-fashioning, providing a means of representation for the gentleman connoisseur that allowed him to be placed on show among the objects of his desire.

---

306 For the wider history of this genre, see the essays in Lucien Steil (ed.), *The Architectural Capriccio: Memory, Fantasy and Invention* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

307 Ernst provides an insightful discussion of the media-historical workings of this genre of the “imaginary museum”: Ernst, “Frames at Work,” 491–92.

Figure 3.6 Imaginary museums of value:
Giovanni Paolo Panini, Modern Rome (1757). Oil on canvas.
CC0 1.0/ Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Figure 3.7 Elite self-collection: Johan Zoffany, *Charles Townley in his Library* (1782). Web Gallery of Art. CC-PD-Mark/ Wikimedia.

Figure 3.8 Soane’s depiction as self-made collector: detail from Gandy, *Public and Private Buildings* (1818). Watercolour on paper. © Sir John Soane’s Museum.
The imaginary museum of Soane’s works offered a markedly different vision of self-presentation. If we take a closer look at Gandy’s composite painting, we can note the presence of a small figure in the bottom corner of the picture (figure 3.8). Seated at a table and poring over what seem to be architectural drawings and his own published works (“By John Soane”), this was a portrayal of Soane in pronounced contrast to the aristocratic depictions seen in Panini’s and Zoffany’s paintings. Where Townley and his learned friends had been placed centre stage, the figure of Soane was overshadowed by the buildings he had created, and it was the works themselves which provided the focal point. While Townley was encircled by the objects of collection enabled by his gentlemanly wealth, Soane had rather been surrounded by the products of his own labour and invention. Indeed, though the cast of Zoffany’s painting might have been engaged in scholarly discourse and reading, the impression of Soane here was that of an industrious and focused professional at work, fastidiously continuing his concerns despite the spectacular array of buildings he had already accomplished. In emphasizing such industry Gandy’s painting produced a particularly self-made depiction of Soane’s achievements.309

This brings into focus the critical force of the composite painting as a form of self-collection. Precisely as was the case with Bentham’s bodily monument there was a close alignment between self-made form and ethos here. While Panini’s paintings had created a virtual collection of the monuments of Rome within a singular frame, Gandy rather transformed this genre to collect—and thereby memorialize—the works of a single producer. What was formerly an aristocratic means of representing collection had been made into something that could produce an amalgamating anthology of an individual’s works, offering a resourceful canon of Soane’s professional output in the space of one canvas alone. The distinct novelty of such a form had been recognized by contemporaries, with John Britton noting that this “idea of thus bringing together, in an abridged form, the principal features of the various works of a single architect, is both ingenious and interesting.”310 As Britton seemed to grasp, Gandy’s picture operated as a DIY form of canonizing. In much the

309 The precise imaginative relationship between Soane and Gandy, as architect and draughtsman, remains decidedly opaque and has prompted conflicting interpretations. Mary Beard has gone as far as suggesting Gandy effectively taught Soane to be “Soane,” and that the vision we have today of Soane’s work is largely one created by Gandy (and not Soane himself). For William Palin, on the other hand, the “complex artistic relationship between Soane and Gandy” was one of mutual dependence. What is crucial for my concerns here is the use made by Soane of these images as part of his self-monumentalizing project. Insofar as he commissioned these paintings from Gandy and subjected them to his curatorial agency in dictating the terms of their display, I treat such images as principally authorized by Soane. Cf. Mary Beard, “Half-Wrecked,” London Review of Books, 22:4 (2000): 24–25; William Palin, “J.M. Gandy’s Composite Views for John Soane,” in The Architectural Capriccio, 114.

310 Britton, The Union of Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, 34.
same way that the literary *Collected Works* so widespread in this period forged a coherent body of authorial work for the canon, this painting framed Soane’s buildings into a single architectural oeuvre to be commemorated.311

In collecting Soane’s works, *Public and Private Buildings* was characteristic of the logic of self-collection evident in the house museum as a whole. On the one hand, this had been a matter of re-collecting and compiling a lasting and unified record of his professional *oeuvre* of works. What this particular painting offered in this regard was a physical means to protect and guard against the future loss of his creative output. The efforts and energies Soane devoted to this end can therefore be compared to what Gamer has recently described as an “act of consolidation.” 312 Bringing them together in these varied media forms, he was looking to increase the survival chances of his works.313

On the other hand, in re-framing these various artefacts within the dense network of affiliations and meanings of his museum Soane was also creating new contexts for their display to amplify and strengthen the force of such monumentalizing. This was clearly at work in the enchanting frame within which Gandy had placed Soane’s works to elevate them beyond their specific and disparate original contexts into the new body of his collected works. It was similarly evident in Soane’s eventual hanging of this particular Gandy painting in the Picture Room of his museum alongside prized works by artists such as Hogarth, Canaletto, and Piranesi. By placing this collection of his own buildings in a display constellation among such already canonized works of value, a new frame of reception was brought into being: one that boldly asserted a sense of parity between his own and these other works, producing a distinctive new whole in the process. Insofar as these display strategies were self-directed and the product of his own curatorial efforts, this was an exemplary DIY project of self-collection. It is to another such project within his museum we turn our attention below, though one with a remarkably different material basis.

**Self-clipping and the personal archive**

The logic of self-collection was further notable in Soane’s approach to *paper*. Just as the house museum served as a storage space for his works his preserving practices in relation to paper effectively created a personal archive within the house. Parallel to and reinforcing the monumentalizing effects of the museum, this was a recording system in which he similarly assumed a curatorial role in framing what he would leave behind. It is one particular aspect of this archive and the way it proved a notable instance of the making of a self-made monument that we will now consider.

Part of the material estate Soane bequeathed to the nation was the collection of newspaper cuttings he had compiled over the course of his life. Stored today within the Soane Archive under the protective terms of his museum Act, these nineteen volumes and three packets of clippings point towards a long-term project—and one which continued unabated until his death—of collecting and archiving contemporary press material within the domestic space of his house. The completed volumes were comprised of large books—somewhat anachronistically termed “scrapbooks” by subsequent Soane researchers—filled with a considerable amount of print media from the publications of chiefly the London press between 1767 and 1836, with 1820 to 1833 the most densely documented period.\(^{314}\) The clippings covered a wide and often miscellaneous range of topics, including the presence of Soane himself in a number of publications throughout his career as public figure. In each case the columns of newspaper text were carefully cut out and stuck into the book, providing a dense and often impenetrable mosaic of texts spread over each page of the volume (figure 3.9).

What sense can be made of these objects and the records of contemporary press coverage painstakingly pasted within them? What was Soane doing in so attentively collecting—and preserving—such volumes of clippings? How did the making of these books form a part of his wider project to make his own immortality with the museum?

Figure 3.9 Hoarding print renown as cut-and-paste resource: newspaper clipping book from the Soane archive. Author’s photo. By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum.
One explanation proposed to explain these curious objects is that Soane was simply creating a means of documenting his life for his own later use and recollection: positioning them as a sort of personal aide-memoire. This was suggested in recent research highlighting how Soane repeatedly had recourse to the details contained within his wider range of personal papers and documents in the many printed “self-defenses” he had produced, in which he often cited from his notebooks and other archived material in the writing of self-justifications. But such an argument reproduces a distinctly passive notion of this self-collected archival material. It rests upon a view that Soane used and conceived of this material simply in terms of “knowledge retrieval” rather than “knowledge production.”

While Soane certainly could use this material in such a manner, more was at stake in compiling these books of clippings. Indeed, what the careful practical work he invested in collecting this material resembles is the compulsive practices of self-documentation engaged in by the Buribunks with whom I introduced this study. Just as Schmitt’s self-archivists developed such practices from their awareness of living in an age of historicism, we can make sense of Soane’s clippings as a response to the emergence of a modern conception of history. Faced with the increasing awareness of loss that this historical consciousness entailed, these volumes of clippings come into focus as a form of recording device: a means of countering the prospect of memorial oblivion by making himself part of the historical record. In the most basic sense, it was a form of collection to counter being forgotten.

What he was recording, more specifically, was his own press reputation as a public figure. In a period when the proliferation of print contributed to an ever-increasing circulation of names in the public sphere, he had assiduously sought to trace and collect the appearance of his own name in the press. A notable theme throughout the diverse material in these volumes was thus Soane’s compiling of his own celebrity as produced by print media. This was evident from the reports of him meeting the Emperor of Russia at the Bank of England in 1792, through the coverage of his professorial lectures at the Royal Academy, and to the parliamentary reporting on the passing of his Museum Bill in 1833.

316 This turn of phrase is borrowed from Ann Laura Stoler, “Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance,” Archival Science 2 (2002): 87.
Where the Gandy painting had collected the achievements of his works, these volumes of clippings compiled a personal archive of his public recognition. Where one hoarded and stockpiled his buildings, the other accumulated all traces of his name in print and consolidated these within the paper volumes of these books. If this coincided with the collecting and memorializing mode of the later scrapbook, then it was as a form of professional scrapbook: one concerned with documenting his press appearances principally in his role as an architect. Putting together the textual scraps of his public life into a collection to be preserved, these books proved another way in which Soane sought to shape the version of himself that would be amenable to future visitors to his house.

But beyond simply recording such items for future attention, Soane’s volumes of clippings were also a site of production. In putting together these texts to form a larger whole he was engaged in making something new, creating objects of commemorative value in which he was the protagonist. Wolfgang Ernst has pertinently suggested that “[t]o frame is to set something apart and designate it for attention.” While capturing the transformative effects of the museum in general, this characterization helps us grasp what Soane was doing in compiling such volumes. More precisely, it allows us to see how far creating these books placed him in a position of curatorial authority: that is, they saw him cutting and framing to assign his own sense of lasting worth. To get a better sense of how this worked we can take a closer look at the following example.


320 Ernst, “Frames at Work,” 488.
Figure 3.10 Soane’s clippings as compilation of commemorative value: Soane’s ticket to Nelson’s funeral (1805), as part of newspaper clipping book. Author’s photo. By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum.
Assembled here are Soane’s personalized ticket to Nelson’s funeral (1806), four copies of an “epitaph on Mrs Soane”—who had died suddenly in November 1815—and an article on Napoleon entitled “History and Politics” (1815) (figure 3.10). This instance shows how Soane used the specific arrangement of his press material to generate new meanings. In itself the preservation of this ticket to Nelson’s funeral might seem but a straightforward act of celebrity veneration: a boast that Soane was present at this central spectacle of monumental monopoly and among the privileged to join the procession, as “nr 658.” But this was altered by its positioning alongside this series of epitaphs to his wife. Pasting this defining moment in his personal life alongside a symbol of official immortality and events on the public stage of “History” served to forge a relationship and a degree of equivalence between these diverse events. By appropriating the commemorative status of Nelson and the historical standing of Napoleon in this way, the arrangement of the page reinforced Soane’s memorializing of his wife. In doing so, Soane was producing a new form of commemorative value for his own ends.

The particular logic in enacting such appropriation was made explicit by Soane in other parts of the museum. Referring to the composite painting of his unrealized designs produced by Gandy, which proved the companion to the self-collection piece considered above, he drew attention to the spectral presence of Nelson incorporated within the painting. His curatorial comments upon Gandy’s *Architectural Visions of Early Fancy in the Gay Morning of Youth and Dreams in the Evening of Life* (1820) explained that “this assemblage […] is enriched with the funeral procession of the immortal Nelson.” The use of this specific term—enriched—suggested Soane’s alertness to the political economy of immortality that recent scholarship within the field of Memory Studies has sought to foreground. Pointing to the mining of commemorative value taking place, he was keenly aware of how Gandy borrowed from Nelson’s established immortality to enhance the value of his works.

That a sort of historical enchantment was at work in Gandy’s composite paintings as in the newspaper clipping books was demonstrated by Soane’s inscription practices throughout the collection. Taking one of the more prominent examples, the enshrining of Napoleon’s pistol in the Breakfast Room, we can see how he elevated the status of this object through its bold encasing as a “Historical Record” (figure 3.11). By framing himself alongside Nelson and Napoleon in the pages of these clipping books, he fashioned details of his own life as precisely such a record.

321 Soane, *Description* (1835), 18.
322 See the texts mentioned in this regard in the introductory chapter (n.28): i.e. Reading, “Seeing Red”; Allen, *Labour of Memory*; and Allen, “Poverty of Memory.”
In placing together these different levels of the British pantheon at St Paul’s, the print celebrity of his deceased wife, and Napoleon’s “History and Politics,” Soane used these clipping books to fashion his own particular history. Collating such stories within the wider self-made context these volumes comprised, he authored new webs of meaning from these old scraps of paper, producing a recording frame cut and paste on his individual terms. Insofar as it was he who was the creator, and it was his particular name that was the predominant leitmotif in this print collection, he also sought to make himself history—and part of the archival record that would be recalled and commemorated. As a particularly DIY approach to archiving it was Soane who was to be set apart and designated for future attention.

**Making the transient durable**

The examples of the composite painting and the clipping books show the integral role of self-collecting in the making of Soane’s project. Where Gandy’s painting offered a sort of imaginary museum to canonize his works, similar effects were made possible by these clippings in providing a “paper museum” of his life.323 In both cases a distinctive ethos of memorializing was

---

323 This term is taken from the thoughtful discussion of a student-driven project into scrapbooking practices: Claire Farago et al. “‘Scraps as it were’: Binding Memories,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 10:1 (2005): 116.
at work: the one appropriating what had been principally an aristocratic form of representation and making it self-made, the other a resourceful re-fashioning of ephemeral paper into something aspiring to greater permanence. Indeed, insofar as the latter involved a form that was readily-accessible and potentially available to all it served as a precursor to the later establishing of “the egalitarian archive of the scrapbook.” 324 What these particular forms constituted was the forceful attempt to make things permanent and materialize future renown. Through the investment of his own memorial labour, both these instances sought to assert individual control over what Bauman described as the “approved division of things and qualities into durable and transient.” 325 Working to make the transient durable, Soane incorporated these materials in the building of his own monument.

In doing so he exemplified the demands for resourcefulness and a creative approach to fashioning legacy proposed in the Bentley’s Miscellany article we opened this chapter with. In this sense, Soane’s collecting practices also illustrate the particular limits of Gamer’s thesis of Romantic self-collection as literary canon-formation. What the Soane examples discussed here demonstrate is that the self-made immortality regime such practices embodied was a wider concern than simply literature, and that these were hardly confined to the collecting of texts alone. Architects as well as authors engaged in them, and paintings and newspaper cuttings were clearly also material forms amenable for consolidation beyond the published book.

More significantly, the case of Soane suggests one of the broader conditions for the emergence of self-made immortality in this period entirely overlooked by Gamer’s literary perspective: a sense as to why these specific practices might have emerged in this particular period. Namely, the pressing memorial anxieties produced by a new sense of historical time as changing and in flux, which I have referred to simply as “history.”

That Soane’s project of collecting had been shaped by the visceral fear of being forgotten that this consciousness of time could produce was hinted at by the frontispiece of Britton’s guide to the house. Here the quote from John Bull’s poem The Museum (1824) had suggested that “to talk with antique lore” and engage with the material remnants of the past offered a means for the visitor to “obtain a partial conquest over time.” 326 It thus exemplified an understanding of Paul Connerton’s recent aphorism that “the threat of forgetting begets memorials,” while pointing to the role the museum could be made to play in fighting this threat. 327 Viewed this way, Soane’s investment in

324 Garvey, Writing with Scissors, 24.
325 Bauman, Mortality, 57.
326 Britton, The Union of Architecture, Sculpture and Painting, iii.
these forms and practices of self-collection become legible as pointed attempts to “conquest over time” and counter the ignominy of memorial oblivion.

Soane’s museum as scrapbook

If the scrapbook constituted a form of paper museum, the personal museum could also operate as a larger form of scrapbook. Soane’s house as a whole was in various ways analogous to the popular scrapbook that became an item of mass use in the later nineteenth century: from the way in which it was put together to the larger whole it came to build. I develop this parallel below to isolate the wider significance of the way in which Soane put together his museum.

Encasing and collating lasting renown

Soane’s house proved a medium via which he could memorialize and record his professional achievements. Where the archiving of newspaper clippings enabled him to preserve his press celebrity, the exhibition space of the museum he designed and built offered a means of monumentalizing his identity as an architect. Of course, his collection made a significant statement to this end in itself. Housing a diverse array of architectural fragments and often prestigious objects of art, the museum was obviously a forceful assertion of cultural capital; demonstrating the embodiment of the taste and collecting prowess of an establishment architect as a man of the arts and professional leader. Similarly, the physical design and formation of the house itself was a bravura display of his creative competence. But in the various efforts made to paste himself into the larger whole of this collection, his project also constituted a more specific sort of self-fashioning: one devoted to preserving something of the particular contours of his own life story and career, as we now turn to see.

This was especially clear in the South Drawing Room where he had hung his “Royal Academy Diplomas of Associate and Academician.” By framing and displaying the career milestones of his admission to the Academy in 1795 and his election as a full Academician in 1802, he was effectively musealizing his accession to the upper echelons of the artistic establishment. Here his

---

328 Such a parallel has also been made by Ellen Gruber Garvey, who discussed the archiving potential of the later nineteenth-century scrapbook in light of Isabella Stewart Gardner’s personal museum: noting how “[s]crapbooks are like the Gardner Museum with its fixed exhibits … [and] deliberate arrangement.” Garvey, Writing with Scissors, 207–08. While Garvey’s analysis thus hinged upon this elite/popular, high/low divide, Soane’s entrepreneurial archiving notably elided such a distinction in taking advantage of all available resources.


330 Soane, Description (1835), 74.
professional validation as an architect was writ large upon the walls of his house for future publics to see.

*Figure 3.12* Elite souvenirs of personal achievement: Soane’s Royal Academy Diplomas on display in the museum. Photo: Andrea Felice (2017). By courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum.
Just as the press cuttings exemplified a self-made man documenting his own success, the objects from his career on display in the museum worked towards establishing a narrative of professional progression and achievements. Moving away from this pair of framed diplomas and towards the window in the same room, we can note how Soane had installed a series of “mahogany glass cases” to exhibit a range of esteemed items. Alongside “a series of the Napoleon Medals, formerly in the possession of the Empress Josephine” and a diamond ring given by the Emperor of Russia, Soane had included his student awards of “Silver and Gold Medals of the Royal Academy” as well as “the Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals presented to me by the British Architects, as a mark of their approbation of my professional conduct.”331

In pointing towards the mutually reinforcing relations between the various aspects of Soane’s self-made monument, we can see how he used his Description to strengthen the claims of commemorative value he was attributing to his medals (figure 3.13). Not only had he used this curatorial description to highlight the connection—and equivalence—his framing arrangements forged between these artefacts encased together in the same space. He also deployed this text to elaborate upon the specific circumstances in which he had come to receive this culminating “honour” from his peers.332 By clipping in reports of this “testimonial to Sir John Soane” to explain the value of this recognition—including reference to the support of “His Royal Highness, the Duke of Sussex”—Soane was using his newspaper cuttings to strengthen his claims to lasting renown (figure 3.14). Here the constellation of clipping-object-description worked in tandem to frame his immortality as an accomplished and professional individual.

331 Soane, Description (1835), 75.
332 Soane, Description (1835), 78.
Similar claims were also produced by the particular display arrangements Soane employed and the connections between objects he thereby forged. While the newspaper clipping books generated such narrative links on the
page, the house made possible an enhancing of memorial value through the curatorial choices of hanging on its walls.

If we head out from the South Drawing Room and towards the stairs, we encounter a striking instance of the associative strategies of display notable throughout the museum. Hanging on the panel above the staircase to the left is a distinctive collage of images fashioned by Soane (figure 3.15). The grandly-framed picture at the centre of this assemblage is “a series of studies, made in Italy in 1778, of a design for a Triumphal Bridge,” while Soane was on his RA-funded Grand Tour. This was then encircled by “five Characters from Shakespeare … by the late John Mortimer” above, portrait medallions of Mr and Mrs Flaxman either side, and engraved portraits of Sir Thomas Lawrence, King George IV and Flaxman underneath.333

333 He further sought to monumentalize his work here by explaining how he had subsequently presented drawings based on it to the Ducal Academy in Parma, “that celebrated Institution for the promotion of the Fine Arts,” which responded by “making [him] one of its honorary members.” Soane, Description (1835), 82–83.
Certainly, one way of grasping this is simply as a blunt assertion of taste, with Soane keen to show off his ownership of such contacts and items—and indeed, his curatorial text hastened to describe the Mortimer works as “beautiful specimens of the taste and discrimination of that great artist” in a
way that suggested these qualities might be transferable to their owner. But as a distinctive fashioning of self-made immortality, more was at work in the use of this particular arrangement. Placing these objects in visual dialogue with one another Soane established connections between them which provided a context for the understanding and valorizing of his own achievements. In suggesting that his early designs had some form of relation to Shakespeare—venerated elsewhere in the museum with his own “shrine”—to these authoritative figures of the RA, and to the monarch himself, he was working to leverage the weight of his own claims to commemoration. He was thus making and insisting upon his status as an individual of significant value.

In this sense, and as we saw with Bentham’s vision to stage his own canonicity, Soane was fashioning a particular frame within which he was to be interpreted by future publics. This also involved making a claim upon priority. Soane might have been seeking to associate himself with the distinct milieus of British cultural patriotism—from the Bard to the Royal Academy and the monarch—but the ornate frame, the size of his drawing, and its prominent position worked together to affirm the centrality of his own position in this constellation of value. Soane thereby exploited his editorial and curatorial authority to define the terms of his future reception, just as we noted previously with the Nelson and Napoleon parallels in his cutting books. In his use of these display arrangements, he was building his own context and framing the terms upon which his works were to be understood by subsequent visitors to the museum.

Heads on display

Such collaging effects were deployed persistently to bolster Soane’s attempts towards preserving his identity in posterity. A significant narrative strand he produced in doing so was the memorializing—and thus making permanent—of a series of personal relationships with his professional and artistic forebears. In this sense, the physical space of the museum can also be grasped as a montage of the famous heads that Soane had either been acquainted with or desired to be associated with in his career as an architect. Indeed, as a visitor walking through the museum it is hard not to be struck by the sheer number of monumental heads, busts, and images that are stored and displayed within

---

334 Soane, Description (1835), 83.
335 Of course, the concept of “montage” emerged later in the age of films and mass-produced photographs. But there are notable similarities between this as a specific means of crafting a coherent entity from sections of films or photos, and Soane’s fashioning of a series of objects into a singular vision in his museum, which warrants the creative anachronism here. As the OED defines this particular sense of the term, appearing first in 1929, it was the “process or technique of selecting, editing, and piecing together separate sections of film to form a continuous whole; a sequence or picture resulting from such a process.” “montage, n. and adj.” OED Online. July 2018. Oxford University Press: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/121764?rskey=rNlpWm&result=1 (accessed 22 September 2018).
the house. Seen this way, the museum constituted an assembly of renowned busts, paintings, drawings, and models to be walked through that collectively formed both the paying of tribute and the claiming of a very specific line of descent.

There are numerous examples of this making of lineage in the wider display arrangements of the museum: especially in the compiling and exhibiting of portrait busts. If we turn back to the South Drawing Room, leaving behind us the bust of one of Soane’s architectural heroes and mentors, Sir William Chambers, along with a Flaxman bust of Pitt, his most prominent patron, we can note how the very design of this room had facilitated such gestures of homage. As Soane had explained, the windows in this room formed a gallery space to be “decorated with Pillars, Busts, and Statues of eminent persons” (figure 3.16). Of course, there was nothing new about bringing famous heads into the home like this: the houses of powerful Romans had been filled with commemorative busts, while more recently practices of Grangerizing had seen paper portrait images of the renowned pasted into biographical dictionaries. But what was distinctive in this case were the particular narratives of association he had sought to fashion—and preserve—with his arrangements of these heads.

Taking a closer look at the specific figures Soane had elevated for veneration in this carefully-crafted exhibition space, two notable themes emerge. Firstly, there was once again the underscoring of his RA credentials, with the presence of a self-portrait bust by his friend and fellow academician Flaxman reiterating the homage to the Academy exemplified by Flaxman’s model of its first president, Sir Joshua Reynolds, on display nearby in the recess above the bookcase. Secondly, the inclusion of busts of Inigo Jones and Sir Christopher Wren was an offering of commemorative devotion towards these famous architects from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Like Bentham’s envisioning of his own head on stage among a series of illustrious predecessors, this proved a gesture of affiliation and an attempt to define his own idealized intellectual inheritance as a cultural producer. Using his house to embody and populate his particular vision of the history of architecture, he painstakingly pieced together the wider genealogical frame his own contributions were to be slotted into.

336 Soane, Description (1835), 74.
337 For these practices of Grangerizing texts, see Pointon, Hanging the Head, 62–67.
A further prominent instance of this fashioning of professional relations was in the display arrangements of the Dining Room downstairs. Above the fireplace hangs the definitive portrait of Soane, completed in 1829 by, as he was careful to point out in his description, President of the RA Sir Thomas Lawrence, proving “almost the last picture painted by that distinguished artist.” This image of professional prestige, and this demonstration of an affinity with an establishment leader, was underlined by the presence of Soane’s work below, with the encased model on the chimney-piece of the
“Board of Trade, the new Privy Council Offices, and the Entrances into Downing Street.”\(^{338}\) If these together represent the culmination of his career—with legitimation from the RA president and the designing of the centre of state power—the image opposite on the west side of the room gestured towards his beginnings. There hung the “Picture of Love and Beauty, by the late Sir Joshua Reynolds,” whose *Discourses* Soane had so assiduously studied as a young student and who had presented him with the Gold Medal for architecture in 1776 that effectively made possible this career.\(^{339}\) By putting these items together in this way, Soane was forging and preserving a sense of *familial* connection between himself and these professional associates. The objects of his museum and their display were thereby used to forge descent and ancestry.

**Preserving self-made lineage**

At work in these numerous exhibitionary gestures asserting identity and affiliation was the self-made Soane carefully building his own intellectual lineage. Arranging the objects of his collection in a manner that produced scrapbook-like effects of frame and narrative, he thus employed his museum to monumentalize his career and architectural achievements.

The significance of this as an element of self-made immortality becomes clearer if we consider Soane’s new form of social display here in relation to a more widely established and socially entrenched form for the displaying of lineage and prestige at this time: the ancestral portrait gallery. As Christopher Rovee has suggested in relation to the most widely-known visit to a stately home open day in nineteenth-century literature, Pemberley Hall in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), these aristocratic exhibitions of portraits performed a significant role in upholding social distinctions and staging ancestry.\(^{340}\) As an elite tool of social power these galleries functioned by visualizing the steady continuity of descent, and implying that the permanence of this institution would be reproduced into the future. What such galleries provided, in short, was a symbolic demonstration of social order.

If we turn back to Soane’s museum and consider it from the perspective of these portrait galleries, this was evidently a remarkably different type of lineage-production. The family portraits viewed by Elizabeth Bennet in the gallery at Pemberley represented a form of lineage and social reproduction that was inherited, biological, and a status materially transferred from one generation to the next via the physical property of the estate. But as a self-made man Soane had neither the inherited wealth and standing of the Darcys, 

\(^{338}\) Soane, *Description* (1835), 5.

\(^{339}\) Soane, *Description* (1835), 7.

nor the familial prestige of the various eighteenth-century architectural dynasties (the Hopes, the Adams, the Dances) to call upon in terms of his own descent.341 What he instead came to construct in his museum was his own idealized form of lineage. As something personal, new, and professional, his was a line of descent that was imagined and willed into being rather than inherited and socially given. Just as he had laboured as an aspiring young architect to acquire the accoutrements of greater social distinction, so he engaged in such concerted efforts to build his chosen genealogy.342 Buttressed by the considerable expense and prestige of the various objects with which he forged these connections, Soane’s museum comes into focus as an investment in a novel form of lineage.343

This attempt to construct and display his own lineage becomes legible as a creative act of appropriation, as we saw previously with Gandy’s composite painting. Borrowing from the aristocratic media format of the ancestral portrait gallery, as site of power, prestige, and continuity, Soane transformed this into something distinctly new: a display of self-made lineage emphasizing professional and intellectual inheritance and one that was assertively individual in character and construction. A key component of the monument Soane made for future publics was therefore this DIY fashioning of personal descent. That he invested such energy and resources to secure the perpetuation of his museum meant he was also intimately concerned with preserving this newly-minted lineage. In a significant sense, the personal museum was made to stand as guarantor for the House of Soane. Collecting together the various traces of distinction accumulated over a long career, as a site of validation Soane’s museum thus “illustrated the prudent virtue of keeping.”344

341 Britton summarized this in the following terms, “[I]ike most other artists of eminence, Sir John Soane has been the creator of his own fame and fortune. He inherits nothing but his name from ancestry,” Britton, Brief Memoir, 4.

342 As pertinent instances of this youthful self-fashioning, Soane had added the “e” to his surname in 1784 and acquired his own coat of arms soon thereafter. He would then meticulously replace all previous references to John Soane with this newly-formed name: re-writing “Soane” in the cover of every single book he owned as part of his project to extinguish “the last vestige of his earlier self.” Darley, John Soane, 1; Darley, “Soane: The Man and His Circle,” 16. (I am grateful to Stephen Astley for this particular point about Soane re-signing his books.)

343 In this sense Soane’s museum was at a considerable remove from another entrepreneurial attempt to construct a house-as-monument in this period: Scott’s Abbotsford. Where Scott’s project was effectively conceived of as a “substitute inheritance” to restore what had been lost by “the improvidence of his ancestors,” Soane was rather starting from scratch and fashioning something entirely new with his house here. For this analysis of Scott in terms of the motif of inheritance, see Bann, Clothing of Clio, 93–111.

344 This characterization of the museum is found in a short story by Henry James, “A London Life [Part 2],” in Scribner’s Magazine 4 (1888), 78.
Soane’s ruins as self-consecration

What we have seen thus far is two significant dimensions of Soane’s museum as an instance of self-made immortality: firstly, the plans made to control the future use to be made of the house I have characterized as his investment in *self-commemoration*; and secondly, the various ways he designed and put together his collection specifically as what I termed a *self-made monument*. In the final part of this chapter I turn to consider the enactment of consecrative authority underpinning his museum project at large. Highlighting Soane’s DIY approach, I argue he proves a notable example of the new practices of *self-consecration* that characterized the logic of this regime, and that we saw previously with Bentham’s Auto-Icon.

In his account of the workings of cultural consecration, Pierre Bourdieu referred to the way in which the process of making value confers “on the objects, persons and situations it touches, a sort of ontological promotion akin to transubstantiation.”

As a site devoted to such acts of “transubstantiation,” Soane’s museum asserted precisely this “sort of ontological promotion” in relation to the various objects it housed, making him a consecrative authority in his own right. In the following section I examine one of the particular forms via which he sought to exercise this enhancement of value: the representational strategy of the ruin. Focusing upon the prevalence of the ruin in the depiction of his own works, I argue this provided an innovative means of laying claim to future survival.

**Modern time and memorial anxiety**

Soane’s preoccupation with questions of lasting value permeated his museum project and proved a significant driver to the various instances of his memorial work I have been discussing here. A pertinent starting point for thinking further about the particularly *historical* dimensions of this preoccupation and the impulse towards self-monumentalizing it generated, is to turn to the posterity doctrine that was such a pervasive feature of Romantic reflections upon reception. This we can pursue empirically since Soane had experienced at firsthand the insistence upon the “test of time” of Hazlitt, one of its most vocal proponents.

Having attended a number of the younger man’s lectures upon literature the previous year, Soane hosted Hazlitt for dinner in Lincoln’s Inn Fields on 25 January 1819. We know little now about how the conversation might have proceeded that evening beyond Hazlitt opportunistically leaving a subscription prospectus for his ongoing *History of English Philosophy*, and Soane taking them to the RA afterwards to hear a lecture by his colleague.

---

Henry Fuseli.346 But what we do know about the backdrop to this evening is that one of the lectures the older architect had earlier enjoyed was Hazlitt’s repeat performance of “On the Living Poets,” given in the meeting hall of the Crown and Anchor Tavern at the Strand in April 1818.347 Soane no doubt heard on this occasion Hazlitt’s opening claim that fame properly understood was “the recompense not of the living, but of the dead.”348 He would therefore have been presented with a definition of lasting fame as distinct from contemporary celebrity that was a central tenet of this posterity discourse, and which his self-made museum-as-monument was in the process of subverting.

If Soane was listening carefully he would also have heard something closer to his own professional and monumentalizing ambitions being addressed in this lecture. Once he bracketed posthumous from present renown, Hazlitt had gestured towards at least something of the history of architecture in strengthening his point about the inevitability of deferred reception in establishing value. Having asserted the priority of “posterity” over the judgement of “any one generation,” he explained the weighted mechanics of consecrative authority in the following terms:

The brightest living reputation cannot be equally imposing to the imagination, with that which is covered and rendered venerable with the hoar of innumerable ages. No modern production can have the same atmosphere of sentiment around it, as the remains of classical antiquity.349

What this dramatic characterization of the force of “successive generations” suggested was that canon-formation was temporally unidirectional and favourably skewed towards the works of the ancients. In Hazlitt’s vision the canon proved a successively unfolding hierarchy of value in which the new was necessarily always subordinated to the old. Seen this way, even the most brilliant “modern production” paled in significance when compared with the material traces of antiquity. But if the test of time thus seemed to offer disheartening entry conditions for the “moderns,” Hazlitt concluded with the consolatory reflection that these producers too “will be old in their turn, and will either be remembered with still increasing honours, or quite forgotten!”350

---

347 Details of this little-remarked connection between the architect and the critic are taken from Duncan Wu’s recent biography of Hazlitt. While Wu uses this principally to show Hazlitt’s interactions with “the major figures of his time,” it is rather Soane’s contact with the Romantic posterity discourse that concerns me here. Duncan Wu, William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 241–42, 262–63.
The stark division of memorial fates Hazlitt held up for his audience—
between the honour of future veneration and the contrasting ignominy of
oblivion—exemplified the heightened temporal awareness of Romantic
reflections upon the making and unmaking of cultural memory. This in turn
was intimately connected to the broader emergence of a modern conception
of time that occurred in this period, including the advent of a singular notion
of “history” that I have suggested proved a key precondition for self-made
immortality. It is the way this newly-felt sense of history shaped Soane’s
particular strategies of self-consecration I wish to highlight below.

Soane’s specific perception of the potential for loss produced by a modern
historical consciousness was evident in the narrative he wrote when the initial
building work transforming the facade of his house museum had started.
Subsequently characterized as “one of the strangest and most perplexing
documents in the history of English architecture,” Soane’s manuscript Crude
Hints towards an History of my House (1812) can be read more broadly as
exemplifying precisely the predicaments of modern memory production
outlined above. Playing with the temporal perspective insisted upon by
Hazlitt for the proper imparting of critical judgement, Soane positioned his
unnamed narrator into the vantage point of the future to imagine the prospect
of his house museum in “ruins.” Engaged in surveying “the remains” of the
building, Soane had this figure—“An Antiquary”—reflect upon its possible
origin and function. Once he had decided the house was most likely the
dwelling … of an Artist, either an Architect or painter,” this narrator
concluded with a pessimistic summary of how it had been used since its
founder’s death:

From this period the place has been variously occupied, but always for
purposes very remote from those which it was founded & for which it alone
was calculated – no wonder then that it has fallen into neglect & produces the
picture represented by the annexed drawings taken in the year 1830 – compare
these with representations of its original appearance […] Oh what a falling off
do these ruins present – the subject becomes too gloomy to be pursued – the
pen drops from my almost palsied hand ……

351 I elaborated upon the sense in which this history produced and enabled self-
monumentalizing in my introductory chapter (cf. 38–39 above).
352 The characterization is Helen Dorey’s in her introductory essay to the text: Dorey, “Crude
John Soane Museum, 1999), 53. For a recent analysis of Soane’s text emphasizing its literary
dimensions, including an interesting discussion of its possible relation to his son George’s
literary productions, see Nicole Reynolds, Building Romanticism: Literature and Architecture
353 John Soane, Crude Hints towards an History of my House in L[incoln’s] I[nn] Fields (1812),
reproduced in full in Visions of Ruin, 61.
354 Reflecting his habit of continuously reworking his designs and writings, Soane wrote three
alternative endings to this narrative. This particular quote is from the third of these drafts:
Soane, Crude Hints, 74.
Comparing the past vision of the original building with its present “miserable picture of frightful dilapidation,” Soane’s text indexed the heightened threat of destruction that time seemed to proffer in the post-revolutionary world—as also startlingly expressed in the apocalyptic sublime of John Martin’s biblical scenes of rupture and disarray, which Soane had admired and included within his collection (figure 3.17).\textsuperscript{355} In this sense, and insofar as he imagined a radical distance between the present and future state of his house, Soane was vividly responsive to what Peter Fritzsche has characterized as “the melancholy of history” that emerged with this modern time.\textsuperscript{356} Moreover, that these questions of future reception and loss were of such acute concern at the very moment his house was being built suggests how constitutive the fear of being forgotten was to the conception of his museum project. For Soane, as for many of his contemporaries, this fear could prove productive in generating sustained memorializing measures.


\textsuperscript{356} Fritzsche, \textit{Stranded in the Present}, 4.
Figure 3.17 Registering the melancholy of modern history: John Martin, *The Fall of Babylon; Cyrus the Great defeating the Chaldean army* (1819). Mezzotint by J. Martin (1831). CC BY 4.0/ Wellcome Collection.
Soane’s ruins as statement of value

Although Soane never produced such an image of his house museum in decay he did commission several striking paintings of his own work as imagined future ruins (figures 3.19 and 3.22). While often interpreted in specifically biographical terms, as expressive of his “melancholic and regretful” disposition,\(^\text{357}\) this is only part of the story in grasping the significance of this investment in the ruin.\(^\text{358}\) Indeed, though the visualizing of his buildings “falling off” towards ruin testified to the fear of memorial oblivion incumbent upon the experience of modern historical time, the production and public display of these paintings also formed an important part of the strategies Soane energetically pursued to counter such an anxiety. Ruins may well have gestured towards that which had been lost, but in the early nineteenth century they increasingly came to signify a site of value as well.

If we consider the particular temporality implied by Gandy’s visions of Soane’s ruins, of course there is a sense in which they represent a process of loss. As was the case with *Crude Hints*, these paintings of the rotunda of the Bank of England were produced just as the building itself was being completed. By insisting the newly-built rotunda be depicted in both pristine present condition and future dissolution, Soane’s commission necessarily implied a relation between these two states: that building and creation was somehow inseparable from the opposing forces of demolition and decline, and that what had once been new was inescapably destined to age and subside. In this vein, and pointing towards “the presence of men with pick-axes” as suggesting “the *calciatori* of Rome who plundered ruins for marble,” Sophie Thomas argued that the second of these images provided an “implicit warning against the vanity of mortal aspirations.”\(^\text{359}\) Soane would later underscore this sombre message when he exhibited the work at the Royal Academy in 1832, displaying it with an extract from *The Tempest* proclaiming that: “The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,/ The solemn temples, the great globe itself,/ 357 Cf. Sophie Thomas, *Romanticism and Visuality: Fragments, History, Spectacle* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 55. Woodward likewise suggested that “ruins came to express the architect’s sense of persecution”: Woodward, *In Ruins*, 162; while Gillian Darley made a biographical reading of *Crude Hints*, describing it as a “convoluted history of his troubles”: Darley, “Soane: The Man and His Circle,” in *John Soane, Architect: Master of Space and Light*, ed. Margaret Richardson and MaryAnne Stevens (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1999), 24.

358 Soane’s investment in artificial, self-made ruins stretched beyond simply these paintings to include both the sham ruins he had designed and installed at his country house, Pitzhanger Manor, and the “Monk’s Yard” at his house in Lincoln’s Inn Fields. But for the economy of my argument, and because they represent his own artistic production in ruin, I focus solely on these pictures here. For more on these other ruin projects, see Woodward, *In Ruins*, 165–69; Thomas, *Romanticism and Visuality*, 54–57; and *Visions of Ruin*, esp. 5–17, 30–31.

359 Thomas, *Romanticism and Visuality*, 53–4. Soane had himself expressed precisely such a sentiment in *Crude Hints*, when he had his narrator survey the ruined museum and suggest: “What an admirable lesson does this work furnish against the vanity of human expectations”. Soane, *Crude Hints*, 73.
Yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve.”

Drawing on an older tradition of the ruin as symbol of *vanitas*, Gandy’s image therefore seemed to embody what Thomas described as “an uncertain future for the accomplishments of the present.”

Yet this reading overlooks the multivalence of the ruin as signifier in Gandy’s paintings and the Romantic period more broadly. While grasping that the “spectacle of ruins reveal the fact of destruction,” interpreting Soane’s preoccupation solely in terms of melancholy and loss ignores the degree to which such a spectacle “also reveals the fact of survival”—to borrow Robert Pogue Harrison’s pointed phrase. Indeed, this critical insight concerning the commemorative potency of ruin-as-remains was itself a significant product of the heightened historical consciousness of the Romantic period, and one Soane himself was keenly aware of as architect and theorist of ruins. Though his Royal Academy lectures could certainly suggest what Fritzsche has characterized as an eighteenth-century notion of the ruin as symbol for “the decay of all things,” Soane also demonstrated a clear understanding of ruins as the valuable artefacts of particular historical events—not least in his positive comments upon recent antiquarian efforts to produce “a desire to preserve these noble vestiges [i.e. surviving historical buildings] from further dilapidation and to protect them from suffering by innovation and modern improvement.”

Underlying this comment was an appreciation of “the proper emotions of respect and reverence” that he insisted such encounters with the “venerable monuments” of the past could generate for the contemporary

---


363 As Fritzsche has persuasively argued, the “new historical field” which modern temporality brought into being in the post-revolutionary era meant that the ruin came to be transformed into a “relic of historical possibility.” In this way, he argues, nineteenth-century ruins came to be imbued with “a sort of half-life” that proved “evidence of particular cultures” that might reemerge. Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present*, 104–7, 213 (105, 107, 213). See also Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness*, 19–35.

364 Soane could thus refer to the “mouldering remains” of antiquity as melancholically conveying “the departed grandeur of their former magnificence,” having become but testament to “the insufficiency of our endeavours.” Soane, “Lecture X,” *Royal Academy Lectures*, 625–26; Fritzsche. *Stranded in the Present*, 94.

In this sense, the ruin was no longer simply a reminder of impermanence but could also provide a charged point of contact with the newly historicized past—becoming one of those modern entities Pierre Nora termed *lieux de mémoire*.367

Conceiving of the ruin in this way—as symbol of value as well as loss, and thus as potential target for energetic preservation efforts—suggests how such ruins formed part of Soane’s broader efforts to broker his own immortality. As a medium for staging the vantage point of the future they enabled him to lay claim upon—indeed, to perform and demonstrate the existence of—the canonical worth of his architectural creations. He therefore exploited these paintings as an innovative consecrative technology. Providing a practical means of sidestepping the temporal restrictions of the Romantic posterity doctrine, Soane’s use of these imagined future ruins demonstrated the wider logic of *self-consecration* at work throughout his house. A closer look at the particular details of Gandy’s images and their place within the museum will serve to reinforce my argument.

---

367 Nora, “Between Memory and History.”
Figure 3.18 A pristine new building:

The ruin as canonizing filter
Soane transformed ruins into a form of self-consecration by appropriating the pervasive cultural authority of the antique as emblem of endurance. This is illustrated most clearly through comparison with another among the many eighteenth-century images of classical ruins he had acquired for his collection. Viewing Gandy’s vision of the decaying bank alongside Charles-Louis Clériesseau’s *Architectural Ruins* (1771; figure 3.20)—as, indeed, Soane’s curation invited through displaying them in the same space—we can see how Gandy borrowed from the aesthetic genre of the picturesque that proved so notable a lens for the broader eighteenth-century fascination with the material recovery of antiquity.368 The briefest of glances highlights the extent of such borrowings: from the presence of small figures in the foreground dwarfed by the scale of the crumbling ruin, to the creeping plants and trees gradually seeming to engulf what is left of the building, the parallels between these images are immediately obvious. Adopting the pictorial conventions of this genre, Gandy was representing Soane’s work in the established mode of the classical ruin. In doing so, his picture forcefully enacted a degree of equivalence between Soane and the remains of antiquity this genre variously memorialized. Where these existing ruins constituted the pinnacle of past value—as Hazlitt had suggested—Gandy’s paintings asserted the present worth of Soane’s buildings as inevitable future classics.369

Analyzed in terms of the political economy of immortality this visual poaching becomes legible as the strategic mining of a rich source of lasting value. More specifically, the conventions of this genre provided the basis for a pointed technique to render canonical effects: just as the sepia filter within Photoshop enables the recreation of the style of nineteenth-century photography today, the picturesque classical ruin was made to function as a canonizing filter for envisioning future survival. Indeed, dressing up Soane’s ruins with these visual accoutrements for representing ancient remains, Gandy


369 As Jonathan Sachs has argued, this image suggested Soane’s building was destined to “become the antiquity of the future.” My interpretation of Soane’s ruins as statement of value in this section aligns closely with that recently proposed by Sachs, whose work upon temporality and decline I have found particularly useful in thinking about Soane’s extended engagement with the ruin. For his particular discussion of this Gandy example, see Jonathan Sachs, *The Poetics of Decline in British Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1–3, 16.
appealed to the contemporary understanding of such props as pertinent markers of cultural permanence.

This filter was clearly evident in the backdrop of the two paintings shown above. We can observe how the first of these transplanted the ruins of the rotunda to a recognizably Roman setting, while the latter image reframed the Bank in a landscape evocative of the ancient excavation sites in “Asia Minor” that preoccupied European archaeologists in the eighteenth century.370

Looking more closely at this Bird’s Eye-View it is notable how the foreground of the image in front of the Bank is comprised of a sandy, desert-like landscape far closer to these ancient Mediterranean sites than that of the city of London faintly visible behind the building. Soane’s alertness to the operation of such classicizing strategies was evident in the curatorial comments he provided on another of Gandy’s composition paintings in the Picture Room, where he noted that “Palmyra and Baalbec suggested the idea of the arrangement in this assemblage.”371 Removing his ruins from their specific context in early nineteenth-century London and framing them in this classical guise, Gandy’s images thus transfigured Soane’s works into the physical space of an imagined future canon.

That these paintings sought to elevate Soane to a higher plane of value was further demonstrated by the creative use of one of his principal architectural tools: the medium of light. This can be isolated through contrast with an earlier instance of an existing building envisioned as ruin, perhaps the first case of which, Hubert Robert’s painting of the Louvre (1796; figure 3.21).372 In Robert’s future ruin, the limited light cast upon the building functioned to convey the desolation depicted within; the majority of the image remaining gloomily foreboding, hinting at both the seismic ruptures recently initiated by

---

370 Soane’s engagement with this broader preoccupation was evidenced by the presence in his library of annotated copies of the Robert Woods volumes that played a key role in bringing these ruins in what was then termed “Asia Minor” (today Syria and the Lebanon) to the attention of Enlightenment Europe: The Ruins of Palmyra (1753) and The Ruins of Baalbec (1757). See “The Ruins of Palmyra …” Sir John Soane’s Museum Collection Online: http://collections.soane.org/b7513 (accessed 22 September 2018) and “The Ruins of Balbec …” Sir John Soane’s Museum Collection Online: http://collections.soane.org/b7513 (accessed 22 September 2018).

371 The particular painting he is referring to here as shaped by “Palmyra and Baalbec” is that mentioned earlier in this chapter: Gandy’s Architectural Visions of Early Fancy in the Gay Morning of Youth and Dreams in the Evening of Life (1820): Soane, Description (1835), 18.

372 See Thomas’s argument that Robert was “[t]he first painter to depict an existing building in ruins.” Thomas, Romanticism and Visuality, 53. While no direct empirical link connects the projects there is a tantalizing visual parity between Robert’s pair of Louvre paintings as new and ruined in 1796 and Gandy’s two paintings of Soane’s rotunda from 1798, which hints that either Soane or Gandy could have been aware of Robert’s work. For the argument that Gandy’s ruin paintings were “in the direct tradition of … Hubert Robert’s painting,” see Watkin, The English Vision, 62. For more specifically on Robert and his relation to anticipated ruins, cf. Nina L. Dublin, Futures and Ruins: Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010).
the French Revolution and Robert’s scepticism towards this newly-founded institution of public art. In Soane’s ruined rotunda, on the other hand, light has been juxtaposed to produce remarkably different effects. Certainly, there was still the presence of a haunting darkness framing the anticipated ruins, as if figuring the ominous threat posed by the forces of modern historical time that we also saw in John Martin’s work. But this was forcefully countered by Gandy’s direction of a startling strain of light to illuminate the remains of Soane’s creation. Characterized in Sachs’s apt phrase as “bathed in an ethereal light,” Soane’s ruins were thereby illuminated and hallowed as objects of continued reverence—somehow sheltered from the violent loss projected in the images of Robert and Martin.

This sense of light as a technique for transfiguring, iconifying, and visualizing the abstract notion of canonical, was yet clearer in Gandy’s Bird’s Eye-View. Here the entire site of the Bank was framed in this same “ethereal light”—as if sanctified as a sacred space—in a bold and assertive attempt to attach Soane’s work with one variant of what Bauman later described as the “value tags of immortality.” Gandy achieved such value-tagging effects by exploiting lumière mystérieuse: a particular conception of lighting described by Soane to his students as “a most powerful agent in the hands of a man of genius […] its power cannot be too fully understood, nor too highly appreciated.”

What this “power” was being harnessed for in these specific paintings was the staging of Soane’s serene survival as valuable future remains. History might well destroy and decimate into ruins, but—as the consecrating light of these images suggested—it could also offer the redemptive prospect of survival.

Ruins on display

The use made of these paintings in the museum amplified this consecrating function, while registering Soane’s impulse to make himself history. Hanging Gandy’s rotunda-in-ruins in the Picture Room alongside forty other depictions of classical ruins, including his prized Piranesi drawings and those by artists like Panini and Clérisseau, this left little doubt as to the monumentalizing aspiration of the future ruin. Of course, with such curatorial arrangements Soane reinforced the claim to classical parity that Gandy’s visual

373 Thomas, *Romanticism and Visuality*, 53
377 As a young student in Rome, Soane had met the elderly Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–78) shortly before his death. Soane memorialized this encounter with Piranesi in his museum guide in noting that the four prints of Roman buildings on the north side were “presented to me by that great Artist.” For his inventory of all the images of classical ruins in this room, see Soane, *Description* (1835), 15–20 (15).
appropriations had variously enacted. Yet more strikingly he also employed this display context to insert himself into a larger historical frame—thereby asserting his own place among these revered past ruins.

The distinctive logic of this framing becomes clearer if we see it in parallel with perhaps the sharpest instance of such self-historicizing in the museum: the Model Room, where Soane had placed models of his architectural creations alongside those of the most prestigious remains of antiquity (figure 3.23).\(^\text{378}\) Just as these models were made to fashion a narrative in which his “buildings and ancient architecture constitute a single new entity,” Soane’s assembly of ruins served to incorporate—and indeed, to preserve—his own works within a single space of prestige.\(^\text{379}\) And while the central device of the pedestal generated these history-making effects in the Model Room, the carefully-curated panels of the Picture Room were made to produce similar enactments of consecration for his ruins. In this sense, both display techniques formed part of Soane’s ambition to materialize his position in the broader “History of the Art” he saw his museum as creating for “Architecture.”\(^\text{380}\) Like the newspaper clippings and self-made lineage considered above, they thus proved pointed instances of DIY history-making.\(^\text{381}\)

---

\(^{378}\) Insofar as it provided a self-made attempt to monumentalize the value of his own works, the Model Room offers another striking example of the logic of a self-made immortality regime in Soane’s project—one largely parallel to the argument about his ruins that I present here. Indeed, entirely similar arguments about making immortality could be made using this Model Room though for reasons of analytical potential, economy, and precision I have opted to focus principally upon the ruin rather than the model in this chapter. For a penetrating discussion of the workings of this room as a museal project, see Elsner, “A Collector’s Model of Desire,” 155–76.

\(^{379}\) This analysis of the Model Room is quoted from Elsner, “A Collector’s Model of Desire,” 162, 166.

\(^{380}\) Though made within a fictional frame, Soane’s comments about this historical ambition provide a succinct summary of how he regarded the museum’s wider pedagogical function for future publics. Soane, Crude Hints, 70.

\(^{381}\) Indeed, while Stephen Bann has referred to a widely-felt Romantic “desire for history”—and the urge to conserve and re-create the historical past he identified as emerging in this period—Soane’s efforts here rather illustrate a powerful impulse to make himself history. Bann, Romanticism and the Rise of History, 3, 11.
Figure 3.23 Soane’s Model Room as self-made pedestal for prestige: “View in the Model-Room,” Soane, Description (1835). Lithograph. Author’s photo. By courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum.
The purported purpose of such a “History” was to offer exemplary instruction to present and future students. Here Soane was drawing upon his own experiences as a young architect in Italy, where he had been fervently engaged in “seeing and examining the numerous and inestimable remains of Antiquity.”\textsuperscript{382} He thus referred to his museum as a site of “[a]rchitectural knowledge” for those “[s]tudents … who had no means of visiting Greece and Italy”: making the collection, and the Picture Room in particular, a sort of miniature Grand Tour in itself.\textsuperscript{383} At stake in placing his own ruins in such a setting was preserving something of their “original state of creation”—as Riegl would later propose as a core element of “historical value”—so that they might become a source of pedagogical inspiration.\textsuperscript{384}

Looking back at Gandy’s \textit{Bird’s-Eye View} we can therefore note how far this image functioned as both ruin and a model of preservation. What the impossibly pristine depiction of ruin actually revealed here was a perspective drawing of the building that celebrated and conserved the precise details of Soane’s design, just as the various models of his works installed in the Model Room did, and just as Piranesi’s earlier use of this technique had done for the remains of classical Rome.\textsuperscript{385} In this regard the ruin had been made into a recording device that was as concerned with verisimilitude as Bentham’s Auto-Icon. The type of imaginative response which Soane thought could be produced by displaying such acutely-observed preservations of ruins was suggested when he spoke of “all those fine effects, that noble enthusiasm, which that sight of Roman buildings in ruins, in the pictures of Claude and Salvator Rosa, present to the mind.”\textsuperscript{386} Using the ruin to record his place in history, he thereby sought to ensure such “fine effects” for his own works as mediated objects of worth.

What Soane was ultimately doing through installing his ruins as part of his own personalized Grand Tour in this way, was working to make himself a site


\textsuperscript{383} For the suggestion that the museum proved a substitute Grand Tour for students unable to visit continental Europe, see Soane, \textit{Crude Hints}, 69. For further discussion of the house as a domesticated and interiorized version of this Tour, cf. Furján, \textit{Glorious Visions}, 27–29.

\textsuperscript{384} Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments,” 75. This point about preservation was also evident in Soane’s comments above about the antiquarian desire to “protect” past buildings from “innovation and modern improvement”: Soane, “Lecture X,” \textit{Royal Academy Lectures}, 627.

\textsuperscript{385} That Soane saw this image thus, as a ruin that preserves, was suggested by the encaption from Lesage’s \textit{Gil Blas} he chose for its exhibition at the RA (1830), which spoke of a desire “to lift the roof off that wonderful national building. The interior will be revealed to you like a meat pie with the crust removed.” See “A Bird’s-Eye View of the Bank of England,” \textit{Sir John Soane’s Museum Collection Online}: http://collections.soane.org/object-p267 (accessed 22 September 2018). For another analysis that emphasizes the productive ambivalence of Gandy’s aerial view here, cf. Daniel Abrahamson, “The Bank of England,” in \textit{John Soane, Architect}, 219. For Piranesi’s use of the aerial perspective in his work, see Pinto, \textit{Speaking Ruins}, 104–06.

\textsuperscript{386} Soane, “Lecture X,” \textit{Royal Academy Lectures}, 626.
of commemorative attention. The sort of fascination he desired to initiate and acquire for himself—as object of imagination, inspiration, and emulation for future architects—was clearly visible in the illustration commissioned for his RA lectures in which a student was shown balanced on a ladder, with measuring rod in hand, devotedly preparing to capture the exact measurements of this venerated Roman ruin (see figure 3.24). This image further reveals the particular effects Soane hoped to achieve in his various strategies to stage the consecrative judgement of the future: i.e. securing the same sort of feverish historical scrutiny and examination for his works as he had devoted to the antique world, which would, in turn, be determined proof of continued survival.

Such an insight helps to make sense of the commemorating drive of Soane’s _Crude Hints:_ as the envisioning of his museum as site of interest and study among the antiquarians of the future. It also helps in understanding the small figures visible in the foreground of Gandy’s rotunda-in-ruins that we noted above. Rather than the agents of vandalism suggested by Thomas, these emerge instead as future archaeologists and prospective Piranesis—busily at work in excavating, measuring, and recording the achievements of the venerable surviving remains of Soane’s buildings.387 Gandy’s images might thus have constituted what has been pointedly described as “a Piranesian ruinscape,” but they were used by Soane in a way that sought to acquire all the respect shown by Piranesi for ruins as compelling sites of lasting value.388

---

388 The phrase as to “ruinscape” is from Lukacher, _Joseph Gandy_, 162. For Piranesi’s reverence for antique remains, see Pinto, _Speaking Ruins_ and Richard Wendorf, “Piranesi’s Double Ruin,” in _After Sir Joshua_, 57.
Self-made ruins and future value

Soane’s exploitation of the ruin formed part of his broader efforts to consecrate himself as history. Through the various features highlighted—from the picturesque setting, classical backdrop, and lighting in Gandy’s images, to their display frame among his Piranesis—we have seen how Soane was appropriating central components from the existing infrastructure of canonical value. In borrowing from this established template, his future ruins thus produced for his own creations the same “atmosphere of sentiment”—and the “venerable … hoar of innumerable ages”—that Hazlitt had diagnosed as sustaining the privileged status of the antique.

Although Hazlitt’s lecture sternly denied the possibility, Soane was engaged in very practical efforts to claim the prestige historically attached to
“the remains of classical antiquity” for himself in the present. He did so principally as a means to subvert the temporal order of the Romantic posterity doctrine, which made the business of posthumous renown so uncertain a concern. What this use of the ruin principally sought, then, was to demonstrate the security of his commemorated position in the future’s past—to adapt Koselleck’s pertinent phrase.

This clarifies the sheer boldness of Soane’s building of his future survival: allowing us to grasp these material strategies as a distinctive attempt to manipulate time in the bid for lasting value. Of course, his ruins might seem an essentially defensive manoeuvre, intended to “close an open future by projecting patterns of the past … forward into the future”—as Sachs suggested of such anticipations of decline more broadly. But rather than anxiety about an unknown future, Soane’s entrepreneurial efforts to build his own place in this canon speak rather more of the new possibilities such an open future generated. While his various ruins certainly suggested the fear of “falling off” and the prospect of memorial oblivion prompted by modern historical time more generally, as attempts to negate this fear these ruins can be understood as an aggressively assertive stake upon a plot in this newly-conceived future memory.

In this sense, Soane’s transformation of the ruin relates to Koselleck’s wider argument about the “acceleration of time” so notable in this period: especially Robespierre’s proclamation imploiring the hastening of the Revolution’s pace, which had effectively insisted this “acceleration … is a human task.” Just what was being accelerated here in Soane’s case—and indeed, with the making of self-made immortality in general—was the successful passing of the “test of time,” which adherents of this posterity doctrine had regarded as precluding the notion of living canonicity. By fast-forwarding his ascension to lasting value in this way, his self-made ruins become legible as a pertinent strategy for enacting what Bauman fittingly termed the “colonization of the future.” Consecrating himself as history, Soane worked to enshrine his place in the future’s past.

---

390 Sachs, Poetics of Decline, 32. Indeed, Woodward suggested such an argument about the defensiveness of Soane’s museum project when he claimed that “no man has ever been more distrustful of posterity than Soane.” Woodward, In Ruins, 160.
391 Here Koselleck was paraphrasing Robespierre’s 1793 speech on the Revolutionary Committee in which he stated: “The time has come to call upon each to realize his own destiny. The progress of human Reason laid the basis for this great Revolution, and you shall now assume the particular duty of hastening its pace.” Koselleck, “Modernity and the Planes of Historicity,” in Future Past, 12.
392 While made in general terms, Bauman’s term and discussion of such “colonizing thrusts” provides a particularly apposite way of conceptualizing what Soane was engaged in here. Bauman, Mortality, 54–55.
Busting the pantheon

The staging of his place within future history brings us back to the striking gesture of self-monumentalizing at the core of his enterprise: the presence of his own bust on display within the museum (figure 3.25). Comparable with Bentham’s Auto-Icon as candidate for perhaps the boldest and most literal example of self-consecration in Romantic Britain, this embodied several of the features of Soane’s project brought into focus here.

At first sight this striking form of display appears in itself the emblem of self-made immortality. By placing himself on a pedestal in this way, Soane was once again appropriating the authority of antiquity to buttress his own value, precisely as we saw with his ruins. Turning to a material widely-held to bear “the stamp of eternity and hence a promise of immortality,” the
classicizing aspirations of this form had been evident to his contemporaries. The creator of the bust, Sir Frances Chantrey, thus confessed that he no longer knew if it “shall be considered John Soane or Julius Caesar,” while the curatorial comments of Barbara Hoffland in Soane’s museum guide made clear its function here: proving “a gift to posterity, for which many a future race will be grateful.” Presenting himself in the patina of the antique this representation for the benefit of future generations therefore embodied the staging of the successful passing of the “test of time” and the acceleration of canonical judgement mentioned in the preceding discussion.

It also saw Soane employing strategies of display to enhance his future commemorative worth, as we noted previously with the arrangements of his newspaper clippings and his fashioning of lineage in the rest of the museum. This was partly a matter of the particular constellation of objects among which he was inserting himself. Placing his bust above smaller statuettes of Michelangelo and Raphael he left little doubt as to the supposed prominence of architecture—and his own place—in the union of sculpture, painting, and architecture he saw his museum constituting. The other figures of value variously positioned around this pedestal were the busts “of distinguished Romans, intermixed with antique Vases, admirable in design and execution,” while the interior included a plaster cast from “the outside of the Pantheon” in Rome. That he was using such fragments to create his own personal pantheon was further accentuated by the deployment of space and light to enshrine, just as Gandy’s ethereal elevation of his ruins had done. This was again accentuated by Hoffland’s comments, who noted how the “light admitted from the dome appeared to descend with a discriminating effect, pouring its brightest beams on those objects most calculated to benefit by its presence.” Value tagging his bust for special attention in this way, Soane sought to guarantee his future status as an icon.

If these features of how Soane used the bust in his museum seem to epitomize the workings of self-consecration, it was in how he put this image to work beyond the frame of his house that embodied this new regime in most

---

393 This is Mona Ozouf paraphrasing Falconet in the Encyclopédie: Ozouf, “The Pantheon,” 333.
394 Sir Francis Chantrey to Soane, April 5, 1829: SM Archive Priv Corr III.C.3.14; B.H. in Soane, Description (1835), 44.
395 Soane, Description (1835), 43.
396 B.H. in Soane, Description (1835), 37.
397 The sense in which the early nineteenth-century Pantheon was a site of deification and a place for fashioning modern icons was suggested by the notes of John Hobhouse to the poetry of Byron. Observing how the Roman Pantheon “has been made a receptacle for the busts of modern great, or at least distinguished, men,” he noted how several of these “have been almost deified by the veneration of their countrymen.” Hobhouse, “Notes to Canto IV of Childe Harold,” in The Works of Lord Byron, 5 vols. (London: John Murray, 1823), 2:264–65 [note 65].
acute fashion. Christopher Woodward has suggested that Soane’s enshrinement in his museum was one shaped by a consciousness of loss, and that the architect was keenly aware of the “fragility of all such monuments.”

But rather than accepting this as a necessary result of the uncertainty of future reception, Soane had set to work in investing his own energy and resources in countering such memorial “fragility.” The solution he adopted to this problem of securing the place of his bust in particular and his museum in general was emphatically self-made, both in the specific borrowings of media form and the details he sought to preserve for future attention.

*Figure 3.26* Soane’s bust transformed into a paper monument: frontispiece to Soane’s *Description* (1835): *Sir John Soane* by Charles Turner after Sir Francis Chantrey (1831). Mezzotint. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

---


Figure 3.28 Print engraving as preservation: frontispiece to G.B. Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane* (Rome: Nella Stamperia Salomini, 1784). Engraving. Author's photo. By courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum.
As the first of these images suggests, Soane had commissioned a mezzotint print of this bust to be used as the frontispiece for the definitive final edition of his *Description* (figure 3.26). By remediating Chantrey’s bust into print he was adopting the same resourceful approach we noted above in relation to his practices of self-collection. Just as Gandy had borrowed from existing genres to pursue new ways of fashioning an artistic *oeuvre*, Soane was poaching from the representational protocols of broader celebrity and memorial cultures. This was partly about borrowing from the conventions of an emerging celebrity culture in which a premium was placed on the instant recognizability of the face that, once well-known like Byron’s, could be industrially circulated and energetically promoted (figure 3.27). But it was also a question of looking towards the use made of frontispieces by artists such as Piranesi (figure 3.28). Where his *Antichita Romane* (1756, 4 vols.) had expressly sought to rescue the crumbling ruins of Rome through engraving, Piranesi combined ruins and engravings in his frontispiece in creative new ways that played with inscription practices as a means of fashioning claims to memory.399

Soane engaged with these practices but adapted them to his own ends in fashioning his paper monument. The particular inscription added to the pedestal his bust was resting upon was a striking feature of the mezzotint created by Charles Turner. What had been inscribed more specifically was the most prestigious positions he had held over the course of his career, as well as his honorary memberships bestowed by artistic academies in Vienne and Parma (figure 3.29). Where the marble bust within the museum had been inserted in the classicizing display frame of the Pantheon and the fragments of antiquity, here it was rather a listing of Soane’s various professional accomplishments that was intended to shape the paper bust’s reception. Making this stone of distinction into a visually legible form of CV, Soane’s frontispiece was therefore part of his larger project to preserve self-made achievement throughout his museum. By ensuring these details were engraved in the reproducible medium of his *Description* he sought to record them in the commemorative space of the future, just as Bentham had insisted upon a named display case for his Auto-Icon. As was the case with Bentham, self-inscription proved a concerted effort to counter the fear of being forgotten.

---

Harold Innis presented a distinction between time and space-biased media, suggesting that heavy materials such as marble are durable over time yet reach only limited audiences, whereas lighter materials like paper prove more ephemeral yet can reach many people over long distances. By preserving the bust of his image in both marble and paper form Soane was hedging his bets on the question of future survival. Bequeathing the sculpted version in the stone form of his house he was investing in the durability of time. But circulating the paper version of his bust in the 150 copies of the Description he carefully distributed to significant individuals and institutions across Europe, he was also committing to the spreading and preserving of his renown over space. In creating this highly mobile version of his self-made monument to supplement and promote the museum, he showed an instinctive awareness of what Ann Rigney has recently explored as the potential of the book as a mobile medium of memory. Investing his own efforts and resources to produce this mobility for his paper bust, he thereby gestured towards the media operations of self-made immortality that Bentham had advocated. In this reformed commemorative space there would no longer be any need for monuments of stone or marble.

---

401 Soane kept careful notebooks detailing the exact recipients of his Description, as well as archiving subsequent correspondence related to this: SM Archive Soane Case 11, 12, 13.
Conclusion

On sale in the gift shop of Sir John Soane’s Museum today is a pop-up model kit for the Picture Room. Presented as a tribute to “Soane’s ingeniously designed gallery,” it is a kit offering the chance to “recreate your own mini Picture Gallery with this pop-up paper version.” Having slotted and folded the parts together, the imaginative force of this design is promised: “it’s like seeing hidden treasure inside walls.” Insofar as this serves to reiterate the value of Soane’s architectural creation, the kit continues the memorializing process centred upon the museum long since instigated by the architect himself.

Resting upon the investment of an individual’s labour, the resourceful transformation of physical space into a paper artefact, and the entrepreneurial force of promotion, this particular souvenir encapsulates something of the self-made logic underpinning Soane’s project that has been highlighted in this chapter. Rather than entrusting his future reputation to the elite machinations of the state pantheon or the uncertain judgement of posterity, Soane took matters into his own hands and worked to enshrine himself in the personal pantheon created by his museum.

Faced with the pressing fear of being forgotten produced by modern historical consciousness in the Romantic period, he pursued precisely the innovative approach to legacy advocated by the authors of the Bentley’s Miscellany article this chapter opened with. Such a resourceful approach to the materials and forms of lasting renown meant he searched high and low for sources of value “to roll down to posterity in safety.” While looking towards the established prestige of antiquity to make himself a classic and his works into ruins, he was also prepared to turn to the more ephemeral scraps of print media in seeking to secure his place in the future archives. With this creative openness a defining feature of his various efforts to fashion his self-made monument, a similarly entrepreneurial drive was evident in his attempts to preserve the collection. Investing his considerable energies in self-promotion and the practical conditions of his future reception, he approached the business of commemoration as someone determined to build his own lasting value.

Using his house as a recording device in this way, Soane partook in a wider preoccupation with shaping what was to be left behind. Part of this was an increasing concern among cultural producers with seeking to manage the posthumous appearance of their works. Beyond the Romantic poets Gamer has recently shown as engaged in fashioning the form of their Collected Works, various of Soane’s RA colleagues thus started to exhibit works in their homes, to reflect over the shape of their oeuvres to be bequeathed for posterity,

403 (Postans), “Every Man His Own Monument,” 439.
and to plan for their future museums. But it was also something that would gain broader traction over the nineteenth century in more modest settings, with the framing of personal histories in the family home. What the proliferation of these portraits, mementos, photographs, and scrapbooks suggested was that an individual life could be captured by such material traces and that their curation within a household could fashion commemorative value. As a striking early nineteenth-century case of this shift to make the home into a site of memory, Soane’s museum showed the importance of things in the emerging media repertoire of a self-made immortality regime.

---

404 Soane had thus designed the Ante-room to the sculptural gallery at Sir Francis Chantrey’s house in Belgrave Place (1830), in what was effectively a monumental exchange in thanking Chantrey for his bust. The painter Turner, close friends with Soane, had also taken to exhibiting his own works in his personal gallery space at home, while also making careful plans for the hanging of these works before future publics. See David Blayney Brown, “Joseph Mallord William Turner 1775–1851,” in J.M.W. Turner: Sketchbooks, Drawings and Watercolours, ed. Blayney Brown (Tate Research Publication, December 2012): https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/joseph-mallord-william-turner-1775-1851-r1141041 (accessed 22 September 2018).

Figure 4.1 A print monument: frontispiece from *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon, Historical Painter, From his Autobiography and Journals*, vol. 1 (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1853). Houghton Library, Harvard University.
In planning his last publicity project, the painter Benjamin Robert Haydon worked with the “untiring industry” thereafter judged to have been one of his principal merits.\textsuperscript{406} He had thus risen early on the morning of Monday 22\textsuperscript{nd} June 1846 and walked towards Oxford Street before breakfast. Having visited the gun-maker Rivière he returned home and—in the wake of a long and distinctly varied career as a public figure—began to prepare the scene for his impending final act.\textsuperscript{407}

Locking the door to keep his wife and daughter from his studio, Haydon set to work in writing his will, his letters to his family, and the closing entry in what was the twenty-sixth volume of his diary. He then composed a separate document vividly entitled the “Last thoughts of B.R. Haydon, ½ past 10,” which included some pointed reflections on the contrasting moral compasses of Napoleon and Wellington as the didactic exemplars that had guided him, before ending with an abrupt “Amen.”

With these textual pieces in place he focused his attention upon the arrangement of his departing props: a portrait of his wife carefully positioned on a small easel opposite the canvas of his vast unfinished picture, “Alfred the Great and the first British Jury”; the last page of his diary placed open on a table next to a prayer book, also painstakingly left open and warning of false prophets. At a quarter to eleven he put the small pistol he had purchased to use and shot himself. Misfortunate yet enterprising to the last, the bullet proved ineffective and a badly-wounded Haydon was forced to use his razor blade to complete this, his final piece of work.\textsuperscript{408}


\textsuperscript{407} For the most recent account of Haydon’s eventful career, see Paul O’Keefe, \textit{A Genius for Failure: The Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon} (London: The Bodley Head, 2009).

\textsuperscript{408} This depiction of Haydon’s death is compiled from the following: B.R. Haydon, \textit{Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon, Historical Painter, from His Autobiography and Journals}, 3 vols., ed. Tom Taylor (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1853), 3:349–50, 382 (subsequent references to this will be shortened to “Haydon, \textit{Autobiography}” followed by
Contemporary commentators, generally shocked and aghast at this “act of self-destruction,” had pointed to various ways in which the style of Haydon’s suicide seemed emblematic of the broader mode of his professional career. Several noted what was described as “the extraordinary and careful arrangement of the room and the articles therein,” with one observer scathingly suggesting that “the strong marks of vanity in the arrangement of the death show” proved “an epitome of his previous life.” Still more incisive, beyond this pinpointing of the theatrical and promotional dimensions of Haydon’s self-fashioning as a public artist, were the comments made by his epistolary acquaintance, the poet Elizabeth Barrett. Rather than simply the explanation of “pecuniary embarrassment” circulating in the press, Barrett had insisted her friend’s death further be understood in terms of his lifelong ambitions for “greatness.” The act thereby became legible as one last instance of what she termed the “self-assertion which he had struggled to hold up through life.” And certainly Haydon had once made a similar point himself, in contemplating the heroic possibilities of suicide as the self-directed departure of the great.
The DIY frame implied here, of an individual striving by his own efforts and resources to achieve the public “reputation” he deemed accordant to his genius, also provides pertinent perspective upon the instructions dictated in Haydon’s will that his memoirs, correspondence, and journals be published posthumously.\textsuperscript{415} Indeed, building on the various recording practices he had engaged in to document the course of his adult life, this testamentary request pointed towards Haydon’s pressing urge to leave behind a version of himself for the attention of future publics. It is upon this paper-based monument—its making, framing, and anticipated future use—I focus in this third and final case study. For as we will come to see, it was in precisely these textual artefacts that Haydon came to invest his hopes for a sustained posthumous reputation.

Parsing the autobiographical frame

I use this example of Haydon to explore how the desire to avoid memorial oblivion that conditioned this new immortality regime also gave rise to the making of distinctive forms of \textit{textual} monuments. In the preceding chapters I have shown how the body and the house museum came to occupy significant positions in the media repertoire of this regime; here I turn to the apparently more mundane instance of paper-based practices of self-monumentalizing that also emerged in this early nineteenth-century period. For while Bentham and Soane had largely entrusted their posterity claims to memorial technologies that literally embalmed and musealized, Haydon pursued the mnemonic potential of print media to preserve himself for posthumous acclaim.

In this final case study, then, I examine how various forms of written text came to be exploited by DIY seekers of immortality who—like Haydon and Schmitt’s Buribunks—took to paper resources as a means of targeting future veneration. Placing special attention upon the \textit{individualizing} emphasis of these forms of print monument, I use Haydon to suggest the larger argument that the wider proliferation of life-writing in this period was symptomatic of the workings of a self-made immortality regime.

A principal point of departure for this argument is situating Haydon’s legacy project in relation to the expansion of biographical writings and the genre of autobiography that was essentially coalescent with his lifespan


\textsuperscript{415} For this comment about his reputation, see Barrett, letter to Mitford, reproduced in \textit{Letters of Mary Russell Mitford}, 1:164. For these testamentary instructions, see Haydon’s “last will,” June 22 1846, clause 13; the text of this will was reproduced in full in Haydon, \textit{Autobiography}, 3:350–353 (352).
Two parts of this are especially apposite to grasp the significance of the paper practices he engaged in to shape his life. Firstly, there is the intimate connection between the autobiographical form and the self-made claim to immortality. This interdependence was clear enough to contemporary observers, even if it has only been hinted at in subsequent accounts of a larger historical shift in systems of renown. Bentham had thus welcomed the link between “every man is his best biographer” and “every man his own statue” as part of the wider emancipatory establishing of the auto-logic; while Bauman would later note that it was once but the biographies of “the kings, the warlords, and the popes” inscribed into history, before restrictions upon individual immortality were challenged in this modern period. As a frame for my analysis, this symbiosis between writing a life

---

416 The genre of “autobiography” was established in its modern form during Haydon’s life, with the word used first tentatively in English in 1797 yet already ubiquitous by the 1830s, when it was being touted as the characteristic feature of the age. In its first appearance in print W. Taylor thus employed the term explicitly to reject it: “The next dissertation concerns Diaries, and Self-biography. We are doubtful whether the latter word be legitimate: it is not very usual in English to employ hybrid words partly Saxon and partly Greek: yet autobiography would have seemed pedantic.” In 1809 Robert Southey could refer to an “amusing and unique specimen of autobiography” confident his public would understand what he meant. By 1834 Thomas Carlyle was writing of “these autobiographical times of ours.” Taylor and Southey cited from: “autobiography, n.” OED Online. July 2018. Oxford University Press: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/13379?redirectedFrom=autobiography (accessed 22 September 2018); Thomas Carlyle, Sartor Resartus [1833-34] (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1837), 100. For a perceptive account of the contested process via which the genre was established, see James Treadwell, Autobiographical Writing and English Literature 1783–1834 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).


418 Bentham, Auto-Icon, 1–2; Bauman, Mortality, 58, 170–71 (170). Antoine Lilti likewise pointed to an expansion of biographies during the eighteenth century as a key element in what he posited as a shift from older notions of “glory” to a more open and modern “celebrity.” In contrast to biographies about the lives “of kings, of saints, of illustrious men,” Lilti suggests, a new form of writing emerged “based on the assumption that all lives, even the most humble, are worthy of being related.” Antoine Lilti, The Invention of Celebrity, trans. Lynn Jefress (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), 73–74.
and making a monument is entirely central in bringing to light the DIY basis of Haydon’s project.

Secondly, beyond this wider politics of access, I focus upon the material basis of life-writing as a monumental form. Here I draw attention both to the labour involved in compiling these texts and to the invariably intermedial character of such legacy projects. Rather than simply the final product of the published text of the Life, the emergence of this genre had involved a wider array of forms and practices for collecting and preserving the individual life: from the keeping of journals and ordering of letters, to the scrapbooking and practices of personal archiving we encountered previously with Soane. Indeed, as the particular wording of Haydon’s textual bequest emphasized in referring to his “memoirs,” “journals,” and “correspondence,” this type of textual monument was not only about the printed book, even if this would become its most prominent public expression. This insistence that there existed an autobiographical frame—a constellation of related paper practices for documenting and recording lifestories for future publics—is vital in grasping the range and degree of Haydon’s self-monumentalizing.

Haydon provides a pertinent example with which to approach the place of such paper practices in this period’s new immortality regime. Not only had his struggles with the Royal Academy made him keenly alert to larger questions of access, his work as a historical painter also meant he was especially concerned with the physical means of capturing and recording renown. Here I successively bring into focus the various ways Haydon had sought to preserve his own life as a part of (future) history: the life mask, the diary, the personal archive, as well as the written life of the autobiography. Before turning to consider this array of practices, I open the chapter with a closer discussion of his prolonged engagement with the claiming and making of posthumous value. For it is here we can start to make sense of his commitment to brokering his own immortality.

---

419 On this notion of intermediality as a tool to approach and understand the wider media ecology of the Romantic period, see the innovative recent study variously concerned with writing a new history of “print intermediality”—i.e. the shifting interactions between a variety of print and nonprint media: The Multigraph Collective, Interacting with Print: Elements of Reading in the Era of Print Saturation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

420 By insisting upon the interrelations of these practices I draw upon the work of Andreas Nyblom, who, in exploring the history of fame’s materiality in nineteenth-century Sweden, has likewise connected museal practices of collecting, the establishing of archives, and the expansion of the biographical genre. Andreas Nyblom, “Handen på papperet. Arkivet och personminnets materialitet,” Lychnos: Årsbok för idé- och lärdomshistoria (2013): 145–65. See also Andreas Nyblom, Ryktbarhetens ansikte: Verner Von Heidenstam, medierna och personkulten i sekelskiftets Sverige (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2008).
The struggle for “immortality in this world”

Like his elder contemporaries Bentham and Soane, Haydon had been variously preoccupied with questions of posthumous recognition. In the opening parts of this chapter I demonstrate how—as an artist entirely persuaded of the scale of his greatness—he came to assume his own status as an immortal. Highlighting the ways in which his understanding of what he termed “immortality in this world” involved the rejection of Hazlitt’s hierarchical division of fickle celebrity and lasting fame, I problematize recent interpretations that have sought to make Haydon a public figure principally concerned with contemporary reputation alone. In suggesting he did not simply discard the site of posterity but rather attempted to reconfigure the relations of present and future renown, I argue that the practices of self-consecration encountered in the preceding chapters also proved a significant element in the making of Haydon’s legacy project.

Imagined future commemoration and the assertion of lasting value

In “Old St. Paul’s: A Vision of Futurity” (1820) Haydon offered a scene of future survival principally similar to those we have examined previously with Bentham’s imagined pilgrimage and Soane’s *Crude Hints*. In common with these other instances, Haydon used this text to assume the vantage point of posterity and lay claim upon his own canonical worth. Presented as a fanciful piece of time-travel, his short account projected its narrator forwards to the “great grandchild of our present metropolis”: a perspective from which he could survey the monumental landscape of the “twentieth century.”

Much of the physical and media contours of this future landscape would have been instantly recognizable to the early nineteenth-century reader, since Haydon’s depiction mirrored the central institutions of monumental monopoly recently consolidated in London. Admittedly, in this vision “Westminster Abbey had been restored” while St. Paul’s was filtered through the lens of Gothic decline, having become—like Soane’s ruins—“picturesque by the decay of its details.” But these remained principal sites for commemorating national immortality in this imagined future, and the location for what the narrator termed the “tombs and monuments of the departed greatness of my ancestors.”

421 The chief example is David Higgins’s chapter on Haydon in his study of Romantic genius in relation to celebrity, biography, and politics. While such a focus explains Higgins’s interpretation of Haydon’s “celebrity … as essentially modern in its emphasis on personality over product.” I suggest this elides the degree to which Haydon was simultaneously engaged with the question of securing secular immortality. Higgins, *Romantic Genius*, 127–46 (128).

422 This text had been published under a pseudonym in a journal he was closely involved with, and that had done much to promote his claims as a young artist aspiring to greatness. Somnabulus [alias Haydon], “Old St. Paul’s: A Vision of Futurity,” in *Annals of the Fine Arts, for MDCCCXX. Vol. 5* (London: Hurst, Robinson and Co, 1820): 327, 329.

monuments of this St. Paul’s would have been entirely familiar as those of Haydon’s contemporaries, especially his elders and acquaintances at the Royal Academy. But what might have proved at least somewhat surprising—depending on the reader’s familiarity with the hagiographical inclinations of the Annals—was the focal point of this commemorative spectacle.

Having wandered “through a crowd of forgotten worthies, who were the idols of their day,” the narrator came to reflect that “many of the epitaphs were not laudatory, but just.” With this sense of memorial justice in mind, his attention was drawn towards the following object among the monumental effigies on display in the Cathedral:

A little farther, an energetic looking statue, with head uplifted, a piercing eye, an eagle’s nose, looking defiance [sic], with plain and simple drapery, broad toed antique sandals, and with a palette on his thumb, was inscribed

‘HAYDON’424

The centrepiece of this “dream” was thus the envisioning of Haydon’s future monumentality. Positioning this artefact on display at a hegemonic site of national commemoration, he used this “Vision” to stage his insertion within the Pantheon of State immortality. He thereby accorded himself a constituent place among “statues of Reynolds […] and of Flaxman, and other illustrious artists of generations long since departed from this moving globe.”425 By doing so he staked out an emphatic claim upon his own posthumous value as someone worthy of such official veneration.

In actively engaging with these questions of future value while also busily at work as a young artist seeking acclaim from a wider public in the present, Haydon was challenging the widespread Romantic insistence on the separation of contemporary renown and posthumous fame. In part this was a matter of overturning the “test of time” doctrine, which we variously saw enacted in the self-consecrating practices of Bentham and Soane. But it also involved a more radical questioning of the relationship between celebrity and monument as particular regimes of value.426 Shelley had partaken in such a probing when he had put forward the notion of “an early but enduring monument” for Byron in his poem Adonais (1821).427 Yet where Shelley ultimately acceded to the Romantic hierarchy that placed “true fame above transient celebrity,” as Mole phrased it, Haydon presented a distinctive

425 In the entire formulation he had accordingly positioned his statue between those of Reynolds and Flaxman, symbolically inserting himself into this lineage: i.e. “statues of Reynolds, of Haydon and of Flaxman.” Somnabulus, “Old St. Paul’s,” 330.
alternative to such an order—one that made immortality amenable to the living.428 Given the centrality of this to an understanding of Haydon’s investment in self-consecration here I turn now to bring the terms of his alternative into sharper relief.

**Haydon and the present pursuit of immortality**

Haydon and Hazlitt had once been united in their admiration of Bentham: looking in longing from the viewpoint of Hazlitt’s rented cottage and considering the philosopher’s “head the finest and most venerable ever placed on human shoulders.”429 But where they might have shared such intimate rituals of veneration, their views as to the appropriate relation between celebrity and monumentality could hardly have been further apart. Hazlitt—as we have seen—rejected self-monumentalizing as the forestalling of immortality: insisting that present popularity and lasting fame were mutually incompatible regimes of value. Haydon, on the other hand—as an artist certain of his own greatness yet committed to self-promotion in the increasingly competitive sphere of metropolitan art—had largely ignored the rigid temporal divisions of the “test of time.” That he instead regarded the present renown of celebrity and the future recognition of the canon as closely aligned was suggested in the following allegory, outlined in his journal:

> On each side of the road of life, rise great lofty and craggy mountains on the top [of] each of which is placed a Fame and when any one has had from the beaten road of life, the skill & courage to reach the summit, Fame blows her immortal trumpet & sounds his name to the crowd below, and the fame of every other Mountain taking it up, the whole world is filled with a roar like the thunder of cannon, the sound of which continues as long as time lasts.430

Present and future fame were here taken as coinciding. The “immortal trumpet” of Fame—conventionally presented in female guise—was to be heard both by contemporaries in “the crowd below,” and in the future “as long as time lasts.” What this suggests is the degree to which Haydon was simultaneously concerned with winning present acclaim and pursuing

---

428 This formulation, as well as the Shelley reference, is borrowed from Mole, *Byron’s Romantic Celebrity*, xiii.


posthumous renown in his efforts as a public figure. For Haydon, the either/or posed by the Romantic posterity doctrine hardly seemed to apply.\textsuperscript{431}

In denying this distinction of popularity and lasting fame, Haydon made the case for the pursuit of immortality in the present. Rather than submitting to the future judgement of posterity, this was a form of lasting value to be actively worked towards and seized \textit{now}. This alternative schema, which radically subverted the passive deference of Hazlitt’s canonization as a necessarily belated activity, was evident in the following piece of prescriptive rhetoric:

> Every great man has two objects to gain, Immortality in this world and external happiness in the next—how happy is he who is struggling for the one by virtue here secures the other as well hereafter—Every man of great views should attempt to gain both by the same pursuit.\textsuperscript{432}

Of course, this pointed towards Haydon’s idiosyncratic religious affinities and his hopes for salvation in the “next world.”\textsuperscript{433} But more significantly for my purposes such an utterance also forcefully captures the way in which he had conceived of secular immortality as a site of aspiration.

Here the posthumous renown of canonical value was formulated as a “object” to be targeted: something to be energetically worked towards and pursued by the hopeful great man. In this sense, the description above effectively provides the basis for Haydon’s own legacy project, those of Bentham and Soane examined in the previous chapters, and, indeed, the logic

\textsuperscript{431} This sense of a choice between \textit{either} present celebrity \textit{or} future fame, so prominent as a structuring order in Hazlitt’s criticism, has recently been reproduced in various attempts to characterize Haydon’s relations with posthumousness. Higgins, for instance, claimed that “most of the time, Haydon refused the consolations of posterity.” Positioning him against the compensatory appeal to future judgement that defined Bennett’s cult of posterity, Higgins concluded that the painter had sought “to engage with the public rather than to dismiss it as inherently debased.” Clara Tuite similarly argued that when faced with the crucial “distinction between posthumous and contemporary fame” that emerged in this period, “Haydon privileges this new form of contemporary fame.”

Both Higgins and Tuite thereby suggest the existence of a distinctive Romantic fault line dictating either the rejection of present renown (and the concomitant appeal to posterity exemplified by Bennett’s troop of unappreciated poets) or the dismissal of posthumous renown (in favour of contemporary acclaim). This is to privilege the empirical force of Hazlitt’s dichotomy and make it a lens for viewing the past. But what the example of Haydon clearly demonstrates is the presence of other ways of conceiving of celebrity-monument relations at this time, which only come into sight when we step aside from the lens of Hazlitt. Cf. Higgins, \textit{Romantic Genius}, 146; Tuite, \textit{Lord Byron}, 75.

\textsuperscript{432} Haydon, \textit{Diary}, 1:167–68 [2 July 1810].

\textsuperscript{433} These had been commented upon in the contemporary reception of his posthumously-published texts. Tom Taylor, for instance, the editor of the three-volume \textit{Life}, suggested Haydon’s “religiousness is puzzling” insofar as his daily prayers often proved little more than but “begging letters … dispatched to the Almighty.” Taylor, “The Character of the Man,” in Haydon, \textit{Autobiography}, 3:356.
of self-made immortality more generally. Making a broadly similar claim as the later author of the *Bentley’s Miscellany* text—that but “few men ought to submit to oblivion tamely”—Haydon’s position epitomized the imperative in this regime for the individual to make immortality a *prospective* concern.434 Within this new, historically-conscious commemorative space it was certainly not enough to “wait patiently and calmly” as Hazlitt prescribed.435 Instead the pursuit of “immortality in this world” had become a matter worth “struggling for.”

That this pursuit of lasting value had been a pressing present concern for Haydon was further evident from the pointed critique Hazlitt posed of his friend’s incessant self-monumentalizing. Complaining that such a posture precluded any sense of humility in the face of established canonicity, the critic thus noted that:

> I never heard him [i.e. Haydon] speak with enthusiasm of any painter or work of merit, nor show any love of art, except as a puffing-machine for him to get up into and blow a trumpet in his own praise. Instead of falling down and worshipping such names as Raphael and Michael Angelo, he is only considering how he may, by storm or stratagem, place himself beside them, on the loftiest seats of Parnassus, as ignorant country squires affect to sit with judges on the bench[.]436

Rather than “falling down and worshipping” already canonized figures and deferentially submitting to the test of time, then, as a DIY applicant for immortality Haydon assertively sought to “place himself beside them.” Indeed, the anti-hierarchical emphasis of this positioning was revealed in Hazlitt’s contrasting of the “ignorant country squire” and the “judges”: though intended as a rejoinder to unwarranted presumption, it inadvertently suggested precisely the force at work in generating such individual claims upon lasting value (i.e. opposition to the established authorities governing these “loftiest seats.”) While Hazlitt was referring specifically to the scale and performance of Haydon’s artistic ambitions, this pertinently captures the operations of self-*consecration* in this new memorial regime.

**Self-consecration and the seizing of time**

Viewed from this perspective the force of Haydon’s “Vision of Futurity” becomes more vividly apparent. Far from being the “schoolboy squib” David

434 (Postans), “Every Man His Own Monument,” 439.
436 This had originally been intended for one of Hazlitt’s essays for the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1826, but was “suppressed by the editor.” It eventually appeared in Peter George Patmore, *My Friends and Acquaintances: Being Memorials, Mind-Portraits, and Personal Recollections of Deceased Celebrities of the Nineteenth Century*, 3 vols. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1853), 3:32–33.
Higgins characterized it as, this narrative exemplified the subversion of the Romantic posterity doctrine Haydon was engaged in—sidestepping its sharp contrast of present appeal and deferred posthumousness. With such a bold imagining of a future place in the British pantheon, Haydon was articulating a drastically different notion of lasting value than the merely compensatory version later outlined by scholars such as Bennett and Higgins. Here posthumous renown was not simply the faint hope of future recognition as opposed to contemporary acclaim, but rather something for the energetic young artist to strive towards and seize. Just like Soane’s preoccupation with casting his works as ruins and the musealizing of his own bust, Haydon’s imagining of his future survival was a performative statement of posthumous value that also presumed his status as a “great man” in the present. Depicting himself in neo-classical guise in the portrayal of his own prospective monument—in “plain and simple drapery” and, tellingly, “antique sandals”—Haydon sought to make himself a classic, precisely as was the case with Soane and Bentham.

In principal terms, Haydon’s “Vision” amounted to an assertive attempt to foreshorten the “test of time” comparable to that embodied in Soane’s ruins. Instead of leaving one’s posthumous fate in the uncertain hands of a distant future judgement, self-made immortality had brought forward the court of appeal and made questions of lasting value a more urgent and palpable concern for the living. Imagining one’s future commemoration in this way was thus an integral part of the operation of consecrative authority in the new regime of every man his own monument. Having examined the discursive expression of this logic in Haydon’s writings, we now turn to a closer look at the material practices it prompted.

Living as an immortal: the material practices of self-consecration

Haydon might have performed a claim upon his own monumentality in “Old St. Paul’s,” but this was far from simply an abstract point of principle. Beyond the print assertion of his anticipated future commemoration he had also engaged in a set of concrete practices to embody his lasting value, broadly comparable—and sometimes closely-related—to those we encountered previously in relation to Bentham and Soane. Yet in significant ways Haydon went further than either of his elder acquaintances in the degree and depth of his particular investments in self-monumentalizing. For not only did he take active steps to make his own future monument, he further sought to lead his public life as if his monumental status was already secured in the present—as Hazlitt’s critique above made clear. Self-consecration was therefore not just a

437 While granting these articles in the Annals prove “interesting as examples of Haydon’s desire to present himself as a heroic figure who deserves adoration,” Higgins concluded they were essentially “little more than schoolboy squibs.” Higgins, Romantic Genius, 132.
precondition for the making of a legacy project, but also the very raison d’être for Haydon’s strivings as an artist. In short, he had lived and worked in self-monumentalizing mode, his immortality largely assumed. In this section I elaborate upon this specific point in relation to the medium of the life mask as a means of proposing a larger claim about the emergence of living immortality in this period.

Casting monumentality

A visit to the critic Francis Jeffrey’s on the fifth of May 1821 witnessed the unfolding of a very practical project of self-consecration. Having dropped in to see his acquaintance Haydon found Jeffrey “preparing to have his face cast.” That a distinct prestige was associated with this new fashion for individuals to sit for their own life masks was notable in how this occasion had been recounted in his diary. Haydon thus explained that the critic—despite his best “efforts to conceal it”—“was pleased at having his face cast before others.” Indeed, having observed the various practical preparations for this procedure (“his chin toweled, his face greased, the plaster ready”) his diary entrance emphasized the particularly social character of the event. Among the curious public were “the ladies watching everything with the most intense interest.” While the production process was underway and Jeffrey’s “face was completely covered,” his friend Sidney Smith had then “mock heroically” intervened: “exclaiming, ‘There’s immortality! but God keep me from such a mode of obtaining it.’” The particular challenges of this medium then became apparent to all as “breathing became difficult” for the encased sitter and the mould had to be broken off prematurely. “So much for this attempt at immortality,” Haydon wryly reflected afterwards.438

While seeming to share Smith’s comically-formulated scepticism towards such a project, Haydon variously participated in the increasing vogue for taking life masks notable in the Romantic period. In part this was a trend related to the wider emergence of a distinctively modern culture of public visibility and representation that took shape towards the end of the eighteenth century.439 This was a cultural space placing a premium on the immediate recognizability of the images of public heroes and celebrity figures, in a development made possible—and further fuelled—by the rapid flow and consumption of printed images in this period. It is certainly no coincidence that two notions of the word ”profile” came to co-exist precisely at this time, as an integral part of this public culture and its tendency to elevate the individual personality. Providing a profile could thus refer both to a short biographical sketch of a public figure and the portrait outline of that person’s

438 Haydon, Autobiography, 2:16–17. See also Haydon, Diary, 2:328 [5 May 1821].
439 For a recent discussion that frames this broader development in terms of “a first media revolution,” see Lilti, Invention of Celebrity, esp. 50–56.
head, in a neat demonstration of how the text/image protocols of this burgeoning celebrity culture could be mutually reinforcing.440

Beyond this role in publicizing individual heads in what Leo Braudy memorably characterized as the theatre of “public self-presentation,” these life masks were also intimately connected to this period’s widespread preoccupation with questions of lasting value and monumentality.441 Of course, an element of Haydon’s particular involvement with producing such artefacts was related to his professional activity as an artist. He had thus made the life masks of Wordsworth and Keats both now among the canonical images of these poets (figures 4.2 and 4.3) in order to include their faces in his epic painting Christ’s Entry into Jerusalem (1820). But these were more than simply props for his art. In the reflections he made in his diary, Haydon had been clear about the monumentalizing concerns at play in the selection of just these figures from his circle of friends. Wordsworth was accordingly described as “a great being” while Keats was “conscious of a high call and is resolved to sacrifice his life or attain it,” with a commitment to poetry in close accordance with his own artistic ambitions.442 Indeed, building on this link between apparent greatness and the meriting of a life mask, Haydon had also partaken in this particular form of self-fashioning: his cast taken at the behest of the famed phrenologist Johann Spurzheim.443 He had thus himself sought to preserve his physical features via this materially-grounded “mode” of making immortality.

440 This dual sense is apparent from the historical etymology of the term provided in the Oxford English Dictionary, where it is possible to find both:

i) “A short biographical sketch or character study, esp. of a public figure”: i.e. “As for the many sketches or profiles of great men's lives, pretended to be synoptical or multum in parvo, we are sure there is nothing we look for in them.” R. North (1734).

ii) “A representation of the outline of an object; a silhouette. Also: a drawing or other representation of the side view of something, esp. a person’s face or head”: i.e. ”Mr Miers … has executed a profile of Dr Blacklock for me.” R. Burns (1788).


441 Braudy, The Frenzy of Renown, 403.

442 For Wordsworth and Keats respectively, see Haydon, Diary, 1:450–51 [13 June 1815] and 2:107 [7 April 1817].

443 He would later recall this event in his journal: “When Spurzheim cast my head he said, 'God bless your Ideality and your hatred on injustice.'” Haydon, Diary, 5:194 [16 August 1842]. While it is not possible to trace the use made of this mask by Haydon, the fact that several copies survive at the National Portrait Gallery suggests how this item may have been reproduced and circulated as an item of value in the monumental economy—either during his life or after.

Making immortality here and now

How did the life mask form part of Haydon’s various efforts to make his own immortality? What was at stake for these early-nineteenth-century figures in exposing themselves to the physical discomfort involved in the production of such plaster casts? And what was the wider significance of this particular medium, which for us today—just as to Sidney Smith earlier—can all too easily seem by turn curious and strange?

A pertinent way of approaching these questions is to situate this specific form of self-monumentalizing in the context of Haydon’s problematizing of the relation between celebrity and monument explored above. Doing so helps us understand the degree to which these practices proved the logical embodiment of the overturning of the “test of time” doctrine that I have suggested he was engaged in. Viewed this way the making of the life mask was emblematic of the workings of self-consecration more generally.

The practices of self-consecration that emerged in this period rested upon radically pre-empting the authority of future judgement, as I have argued. To bring into focus the distinctive force of the life mask in this regard—and, indeed, of Haydon’s specific legacy project—we can first turn to Wordsworth, his sometime friend and the subject of one of the casts displayed above. Wordsworth’s position upon these questions of posthumous renown serves as a useful reminder of the operation of consecrative authority within the poetic culture of posterity I propose Haydon was sidestepping. I therefore use the poet as a demonstrative example to illustrate how far removed was Haydon’s project in particular, and the notion of self-made immortality more generally, from this vision of future-orientated Romantic poets in existing scholarly accounts.

For Wordsworth, the process of consecration to canonical value was determined principally by public “Taste.” This he had memorably expressed in his “Essay, Supplementary to the Preface” (1815), in a passage that encapsulated the core of the posterity doctrine I wish to contrast with Haydon’s self-consecration. Reflecting upon the “fortunes and fate of poetical Works” in the longer term, Wordsworth thus proposed the following “conclusion,” imbibed principally from his fellow poet Coleridge:

[…] that every author, as far as he is great and at the same time original, has had the task of creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed: so has it been, so will it continue to be […] The predecessors of an original Genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them;—and much he will have in common; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will

444 This is well-known and the most common of critical commonplace in the massive array of research upon the Romantic poet. It is also discussed, for example, by Bennett in his elucidation of the Romantic posterity doctrine. Bennett, Romantic Poets, 22, 41–42.
be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road:—he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps. 445

Consequently, while the prospect of immortality and survival “from age to age” was assuredly offered to the genius as future consolation, such an author “must reconcile himself for a season to few and scattered hearers.”446 In other words, the imperative to forge the new critical standards via which one’s work was to be judged necessarily enforced a deferred reception. Though called upon “to shape his own road” to canonicity, the genius would not be around to enjoy the fruits of his labour. It was on this basis that Wordsworth insisted the lasting value of “permanent influence” could be but a posthumous honour, as Hazlitt too had claimed: one granted only to candidates prepared to wait until future public taste was ready and able to grant this distinction.447

But Haydon rejected the inevitability of delayed appraisal that characterized this posterity doctrine. In considering the same set of questions that concerned Wordsworth in his Essay—of the rewards to be expected for the work of genius in an age of mass publics—he had reached remarkably different conclusions about the necessity of this time lag between present reception and future renown. For Haydon, it was neither given that a future place in the canon must be preceded by present rejection, nor that this award of canonicity need wait for the judgement of posterity.

At the core of this difference between the poet and the artist was the question of whether public taste could proactively be reformed—and if so, how rapidly such a transformation might be enacted. Whereas Wordsworth had stressed the “true difficulty” involved in creating taste, Haydon was far more confident that contemporary and future critical judgement could be made to coincide (and to do so in his favour).448 Indeed, this conviction as to the improvability of public taste within but a short timespan helps make sense of what Haydon was doing in his prolonged—and self-appointed—role as public reformer, as Higgins’s study has also suggested.449 Touring the country to give public lectures on matters of art, he was effectively engaged in trying to make the taste his work was to be judged by. He might thus have been struggling to forge his own path to lasting value as Wordsworth had prescribed, but he expected that these efforts to reform the public taste would yield results in the

448 Wordsworth, “Essay,” 494. Haydon’s commitment to reforming the public taste in matters of “high Art” is a recurrent theme in his diary and autobiographical writings. For various examples of which see Haydon, Diary, 1:351 [4 May 1814]; 2:184 [24 January 1818]; 3:226 [10 October 1827]; and 5:408 [1 January 1845].
here and now. The entrepreneurial endeavor with which he approached this commitment to reform was a far cry from the Wordworthian emphasis upon difficulty, deferral, and certain delay.

This is fundamental for understanding Haydon’s practices of self-consecration. It is here, with this reconciling of contemporary and future judgement, that the implications of his commitment to securing “immortality in this world” can be brought more sharply into focus. Since what this diversion from Wordsworth signified at base was Haydon’s conviction that the public was entirely capable of recognizing immortality when it saw it. This assumption of the basic legibility of genius led, in turn, to the negation of the delayed reception of the posterity principle. If immortal honours could be granted in real time in the present, then the need for the consolations of posterity disappeared. Instead—and this is the vital point—the bestowing of such monumental distinction to those still alive to receive it became both feasible and an attractive target to aspire towards.

Immortality was thereby made a form of recognition for the living. It was hence entirely possible for Haydon—following the aftermath of his public acknowledgement after the unveiling of Christ’s Entry in 1820—to address the actress and prominent celebrity Sarah Siddons as “one whose immortality was long since decided.” Tellingly, if perhaps not altogether surprisingly, he had also framed his own artistic achievements in precisely such terms—of an ascension to lasting value long since consecrated. Reflecting in 1818 upon his involvement in bringing the Elgin Marbles to the attention of “the whole of civilized Europe,” he suggested that “[t]o have lived in such times of Art is glory, but to be a prime mover & agent of them is immortality.” He thus believed he was making immortal deeds in the present and that these would be recognized as such by his contemporaries. Bringing forth the court of appeal to the here and now, immortality had become something in the making.

Life masks as living immortality

Returning to the individuals sitting encased in plaster casts encountered previously, we can now make legible the historically-specific monumentalizing claims these artefacts produced. For what this discussion contrasting Haydon with Wordsworth’s deferred reception illuminates is the extent to which these life masks proved the embodiment of this new conception of living immortality. To those early-nineteenth-century

450 Higgins, Romantic Genius, 146.
451 Of course, describing Siddons in this way in correspondence to her was obviously sycophantic, but Haydon’s choice of this epithet as a form of distinction in such a context is revealing in itself. Similarly, for a further instance of Haydon using the term in this way, we can consider when—having received an invitation from Siddons to call past for a visit—he had excitedly proclaimed in his diary that “[t]hese are immortal doings!” Haydon, Autobiography, 1:373 (italics added); see also Haydon, Diary, 2:267 [31 March 1820].
452 Haydon, Diary, 2:211 [31 December 1818].
individuals like Haydon who understood themselves as “agents of immortality”—and the makers and recipients of this newly-configured notion of lasting value in the present—the taking of such masks provided a particularly apposite form of self-consecration. Its DIY credentials as a memorial form pertinently aligned with their self-made efforts upon immortality.

Seeing such masks as the product of a self-made immortality regime provides fresh perspective upon a number of issues. Firstly, it allows us to elaborate upon Haydon’s pointed formulation of “immortality in this world” mentioned above.\(^{453}\) Of course, one way of understanding this term is as the counterpoint to a theological afterlife: where secular commemoration among the living was contrasted with the prospect of eternal salvation. Yet, as the above discussion has demonstrated, Haydon’s notion can further be understood as encapsulating the possibility of immediate lasting value. In this sense it referred to the distinction of immortality being achieved and experienced in the here and now, just as much as it captured a form of secular veneration.

This conception is in marked contrast to the account of living canonicity recently proposed by Paul Westover in his analysis of practices of literary pilgrimage to the homes of Romantic authors. Suggesting that the posterity doctrine reserving lasting fame exclusively for the dead took intensely practical manifestations in this period, Westover showed how these pilgrims came to regard elderly figures of veneration such as Wordsworth and Coleridge as essentially spectral and posthumous presences. Insofar as their canonical status was given, they were therefore treated as the “living dead.”\(^{454}\) But this is far removed from the notion of living immortality I have outlined here in relation to Haydon. While Westover’s living dead were effectively passive and belated figures canonized by the efforts of others, Haydon’s practices of self-consecration were impatiently assertive and combatively aspirational: producing his self-made claims to immortality in the present. “Immortality in this world” thus opened up the potential to live rather than simply die as an immortal. It also gave rise to the particular set of self-monumentalizing practices Haydon would engage in over the course of his career, which I focus upon in greater depth below.

Secondly, situating these casts in the context of self-made immortality makes possible more general reflection upon the wider historical shift in the meaning of life and death masks, as well as the expansion of practices related to these objects that took place in this period. While death masks as an archaic form had long been associated with memorializing royalty and eminent figures

\(^{453}\) Haydon, *Diary*, 1:167 [2 July 1810].

among the nobility, the nineteenth century witnessed a wider range of people engaging and interacting with such objects, especially writers and artists—as the above examples indicate, and as the earlier discussion of wax effigies in the Bentham chapter also suggested. From exclusive record of the elite dead to a particularly DIY form of self-monumentalizing for the living, this longer-term transition from death to life masks captures something of the impetus towards the emergence of self-made immortality I am outlining here. Precisely as was the case with Bentham’s Auto-Icon, there was a particularly close correlation between the materiality of this medium and the emancipatory promise of every man his own that underpinned this new memorial regime. This was accentuated by the circulation of such items in the monumental economy of this period, as the presence of Sarah Siddons’s mask in the basement of Soane’s museum and the surviving copies of Haydon’s variously suggest. Sitting for a life mask therefore became a means of living one’s own claims upon monumental value.

**Haydon’s diary as self-made monument**

In the second half of this chapter I consider how the individualizing logic governing the making of these masks also shaped other dimensions of Haydon’s legacy project, not least its material production. How had he attempted to make his own monument beyond sitting for a life mask? What steps had he taken to try and dictate his future commemoration?

I begin by focusing upon the most significant investment Haydon made in self-made immortality: the twenty-six bound folios and three smaller notebooks of the “Journals” he bequeathed for posthumous publication. Situating these diary-writing practices in the context of his wider struggles to attain immortality, I highlight how the materiality of this diary—its making, physical form, and projected distribution—embodied the self-made approach to lasting value he pursued throughout his career. I thus argue that this paper-based project—and the material artefacts it produced—proves another compelling instance of a self-made monument, broadly comparable to those of Bentham and Soane.

---


Diary-writing and the struggle to be recorded

Haydon started his diary in July 1808, recording a trip made to Dover when he was twenty-two years old. He then sustained this practice over the following thirty-eight years, until the final entry made in June 1846 that signified the completion of this particular enterprise. His life-writing project therefore spanned the majority of his adult life, prompting comparison with the compulsive diary-keeping of the Buribunks that I opened this study with. Like Schmitt’s characters, Haydon had sought to document the details of his life as an historical individual. His journals were thus shaped by what Schmitt memorably described as “the consciousness of the writing subject”: the perception that, in producing such written documents, “he had become the author of a piece of world history and hence a juror on the world court.”

While satirical hyperbole in relation to the Buribunks, this characterization captures particularly well the scale of the ambitions nursed by Haydon—both for his artistic career in general, and his diary project more specifically. Indeed, what we can see in this project is the historical painter becoming his own history-maker: the immortality-conferring powers of the brush transferred to the pen, and the vast canvases swapped for more mundane sheets of paper.

His diary-writing can therefore be approached as an expression of the notion of living immortality outlined above. Convinced his canonical status was already achieved in the present, these journal-keeping practices become legible, at least in part, as an element of Haydon’s performance of the great artist; just as contemporaries noted how he had assumed exactly this role with gesture, “to shew [sic] the public how a great genius would arrange his body and limbs for viewing works of high art.” Such a conscious enactment of greatness was connected, in turn, to the new “sense of contemporaneity” that several scholars have identified as a significant feature of the Romantic cultural landscape. With the emergence of a modern conception of history and the novel distance from the past this entailed, there was an increasing awareness of a distinctively new world being fashioned in the present—and a self-consciousness about the agency for change possible within such a process.

This force of the contemporary was frequently evoked by Haydon in his diary reflections. It was vividly suggested in his excited response to having

458 This point about Haydon’s body language was part of a critique made by a fellow artist who had witnessed him contemplating the Elgin Marbles at the British Museum. Account included in Straton et al., “An account of the living and dead brain,” 52.
459 Tuite, Lord Byron, 75. The most significant recent arguments about this Romantic sense of contemporaneity have been made by James Chandler: cf. Chandler, “Representative Men” and England in 1819, 105–7.
been invited to tea with Sarah Siddons in 1820, for instance, when he had proclaimed:

> These are immortal doings! We are making, as Napoleon said to Talma, we are making History, at least in Genius matters. ⁴⁶⁰

Such a vision of Napoleonesque individuals fashioning history at will might seem to support Clara Tuite’s argument that the apparently unprecedented character of the present led Haydon to privilege contemporary over future fame. ⁴⁶¹ If these acts of history-making could be acknowledged as such by contemporaries, then why the need for more traditional models of posthumous fame? But while Tuite made this point using Haydon’s sense of the difficulties for future generations to grasp the “sensations” of contemporary events, it is far from clear that the endorsement of celebrity as a form of renown is the most fitting conclusion to be drawn from such an observation. ⁴⁶² Given that the events of the present might prove incomprehensible to posterity, this could just as well generate an intensified concern with the conditions for future reception. When capturing the distinctive features of the present was perceived as problematic, the challenge for an historically-conscious age came to be about how the efficacy of memorialization might be improved and the risk of oblivion minimized. Understanding himself as immortal in the here and now therefore also prompted concerns with future survival—and the securing of what he described as “[f]ame on an adamant foundation.” ⁴⁶³

Certainly, this new temporal condition of “contemporaneity” was closely related to the fear of being forgotten engendered by a modern conception of history. The very first entrance of Haydon’s diary had thus mediated upon a time “two thousand years hence, when England and France shall have long sunk into silence like Carthage & Rome,” in order to imagine the possibility of “a Colossal Statue” that might remain “when England becomes a desart [sic].” ⁴⁶⁴ Rather than privileging the present at the expense of posthumousness, as Tuite claimed, this demonstrated an intense preoccupation with making the unprecedented present available to posterity—and with the relationship more generally between memory and forgetting, statues and silence, survival and ruins, as we considered in relation to Soane. Indeed, this capturing of significant contemporary events for posterity had been precisely what Haydon was commissioned to do, on occasion, in his work as an historical painter—as the vast canvas he had painted to commemorate the 1832 Reform Bill

---

⁴⁶⁰ Haydon, *Diary*, 2:267 [c. 30 March 1820].
⁴⁶¹ Tuite, *Lord Byron*, 75.
⁴⁶² i.e. “Posternity can never estimate the sensations of those living at the time.” Haydon, *Diary*, 2:346 [ca. 22 June 1821].
⁴⁶³ Haydon, *Diary*, 2:19 [6 May 1816].
⁴⁶⁴ Haydon, *Diary*, 1:3–4 [July 1808].
suggested. Seen this way the inscribed pages of his diaries—like the plaster case of the life mask—become legible as recording devices: a physical means of preserving himself for the attention of future publics (figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4 The diary as recording device: John Keats by Benjamin Robert Haydon (1816). Sketch in Haydon’s journal. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

---

465 Entitled The Reform Banquet, at Guildhall, London, July 11th 1832 and commissioned by the Prime Minister, Lord Grey, this work memorialized the passing of the Bill as an historic occasion. Haydon instinctively grasped this as a change to bolster his own claims to lasting renown, referring to the “the immortality conferred on me by Lord Grey in giving me a Picture connected with Reform—the glory of that night at Guildhall”. Haydon, Diary, 4:27 [31 December 1832].
In this sense, Haydon’s sustained attempts to document the details of his life in diary form can be positioned as part of that broader, essentially modern phenomenon characterized as “the struggle for historicity.” Introducing this pointed phrase and making a connection between history-making and immortality that Haydon would instinctively have understood, Zygmunt Bauman conceptualized lasting value as the privilege of being documented. In these terms, immortality was conceivable solely for the archived: those who were to “be, from now on, kept in the records, intended to be preserved forever, indestructible; be meant to be always ready to be dusted off, recovered, returned to the agenda of current living.” But the question as to who had access to such a “right to be recorded” had been successively contested historically, as he also made clear. Previously the exclusive preserve of royalty and powerful elites in pre-modern times, this “monopoly of history-making” was overturned with modernity: resulting in a substantial widening of “the occasions of history-making and the arsenal of the history-making tools.” Though presented in Bauman’s characteristically impressionistic style with broad associations leaving little room for historical specifics or precision, this longue durée narrative of the expansion of history helps remind us what was at stake in the prospect of self-made immortality. Challenging the memorializing pretensions of established authorities, individual immortality-seekers in the Romantic period were driven to pursue new ways of forcing themselves into the records of future history.

This pronounced sense of a struggle to be recorded—and the vision of individuals battling against privileged monopolies to secure a place in the archives of the future it implied—aligns closely with the challenges to the workings of monumental monopoly in the state pantheon considered in my previous chapters. It also provides an incisive perspective from which to approach Haydon’s diary as a specifically early-nineteenth-century form of self-monumentalizing. In this wider context of the politics of immortality, the significance of his diary as self-made monument can be brought into focus.

**Monopoly restriction, DIY exhibition**

Haydon’s diary was thus a DIY project to make himself history: a concerted attempt to record the details of his life as an immortal for the commemorative attention of the future. To grasp the memorially combative and individually assertive dimensions of these efforts to monumentalize his life, we need to position them in the wider context of his career as an artist, particularly the critique he had made of the Royal Academy. In significant ways this was a form of self-monumentalizing that reproduced the relationship to institutional authority that had governed his professional life as a whole. Pursuing such a

---

reading will enable us to see how the self-made characteristics of his diary resonated with the wider logic of every man his own monument.

Like Bauman, Haydon had been keenly aware of the contested character of lasting value. This was evident in the account of his future commemoration imagined in “Old St. Paul’s,” when he had pointed to the failed “attempts” made “to erase the name” engraved into his monument. It was further suggested in the more pressing practical obstacles he encountered when seeking to secure such value in the present. This was especially pronounced in the struggles he had engaged in to improve the status of the genre of History painting—a central element of his strategy to realize “immortality in this world.” In one of the many prayers to be found throughout his diaries he thus made the following plea in 1813:

Give Historical Art that protection as a Public body that Portrait has from individuals. Let us be great in every walk and every ramification of every walk […] Let us astonish the World & Posterity with a mass of power that shall sweep off all obstruction to immortality and leave future ages in hopeless gaze & desponding admiration.

Of course, this pointed towards the combined targeting of present and future renown so central to his aspirations as an ambitious young artist that we examined above. But it also captured Haydon’s sense of the obstruction to immortality that was preventing him from realizing these grandly-formulated goals. What had he been referring to more specifically with such a formulation? What particular problem did he perceive as hindering him from consecrating his claims to this distinction?

The principal obstacle he deemed to be thwarting his immortality-making ambitions was the institutional authority of the Royal Academy. Where Bauman posited a general monopoly of history-making, Haydon had made the more specific claim that the potential for professional History painting had been blocked by Academy control of patronage and critical judgement. This was partly a product of the broader critique he had posed to any restrictions placed upon individual genius by monopoly-like structures, and what he forcefully termed “the Infernal Spirit of Monopoly” and “its selfish Sneer.”

---

470 Haydon, Diary, 1:287 [17 January 1813].
472 This formulation is taken from his correspondence: Haydon to Elizabeth Barrett, 9 April 1844, in The Invisible Friend, 175. Similar instances of this anti-monopolistic stance can also be found in Haydon to Barrett, 19 June 1843, in The Invisible Friend, 116 (referring to the
But it was also related to the particular effects he believed this system to have on the type of “public view” afforded to his own works in this genre. This line of critique was notable in one of the allegorical texts Haydon had written for the *Annals of the Fine Arts*, where he deployed the figure of “Michel Angelo” to castigate the RA council:

> Do ye not fill the Academy with portrait painters? Do ye not secure to yourselves the most prominent situations in the most conspicuous rooms, thus taking advantage of a magnificent building, given for the higher intentions of art; thus filling your own pockets, and gratifying your own friends, to the disgrace of your country, the disgust of true connoisseurs, and the pity of foreign nations. While this goes on in reality, do you not blind the public, the nobility, and the Prince, by giving medals, and premiums, and lectures, by sending young men to study my works in Italy—and all for what? That after passing their lives in acquiring the high principles of their art, when their capacities are sufficiently educated to put the principles in practice, do ye not obstruct them? keep them from public view, calumniate and ridicule their plans?

He therefore came to regard the Academicians as performing a sort of gatekeeping function: controlling access to public recognition through the influence they held over hanging arrangements at the Academy’s annual exhibition. In short, he judged there to be a monopoly of display at work, pernicious to the genre of History in general and his own painting in particular.

Where Haydon’s critique of the vested interests of established authorities was principally similar to that of the *every man his own* manuals discussed previously here, so too was the strategy he adopted to sidestep this perceived “obstruction to immortality.” His workaround to the problem of Academy monopoly had thus been the one man show: the hanging, exhibiting, and promoting of his works alone—as a solo feature.

restrictive critical judgement of monumental monopoly), and Haydon, *Autobiography*, 1:117 (referring specifically to the Royal Academy as an association of “vanity, monopoly, intrigue”). Principally opposed to such established hierarchies, he insisted “genius will arise and make its way, if born at the bottom of the Indian Ocean.” Haydon, *Diary*, 1:211 [30 August 1811].

473 In particular, he made this point in relation to the “unfair treatment” given to his second painting, *Dentatus* (1809), which, though initially positioned centrally in the great room of the Academy’s exhibition, had been moved for display in the ante-room with “no window or decent light for any great work”. He later judged that following such unfavourable hanging “this picture was ruined in reputation.” Haydon, *Autobiography*, 1:117.

474 Somniator, “The Other Vision,” 13 (italics added).

475 Haydon was far from alone in adopting these practices of self-hanging, and recent research has started to explore this wider phenomenon of “exhibiting outside the Academy” in more depth—particularly the sense in which it proved a critical statement in defiance of established authority. William Blake, for instance, had also believed himself excluded from the Academy and likewise deemed it “necessary that I should exhibit to the Public in an Exhibition of my own.” While secondary to my purposes here, the parallel between this historical one man show and the present notion of DIY celebrity online is a suggestive one that might fruitfully be developed further. See Andrew Graciano, “Introduction: Alternative Venues,” in *Exhibiting Outside the Academy, Salon and Biennial, 1775-1999: Alternative Venues for Display*, ed.
Though he had earlier rallied against such an arrangement—of being reduced to showing “works like wild beasts, to advertise like Quack Doctors”—this came to be the mode of display he would employ throughout his career.\(^\text{476}\) It was therefore as an \textit{individual} artist he would seek to make his art public and promote the claims of historical painting. While partly pragmatic necessity—his sustained public attacks on the Academy alienating him from its support and infrastructure—this was also significantly a matter of principle. For what these practices of self-hanging embodied was the broader commitment to a self-made perspective that characterized his professional life as a whole. Having variously critiqued the unearned privilege of “property, authority, and rank,” and countered with “the naked majesty of talent or character,” it was entirely apposite he came to exhibit his work in this highly individualized format.\(^\text{477}\) The principle governing his display tactics was therefore that of \textit{every artist his own promoter}.

From this self-promotion to making his own monument, the individualizing logic of the one man show was similarly evident in Haydon’s diary-writing practices. Defiantly promoting his own work to contemporaries in spite of institutional obstruction or indifference, Haydon’s investment in paper forms of self-monumentalizing thus proved the logical parallel of this solo mode of exhibition. Insofar as these practices were conceived alongside such a critical response to the monopolistic exclusions of established authority, they were emblematic of the impulses of a self-made immortality regime more broadly.

**The diary as a one man show**

Situating his diary at this intersection of the one man show and the struggle for historicity allows me to highlight several principal observations about Haydon’s life-writing project. In doing so, I present both a set of specific arguments about his efforts at self-monumentalizing and a wider claim about diary-keeping in this period.

The first point this brings into focus is the emphatically \textit{self-made} character of his diary project. Like the “energy,” exertion, and resources he had

\footnotesize

\(^\text{476}\) This is taken from a larger rhetorical sweep in which he suggested that “leading Historical Painters” being forced to “exhibit their works” in this way proved “a disgrace to the Public bodies of a Country.” Haydon, \textit{Diary}, 1:463 [11 July 1815].

\(^\text{477}\) His endorsement of the self-made individual and the meritocratic critique of the status quo this often entailed can be found in Haydon, \textit{Correspondence and Table-Talk}, 2:341 (for the objections to “property, authority, and rank”) and Haydon, \textit{Diary}, 2:329 [8 May 1821] (for “the naked majesty of talent and character,” here in relation to Giovani Belzoni the Italian strong man turned archaeologist).
committed to the spectacular exhibiting of his Christ’s Entry at the Egyptian Hall, Haydon’s journals were the result of a substantial investment of work: of memorial labour persistently and systematically undertaken to record the details of his life, in much the same way Soane had painstakingly compiled his newspaper clippings. Similarly, where the staging of the one man show had demanded significant individual outlays for its material production, Haydon had likewise personally provided the ink and paper that was the physical basis of his diary as memorial artefact. In this sense it was the product of a pronouncedly DIY ethos that, while effectively the result of necessity, aligned particularly closely with the anti-monopolistic perspective of the every man his own genre. Rather than being at the mercy of the recording protocols of established authorities, his diary thus exemplified greater emphasis being placed upon the energies and efforts of individuals to record their own lives.

The second, closely-related point is the degree to which he exploited the diary as a mnemonic technology to make himself available for future publics. Where Bentham had turned to the body and Soane the house museum, Haydon used the pages of his journal as a means of embalming and preserving the individual life. This was sharply captured when he characterized it as constituting “the history […] of my mind.” It was also apparent in the way in which he assumed a future readership throughout the diaries: variously addressing “my fair readers,” “all those who read this Journal after I am dead,” or “Posterity” in general, in the most grandiose version of this appeal. What this makes clear is how far it had been written with future publication in mind. Although Romantic diary-writing is often conceived in terms of an emergent concern with privacy, Haydon thus regarded his as a public document: intended to be read and distributed among wider audiences.

Like the one man show, where he had engaged in energetic marketing campaigns to promote and publicize his works, Haydon’s engagement with diary-keeping becomes legible as a concerted attempt to capture the attention of future publics. Viewed from this perspective—of a determined commitment to self-promotion in the struggle to become history—his

---

478 A detailed description of the planning and preparations he undertook in staging the unveiling of Christ’s Entry can be found in Haydon, Autobiography, 1:369–73.
479 In order to create the visual backdrop for Christ’s Entry he had been forced to take a last minute loan from Coutts. Having done so he rushed “off to a wholesale house, [and] bought all the fittings wanted of the right colour (purple brown).” Haydon, Autobiography, 1:370.
480 The entire formulation of this description of his diary project read: “It is the history, in fact, of my mind.” Haydon, Autobiography, 1:98.
481 The entire formulation of this latter citation was as follows: “This is a journal which Posterity will refer to.” Haydon, Diary, 3:640 [31 September (sic) 1832]. The other two articulations of a future public are from Haydon, Diary, 1:273 [21 December 1812] and 4:301 [19 July 1835].
prolonged investment in diary-writing comes into focus as a pointed form of posthumous publicity project.

More broadly, the example of Haydon draws attention to the critical potency of the diary as a memorial form in this period. In the face of the wider struggle to be remembered that characterized an age of historicism, the diary provided a DIY recording device for the individual life that was closely aligned with the principles of the self-made—in terms of production, perspective, and ethos. As a mundane resource potentially available to all, it offered the chance for each individual to take control of their own memorial fate and to participate in the “war to colonize the imagined future” that the crowded memorial landscape of the nineteenth-century increasingly came to resemble.\(^{483}\) The entrepreneurial project to secure a place in future history afforded by the diary thus offers striking perspective upon the significant increase in diary-keeping practices that was such a notable feature of the early nineteenth century.\(^{484}\) Fervently working to avoid being forgotten, these diary-writers can be grasped as trying to build their own paper claims upon at least some degree of immortality. Like Schmitt’s compulsively self-recording Buribunks, they were engaged in writing their lives to become their own history.\(^{485}\)

The personal archive as extraction of lasting value

Haydon’s diary thus proves a striking instance of a self-made monument; the forceful attempt through his own efforts and materials to “get hold of today’s archives” and make himself publicly available in the future.\(^{486}\) Having situated his project in relation to the broader politics of immortality-making, I now consider the specific character of his diary-as-monument in more depth. What was it he wanted recorded and archived in these volumes more precisely? Why had he put together these diaries the way he did? Via what strategies did he turn this life-writing project into a form of self-monumentalizing, and thereby produce a memorial artefact for future commemoration?

I approach these questions by examining how Haydon’s compiling of this diary was broadly coalescent with the making of a personal archive. Looking more closely at his particular collection practices—both at what he collected and also what he did with this material—I argue that he exploited this archive as a further means of laying claim to lasting value. More specifically, I show

\(^{483}\) Bauman, Mortality, 55.


\(^{485}\) Cf. “what does the Buribunk do who keeps a diary each and every second of his life? He wrests each second off of the future in order to integrate it into history.” Schmitt, “Die Buribunken,” 241.

\(^{486}\) This term is taken from one of the central points I borrow from Bauman, as also used in the opening pages of this study. Bauman, Mortality, 57.
how he appropriated the monumental status of others and put it to work in reinforcing his own immortality.

The diary as professional scrapbook

Thus far I have referred to Haydon’s life-writing as a DIY form of textual monument, painstakingly built from paper and ink. While principally correct in terms of its material basis, this characterization needs to be nuanced considerably to capture the specific types of text genres he combined to produce this as a monument. Far from simply being comprised of his own handwritten entrances, the briefest of glances at these objects reveals the diversity of materials he used in documenting the details of his life. If his diary resembled anything in its form and appearance it was a scrapbook: with a vast array of additional items pasted onto the leaves of its pages, from newspaper clippings and drawings to manuscripts and correspondence. Just how this eclectic assembly of different sorts of paper was put together and intended to function as a monument is what I bring into focus here.

Of course, one way in which such material could enhance the monumentalizing effects of the diary was in making it a record of public achievement. As we examined previously with Soane’s volumes of newspaper clippings, this was a form of self-documentation that focused on capturing the press attention accorded to an individual and preserving it within a particular frame for posterity. Haydon had certainly engaged in similar practices on occasion. A striking instance was in July 1835, when he had pasted in the letter he published in *The Spectator* castigating the proposed combining of the National Gallery and the Royal Academy. A further newspaper cutting of an article reporting on the Commons debate of this question was then attached, proposing for a committee to consider “the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and of the principles of design among the people … of the country.” This was followed, finally, by Haydon’s triumphant commentary on such an outcome:

> I appeal to all those who read this journal after I am dead if this is not a great Victory, if I have not always prayed, struggled & fought for this, for 30 years. God grant it may be the beginning of the good I anticipate.488

Here the newspaper clippings and the diary entrance were positioned to reinforce one another, confirming the weight of his particular intervention in the process. In this sense, the inclusion of these supporting texts served to

---

487 This diversity is immediately clear in the extensive archival notes classifying the particular characteristics of these volumes at its current institutional home: the Houghton Library, Harvard University. Cf. “Collection Overview” for MS Eng 1331.1-MS Eng 1331.4. *Harvard University Library Hollis*: http://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/hou00516/catalog (accessed 22 September 2018).
488 Haydon, *Diary*, 4:300–1 [19 July 1835].
amplify the significance he sought to ascribe to his achievements as a public figure: helping him win the argument in the long run.

But where Soane prioritized press clippings, Haydon’s collecting had focused predominantly upon letters. Though he did include certain newspaper cuttings, the most significant attempt to capture future attention in the diaries as a whole was the proliferation of correspondence he stored among its pages. To grasp what was at stake with the numerous letters transcribed in and pasted to these volumes, we need to position this in relation to the emergent protocols of a celebrity culture. For it is in this wider media-historical context that we can make sense of these specific material practices and start to see how they formed an integral part of his legacy project.

What the early nineteenth century witnessed was the appearance and rapid expansion of new ways for wider publics to engage with—and seek communion with—the significant individual. Broadly characterized by Thomas Carlyle as an era of “hero worship,” this period gave rise to a constellation of institutions and practices for mediating close contact with the lives of such apparent heroes: from the expansion of the genre of biography to the establishing of literary tourism, and from the “hermeneutics of intimacy” deployed by Romantic poets to the vast number of secular relics on display at The Napoleon Museum (1843). One particular aspect of this broader material frame of biography was the concern with collecting paper traces of these eminent public individuals, something strikingly expressed, for example, in the novel enterprise of autograph hunting. When the mass-produced figure of celebrity came to seem increasingly distant and remote, handwriting—and especially the individual signature—could offer a means of bridging this gap.

---

489 A quick scan of the archival inventory of the volumes reveals the sheer extent of the correspondence he had included in his diary (thereby also including a comprehensive record of his debts and borrowing): “Collection Inventory,” for MS Eng 1331.1-MS Eng 1331.4. Harvard University Library. Hollis: http://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/hou00516/catalog (accessed 22 September 2018).
490 Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History: Six Lectures (London: J. Fraser, 1841); North, The Domestication of Genius; Watson, The Literary Tourist; Westover, Necromanticism; Mole, Byron’s Romantic Celebrity; Nyblom, “Handen på papperet.”
491 It is certainly no coincidence that this specific use of autograph came into being precisely in this period. The OED thus offers the following example from 1833 as an early instance of such a usage: “These old and perfect copies autographed by celebrated savans. belong to Sir Richard.” “autograph, v.” OED Online. July 2018. Oxford University Press: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/13433?rskey=zuxRj1&result=2&isAdvanced=false (accessed 22 September 2018).
Haydon’s correspondence as memorial resource

As someone keenly interested in all manifestations of genius, Haydon had been an active participant in this economy for acquiring the materials of greatness.492 Following the funeral of Nelson, for instance, he managed to gain one of the “shreds” of “the old flag of the Victory,” each of which, he explained, “was carefully preserved by its fortunate owner as a relic of the hero.”493 A similar perspective was also notable in his approach to letters (figure 4.5). This was demonstrated by the rejection letter he received from

---

492 A significant driver in the formation of this economy was the collection of Napoleoniana and other souvenirs from the Napoleonic wars, as suggested by the keenness of collectors such as Scott and Soane to invest in such items. Cf. Stuart Semmel, “Reading the Tangible Past: British Tourism, Collecting and Memory after Waterloo.” Representations 69 (2000): 9–37.

493 Though Haydon “religiously kept” this relic, he ruefully conceded it had been “irretrievably lost in the confusion of my ruin.” Haydon, Autobiography, 1:37.
the Duke of Wellington in 1828, which he had transcribed in full in his diary, reverently noting it had been written in Wellington’s “own immortal hand.”

It was likewise evidenced by the letter from Goethe which he had “annexed” to the pages of his diary and described as “an immortal honour—immortal indeed.”

This might seem to suggest Haydon deployed such correspondence chiefly as a form of textual peacocking: making a fairly weak claim upon immortality-by-association through including them in his diaries. This was certainly the view taken by Willard Pope, later academic editor of these volumes, who had described Haydon’s habits as that of a “tuft-hunter”—i.e. someone who snobbishly and sycophantically sought the favour of those with rank and title.

Seen this way, the inclusion of such letters in his diary appeared principally as but the boasting of a possessor of celebrity souvenirs.

But Haydon was not simply submissively recording others’ greatness, as Pope’s reading implied. Indeed, I argue he was actually using these letters to produce a far stronger claim upon his own immortality. That there were was more at stake for Haydon beyond proud ownership of relics was suggested in the following comments outlining his views upon letter-writing. Here he had insisted that:

> A man after he has got into any repute should always write his letters, *any* letters, as if before the public. Remember this, ye of the “exegi monumentum” race.

Characterizing his contemporaries as monument-makers through this reworking of Horace’s famed citation, Haydon showed a striking degree of awareness about the wider presence of self-monumentalizing in this period: a self-consciousness that strengthens my overarching claim about the presence of a new immortality regime in this period. More specifically, this example shows how he understood the management of personal correspondence to be a significant part of such practices for attracting future attention.

Just as we saw previously with his diary, he regarded the “letters” of a great individual to be essentially *public* in character—and thus invariably addressed

---

494 Wellington had been writing to turn down Haydon’s request to dedicate him a “pamphlet”: Haydon, *Diary*, 3:323–24 [13 December 1828].

495 Goethe had written to Haydon to subscribe to his painting, while even praising the cartoons of the Elgin Marbles that Haydon had sent to the author. Haydon, *Diary*, 3:586–87 [ca. 10 December 1831].


497 Haydon, *Diary*, 3:608 [4 May 1832]. The Horace citation Haydon was alluding to here was that previously mentioned in my introductory chapter: i.e. “Exegi monumentem aere perennius” (I have completed a monument more lasting than bronze.) Horace, *Odes* 3, 259.
to future as well as contemporary audiences. While the publicity of correspondence was a contested question at this time, Haydon’s position opens a pertinent perspective from which to grasp what he was doing with these letters in his diary and with his collecting practices more generally.498

Letters written and then stored “as if before the public” become legible in terms of the recording of living immortality examined above. Certainly, this notion of today’s correspondence being produced—i.e. written, framed, preserved, and ordered—as a conscious part of the future historical record in the making helps accentuate the degree to which Haydon was using this material to fashion a personal archive. It further allows us to distinguish such an enterprise from the wider practices of commonplacing that emerged in this period, as Romantic readers began to accumulate written mementoes of their celebrity encounters.499 Where such “fans” collected and exchanged autographs, extracts, and poems to produce their identity in the present as, say, Byron readers, Haydon was documenting the making of immortality here and now for the veneration of future publics.500 Although both sets of practices were closely-related to the production of identity, Haydon’s monumentalizing of letters involved far greater claims of enduring public value.

The sense that he was engaged in compiling his own archive of lasting value to monumentalize himself is reinforced if we consider the practical efforts he had devoted to creating and maintaining his holdings. Like Soane in the fashioning of his museum, this had seen Haydon exert his consecrative authority as an individual collector: enacting the “ontological promotion akin to transubstantiation” in valorizing items as of permanent worth.501 Such practical local acts of canonization—and its concomitant, those of destruction—were clearly evident in the following example from 1830, when Haydon reports how he had “arranged all my correspondence for 26 years.” This then resulted in a sorting exercise to separate the wheat from the chaff, as he recalled: “[b]urnt a cart load of trash, and selected all the letters of

498 The disputed question of the publicity of correspondence has been discussed by Alethea Hayter, who noted Tennyson’s resentment of the publishing of private papers and Harriet Martineau’s insistence that her friends destroy her letters to prevent future publication. As Hayter also noted, Elizabeth Barrett, Haydon’s epistolary friend, had proposed a position on this matter of framing letters directly opposed to that of Haydon’s here: refusing to believe anyone “would write restrained sentences to their very intimate friend; under the idea that after they were dead their letters will be printed by their executors.” Elizabeth Barrett to Miss Mitford, 11 January 1844, in Elizabeth Barrett to Miss Mitford: The Unpublished Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Barrett to Mary Russell Mitford, ed. Betty Miller (London: John Murray, 1954), 212; Hayter, A Sultry Month, 173.
499 Throsby, “Byron, commonplacing and early fan culture.”
501 This formulation is borrowed from Bourdieu’s account of the workings of cultural consecration, cited previously in relation to Soane’s museum project: Bourdieu, Distinction, 6.
celebrated people.” 502 Fourteen years later he was similarly at work in managing what remained of his correspondence after such earlier culls:

Looked over a vast collection of old Papers & letters. Burnt hundreds and arranged the remainder. Many valuable papers on Art, & hundreds of autographs. 503

Given his impression of the public prospects of these documents, his curatorial decision-making had effectively been a binary one: to consecrate and preserve, or discard and burn. Of course, the question of destruction was not simply a matter of devaluing the ephemeral as rubbish; if future publication was assumed this could just as well involve self-censure to remove delicate or unwanted impressions from the record, as advocates of privacy in such matters like Harriet Martineau had argued, and as various instances of pages ripped out of Haydon’s diary also make clear. 504 Yet there was little ambiguity regarding that which was to be kept and archived. What remained as documentary traces to be laid one day “before the public” was the collection of what he had frequently referred to as his “valuable papers.” 505

Extracting letters, appropriating value

Haydon had thereby treated this correspondence as a resource: something to be used as part of his attempts to materialize his claims upon posthumous renown, and therefore also something demanding careful management. It was certainly no coincidence that both the above-mentioned examples of archiving activities had taken place amidst his fear of impending imprisonment for unresolved debts. He had namely treated this paper archive as an important part of his material estate that warranted protection: facing the bailiffs and dispossession, he was willing to pursue active measures to avoid the loss of the papers he had invested considerable time and energy in collecting. This question of ownership was further evident in the efforts he made to acquire items for his collection, especially those he had himself written. Hyder Edward Rollins, the later academic editor of Keats’s correspondence, thus pointed to the historical mystery surrounding the means by which Haydon, following Keats’s death, had managed to retrieve his letters sent to the poet. 506 That he was prepared to struggle in this way to retain control over his

502 Haydon, Diary, 3:463 [12 June 1830].
503 Haydon, Diary, 5:359 [28 April 1844].
504 For Martineau, see Hayter, A Sultry Month, 171.
505 See also Haydon, Diary, 5:384 [18 August 1844] and 5:386 [25 August 1844].
506 As Rollins noted, it is hard to explain how Haydon got his Keats letters back: “just how can only be guessed.” John Keats, The Letters: 1814–1821, 2 vols. Ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 1:76–77; 2:53. These particular letters would later come to be included in the volumes of Haydon’s correspondence edited by his son: Correspondence and Table-Talk, 2:1–17.
correspondence is revealing of the significance he attached to his archive more broadly.

If he committed such memorial labour to compiling and managing his collection, what did he actually do with this varied correspondence once it was consecrated within his archive? How had it been used as part of his attempts to make his own monument? His incorporation of such materials in his diary, and also the unfinished volumes of his autobiography, is clear—and entirely obvious. But an incisive sense of what was actually at stake in including these items in his life-writing is provided by the following description of his practices related to this. Writing in his diary on 25 August 1844 he noted how he “[w]rote my Life all day. Extracted valuable correspondence.” Of course, Haydon had been referring to “extracting” here in the practical, textual sense of copying an extract from his letters and transcribing it in the manuscript of his Life. But considered from the perspective of the political economy of immortality, he was also simultaneously engaged in extracting value from these documents and transferring it to his own text. Having granted worth to this correspondence in making it part of his archive, he now also sought to mine his collection for the most valuable parts. Once located these were to be extracted and put to work in the telling—and monumentalizing—of his particular life. As an appropriation of commemorative value this was therefore an exemplary DIY project.

Rather than simply hero-worship or tuft-hunting, Haydon’s use of letters had been a productive part of his efforts to make his own immortality. In extracting from “a magnificent letter of Keats,” he was not merely boasting about his acquaintance with the poet but also making a significant claim of equivalence for himself, as being someone of monumental value. Insofar as his life-writing included correspondence with the eminent public figures of the day—Goethe, Sarah Siddons, Wellington, and Wordsworth, among many others and as his diary constantly invoked parallels with Napoleon—Haydon was engaged in framing the particular register of his life as a living immortal.

By fashioning his own context in this way he was placing himself among such figures, and effectively appropriating their status in the process. Indeed, just as Bentham’s imagined future staging of the Auto-Icon had inserted him in a genealogy of illustrious thinkers, and as Soane’s bust had been displayed at the centre of a collection of famed heads, so too can Haydon’s practices be grasped as an attempt to fashion a self-made record of affiliation. While the force of this record may have been strengthened by the monumentalizing of

507 Haydon, Diary, 5:386 [25 August 1844].
508 A further telling example was when he had included “some beautiful letters of Keats, Wilkie, Southey, Wordsworth, Beaumont, & c” in writing his memoirs: noting they “will surely be interesting.” Haydon, Diary, 5:452 [8 June 1845].
others, as its creator and protagonist Haydon placed himself centre stage. In many ways his life-writing can therefore be compared with the fashioning of a personal pantheon like Soane’s: one which preserved pride of place for his own standing and achievements. In this sense, his use of such correspondence put the status of these other figures to work in promoting his own lasting worth.

The early nineteenth century also witnessed wider developments regarding the monumentalizing of paper documents taken to be part of history. Collections of historical sources thus began to be published as a form of national monument: a making public of archival material textually equivalent to the emergence of national museums, galleries and pantheons in this period, as Per Widén has recently suggested. But the example of Haydon presents a markedly different type of textual archiving at work. Instead of the national past being fashioned by a learned society for the edifice—and collective identity-making needs—of the present, this was rather the entrepreneurial efforts of an individual seeking to shape the material of a personal archive for future veneration. As an archival project involving such individual memorial labour, this was a markedly different type of history-making at work.

What we have seen here is the transformation of letters and the archive more generally into part of the media repertoire of self-made immortality. As we observed previously in relation to Soane, this mobilizing of what might seem everyday material into charged monumental resources was typical of the entrepreneurial imperatives of this new regime. Convinced he was dealing with valuable public documents for the future, Haydon sought to appropriate the reading public’s fascination with the personal correspondence of the great, and channel this towards his own legacy project. Using what had been revered souvenirs of the greatness of others and typical relics in an emergent celebrity culture, he put these materials to work in making his own monument: the paper ephemera of the present transformed into a pertinent means of

---


512 Beyond his diary and autobiography, a significant material expression of this was his posthumously-published Correspondence and Table-Talk (2 vols., 1873). These may have been edited by his son but their public existence still hinged upon Haydon’s prolonged labour in managing these documents while alive. In a significant sense, the precondition for this retrospective publication of a textual monument was the devoted practices of archiving he had engaged in throughout his adult life.
making permanent. Indeed, insofar as he was recycling these carefully-stored letters within the new memorializing frames of his diary and *Life*, he was insisting such correspondence had an important role to play in sustaining his own future immortality as a public figure.

**Haydon’s *Life* as epitome of self-made immortality**

When he came to start work on his “memoirs” Haydon turned to the carefully-archived papers of his journals and correspondence as its material base. In seeking to record the approved version of his *Life* for posterity, he therefore drew upon resources doggedly accumulated over a lifetime of self-recording. The writing process had proved a painstaking one: demanding systematic labour in sorting through and prioritizing amongst this material. He had hinted as much in a letter to Elizabeth Barrett in 1843, outlining his progress in adding “10 more pages to my life, and 2 letters of his [i.e. David Wilkie],” and where he explained his plans to “go on arranging every thing from my journals under each year.” It was also a project demanding considerable energy and exertion, as the notes in his diary repeatedly reported: “[w]rote my memoirs—hard.” While writing his autobiography with his diary as source he simultaneously used this diary to record his progress in producing these memoirs, in a process of self-documentation that would have impressed Schmitt’s compulsive archivists, the Burubinks.

If this was typical of the self-historicizing activities of a living immortal—i.e. the practices of taking life masks, keeping a journal, and preserving correspondence as a personal archive I have highlighted here—Haydon’s autobiography was also emblematic of the workings of a self-made immortality regime more generally. In the closing part of this chapter I bring these principal features into focus, showing how he made this textual monument a charged tool in the wider struggle to be remembered.

**Highlighting a self-made immortality regime**

The first and most obvious sense in which Haydon’s *Life* proved characteristic of this broader regime was in the insistence upon a DIY perspective for fashioning lasting value. As a keen participant in the Romantic culture of venerating “great men” he had been an avid consumer of the biographical volumes that contributed to a wider “domestication of genius” in this period: ranging from Boswell’s *Johnson* and Vasari’s *Lives* to more recent works on Nelson and Byron, he had proclaimed of this reading “[h]ow delightful it is to read the delightful lives of ambitious men.” Part of what he was doing in

---

513 Haydon to Elizabeth Barrett, 18–19 April 1843, in *Invisible Friends*, 78.
514 Haydon, *Diary*, 5:117 [7 January 1842].
writing his own life was making a claim of equivalence to place himself among the likes of “Caesar, Alexander, Napoleon” and those great “lives that really delight”—in line with the various practices of self-consecration examined above.\footnote{Haydon, \textit{Diary}, 3:589 [22 December 1831].} But using his autobiography to make a textual monument also demonstrated a larger point about the imperative for self-representation underpinning this new commemorative space.

This was evident from the specific context in which he wrote his \textit{Life}, where he objected to his depiction in Allan Cunningham’s recent biography of his friend and fellow painter, David Wilkie.\footnote{Having obtained a copy of Wilkie’s biography, he spent several pages in his diary listing the errors and “mistakes” of Cunningham’s work. Haydon, \textit{Diary}, 5:265–68 [26 April 1843].} Offended by the “inventions” of “a Man so unfit for Biography as Cunningham,” Haydon had been spurred on in the writing of his own memoirs.\footnote{Haydon, \textit{Diary}, 5:265–66 [26 April 1843].} Instead of being (mis)represented by others he was therefore driven to provide his own account of himself for future publics.\footnote{Cf. “In consequence of Wilkie’s life, I have taken up my own.” Haydon to Elizabeth Barrett, 18–19 April 1843, \textit{Invisible Friends}, 78 [Letter 41]. The sense that he was provoked into writing his autobiography was further evident in the following: “Spent the day in writing my Memoirs. Wilkie’s memoirs have roused me up.” Haydon, \textit{Diary}, 5:269 [30 April 1843].} As he pointedly phrased this instinct: “I do not want to leave it to be done by others.”\footnote{Haydon to Elizabeth Barrett, April 18–19, 1843, in \textit{Invisible Friends}, 79.} Exploiting a connection between the genre of autobiography and the individual brokering of immortality that was given for contemporaries, the example of Haydon suggests how within this memorial regime it was principally a matter of \textit{every man his best biographer}.\footnote{This was a point noted by Bentham, as discussed previously in chapter 2: cf. Bentham, \textit{Auto-Icon}, 2. While Bentham had been positive of this expansion of the auto-logic he advocated, not all among his contemporaries welcomed the proliferation of the autobiography-as-claim-to-individual-immortality. Objecting to the assertions upon lasting value presented in the memoirs of the clergyman Percival Stockdale, Isaac D’Israeli had thus warned of the memorial overload that this expansion of the genre risked: “an epidemical rage of auto-biography” was to be expected, and London “will be peopled solely by ‘men of genius.’” Isaac D’Israeli, “Review of ‘Memoirs of Percival Stockdale,’” \textit{Quarterly Review} (May 1809): 339.}

Where this showed an individualist resistance to being (unflatteringly) subsumed within the biographical discourse of the age, Haydon’s autobiography further witnessed the anti-institutional bent produced by the logic of \textit{every man his own}. Framing his career as the struggles of individual genius pitted against structural iniquities, he made such opposition to authority a defining feature of his life-writing project. As he explained in the introductory chapter to this text:

\begin{quote}
Every man who has suffered for a principle and would lose his life for its success […] every man who, like me, has eaten the bitter crust of poverty, and
\end{quote}
endured the penalties of vice and wickedness where he merited the rewards of virtue and industry—should write his own life.522

That this was a matter of individual justification in a broader politics of memory was made yet clearer with his desire to “put my countrymen in possession of my own case,” since “the oppressor, being a body [i.e. the RA] is sure to survive.”523 Just like the one man shows he had staged to exhibit his art, his Life was thus intended as a statement against the established authority of institutions such as the Royal Academy, and the pernicious influence he saw these exerting over the production of lasting renown.

The second characteristic feature of his autobiography was its entrepreneurial mode of production. We noted above how Haydon used his own labour in recording the details of his life, and how he then used this diary and his personal correspondence as raw materials to be extracted and engaged in enhancing the commemorative force of his memoirs. This calculated approach was closely aligned with his earlier reflections upon the question of “durability,” where he had posited that “it is our duty to make use of the fallible materials of this life to obtain an infallible Fame, & to be an everlasting example.”524 In doing precisely this—i.e. by turning to such “fallible materials” as his archived papers to fashion his own monument—Haydon’s Life forcefully captured how resources in this regime were to be strategically managed to yield maximum future results.

This sense that his autobiography was being deployed as a potent memorial tool—as something to be protected and taken care of as an investment in legacy—was accentuated by the range of practical efforts he had taken to guarantee its continued existence. Where the wealthier, professionally more successful figure of Soane was able to rely upon his house museum as a container for safeguarding his numerous self-made legacy resources, Haydon had been forced to improvise and pursue more resourceful solutions to his pressing storage problems. Facing imprisonment for debt in 1843, he thus removed his paper monument-in-the-making from his home to keep it from the bailiffs: “I locked up my lectures, papers, & Journals, & sent them to my dear Aeschylus Barrett.”525 Similarly, four days before he committed suicide he had once again packed into three trunks the manuscript of his partly-written Life, his diary, and his papers and sent them off to Elizabeth Barrett’s house

524 Haydon, Diary, 2:34 [13 June 1816].
525 Haydon, Diary, 5:294 [1 July 1843]. The value he attached to these objects as memorial resources was accentuated by the imploring request he made to Barrett in sending them there: “I consign to your care my chest of private papers—take care of them for God’s sake.” Haydon to Elizabeth Barrett, 28 June 1843, in Invisible Friends, 119.
for what she would later describe as “shelter.”

Having laboured to record this account of himself he was thus prepared to pursue innovative strategies in the short term to make sure it survived to serve his renown in the longer run.

His management of these papers exemplified the diligent husbandry of the materials of immortality so central to this regime. Protecting the physical things that were to do his memorial work in the future when he was no longer around to stage the one man show, this highlights the vital role that material artefacts were envisaged to play here. Taking creative measures to avoid the paper traces of his life being seized and lost, Haydon worked feverishly to avert the prospect of memorial oblivion that, in a significant sense, had prompted the emergence of this regime. As an object designed, made, and sheltered to enable future memorializing, his autobiography thereby epitomized the self-made monument.

The final aspect Haydon’s autobiographical project captured was the significance of self-commemoration in this new memorial space. Seeking to determine the future public terms of his Life, he was drawing on a long-held concern with staking control over the conditions of reception for his paintings. Beyond staging the one man show he had variously attempted to dictate the optimal display conditions for his works. When Christ’s Entry had been purchased in 1831, he thus sent an accompanying letter explaining to its new American owners how the painting might best be preserved: insisting “[i]f it be kept from Damp & in constant light, it will last for ages.”

The same preoccupation with terms of display and lasting for ages had been at work in Haydon’s approach to the prospective reception of his autobiography. In the instructions left in his will he therefore specified in painstaking detail just how this paper monument was to be made public. On the one hand, he requested for the publisher “Longman to be consulted about” the prospect of his “manuscripts and […] memoirs in the possession of Miss Barrett, 50 Wimpole St., in a chest.” On the other hand, in addition to this strategy for bringing his textual legacy out of storage and before a wider commercial audience, he also attempted to exert exact final control over its contents. Accordingly, he insisted that the completed volumes of autobiography were not to be subjected to the redactional energies of anyone

---

527 More specifically, he had instructed that the painting “should be hung 4 feet from the ground, & tipped forward on top about 6 feet from the wall—It should be placed on the East side of every Room, to catch the glow of the setting Sun—but take care the Sun does not shine on it—above all things beware of Varnish—dust it & Rub it, as directed & it will last for years.” Haydon, “Letter to Col Wild, 6 October 1831”, reprinted in Marcia Allentuck, “Haydon’s ‘Christ’s Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem’: An Unpublished Letter,” The Art Bulletin 44:1 (1962): 53–54.
528 Haydon, “last will,” clause 13, in Haydon, Autobiography, 3:352.
else. Having fastidiously made his own monument, he endeavoured to keep it that way: the self-made *Life of a self-made individual*, “which I wish not curtailed by an editor.”529 Haydon thus worked hard to shape the precise way in which he would “give the World my records of 40 years.”530 Just as with Soane’s museum *Description*, the guide of his life to be presented to future publics was to be “written by himself.”531 He had even tried to define the precise future readership for these memoirs: insisting throughout it was to be understood and used as “a guide-book to youth,” one intended “to be useful to students in every way.”532 Framing his autobiography in terms of its prospective function as a pedagogical tool “for Artists—morally & mentally,” he designed it as a means to secure his urgent desire for continued commemoration as an artist and public figure of worth. Through such an ambition, he explained, “I wish to live in the domestic hearts of my dear Countrypeople & women.”533 Imagining he was leaving his *Life* as an instructive practical monument to aspiring artists, in much the same way Soane had envisioned his house as an Academy for architects, Haydon sought to shape the protocols for its future use. In doing so he was typical of the wider imperative within this regime not only for each individual to make their own monument, but also that they dictate the particular practices of commemoration with which these monuments were to be associated. Facing the prospect of otherwise being forgotten, as little as possible was to be left to chance.

**The effort to be remembered**

Haydon used his autobiography to preserve himself: making it a recording device to enable his future veneration, since “[e]verything that has been recorded is recoverable, and can be reinstated as an element of some future present,” as Bauman suggested.534 The DIY memorial work undertaken to fashion these carefully-amassed paper traces of journals, letters, and recollections into a coherent textual *Life* had pointed towards a basic point of tension in how Haydon approached the distinction of canonical value: one

---

529 See his exact instructions here: “My memoirs are to 1820; my journals will supply the rest. The style, the individuality of Richardson, which I wish not curtailed by an editor.” Haydon, “last will,” clause 13, in Haydon, *Autobiography*, 3:352.

530 Haydon to Elizabeth Barrett, 8 April 1843, in *Invisible Friends*, 75.

531 This was Soane’s formulation from the final version of his museum guide, cited above in n. 288: Soane, *Description* (1835), title page (italics added).

532 Haydon, *Autobiography*, 1:100, 134. He had expressed this point frequently throughout the text, perhaps most succinctly in the proclamation that “I write this life for the student.” Haydon, *Autobiography*, 1:183. Similar sentiments were also recorded in his diary during the writing process: i.e. “What a lesson they will be to Young Men!” and “The Life will interest people much indeed, especially the rising youth.” Haydon, *Diary*, 5:117 [7 January 1842] and 5:447 [25 May 1845].

533 Haydon to Elizabeth Barrett, 16 May 1843, in *Invisible Friends*, 98.

hinging upon the question of how living immortality in the present might be sustained as continued reverence in the future. As we saw earlier in this chapter, he had long lived as if his elevation to canonicity was already achieved and his future renown a given—as the notion of realizing “immortality in this world” readily testified. But if this suggested he need not bother himself with any particular efforts to safeguard his reputation in posterity, he had also been variously preoccupied with the propensity for cultural memory to fail, and the fragile basis of any claim to “durability.”

Visiting the grave of his children in 1833, he thus noted how the name on the nearby grave stone of one of his former idols was “almost obliterated.” Since “flat vault stones have the inscription sooner obliterated than those engraved on upright ones,” he observed, that of “Mrs. Siddons’ is nearly out.” With Siddons dead but two years previously, this particular graveyard experience offered Haydon a compellingly literal demonstration of Pogue Harrison’s later point that history can often be felt as “a force of erasure rather than of inscription.”

This essentially modern perception that time can destroy while recording devices remain fallible helps make sense of Haydon’s energetic attempts to control the terms of his posthumous reception. Grasping the terrifying proximity of memorial oblivion prompted greater efforts to guarantee the successful inscription of his own name. Although convinced of his status as a living immortal he had therefore taken particularly concrete steps not only to “leave a monument behind me,” but also to dictate how this would be used to sustain his future renown. As we have seen, he did so through the particular medium of the autobiography, making the written life serve as textual monument and a pointed piece of posthumous publicity. Haydon thus deployed the self-made published text as a means of battling against the “obliteration” he recognized all around him.

535 See his comments in 1835 that “I am poor but immortal,” and “[m]y own personal immortality I have obtained.” Haydon, Diary, 4:298 [9 July 1835] and 4:322 [6 November 1835].

536 This notion of “durability” contra “the fallible” was a long-standing interest of Haydon’s: i.e. Haydon, Diary, 2:34–35 [13 June 1816].

537 Haydon, Diary, 4:86 [22 May 1833] and 4:88 [23 May 1833].

538 Harrison, Dominion of the Dead, 16.

539 As Paul Connerton has recently argued regarding the wider operations of modern memory production, there is an “intimate link between memorialisation and the moment of felt transience.” Connerton, How Modernity Forgets, 28.

540 For his desire to create his own monument (forceful further evidence against the claims of Higgins and Tuite that Haydon had turned away from posthumous in favour of contemporary fame—cf. n. 417 above), see Haydon, Diary, 5:408 [1 January 1845].
Conclusion

Haydon’s strategy of entrusting his lasting reputation to the medium of paper has largely been proven a prudent one. Introducing a new edition of the Life in 1926, Aldous Huxley expressed the now commonplace view that the painter’s continued presence among the canonical figures of the Romantic period rests more on his writings than anything he ever painted. This was presented as both critical verdict and a regret about paths not taken, since Huxley judged him “a born writer who wasted his life making absurd pictures when he might have been making excellent books.” Huxley was therefore grateful for the “[o]ne book […] he did contrive to make,” asserting that Haydon’s “Autobiography reveals his powers.”

As I have shown, though, the particular “powers” thereby revealed were as much those of a commemorative agent urgently seeking future attention as they were the proof of literary prowess articulated by Huxley. Neither was this simply a question of a single, stand-alone volume: Haydon’s autobiography was part of a wider constellation of forms (the diary, the archived letter, the sketch) that variously embodied his larger project to preserve himself in paper, as I have highlighted. Partly the result of a commitment to document living immortality, his investment in these recording devices also witnessed the fervent effort to shape the particular version of himself to be left behind for the scrutiny of future publics.

In adopting this resourceful approach, Haydon proves a compelling case of legacy-making on the fly: demonstrating the improvised attempts to make immortality of an impoverished artist lacking the wealth and resources Bentham and Soane could draw upon for their respective projects. By turning to the potential of paper, Haydon gestured towards the workings of the regime earlier advocated by Bentham in which “monuments of stone or marble” would successively come to be superseded by more accessible materials.

Making life-writing the means to fulfill his urge to bequeath a lasting monument, Haydon drew upon a connection between immortality and the autobiographical frame self-evident to his contemporaries. Charles Dickens had thus been offended by these practices of using ostensibly private papers to pursue posthumous publicity: turning to Haydon as inspiration for the deeply unsympathetic Harold Skimpole in Bleak House, who similarly “left a diary behind, with letters and other materials towards his Life.” In a pointed

543 This is taken from the longer formulation about the media workings of Auto-Iconism cited previously (n. 98): cf. Bentham, Auto-Icon, 3.
544 Skimpole had also “left a diary behind, with letters and other materials towards his Life; which was published, and which showed him to have been the victim of a combination on the
critique of the moral economy of self-made immortality in general Dickens likewise reprobated those who “jot down in diaries the events of every day, and keep a regular debtor and creditor account with heaven, which shall always show a floating balance in their own favour.”

But Haydon was doing more than simply pursuing retribution or self-justification with his preserving of paper traces. He was also engaging in these practices to make himself part of future history. In doing so he was countering memorial oblivion by securing his status in terms of what Pierre Nora has aptly described as “historical capital.” Nora argued more broadly that this early nineteenth-century period gave rise to the making of *lieux de mémoire*: with the modern sense of history-as-loss prompting sustained efforts to invest this capital at particular sites “where memory crystallizes and secretes itself.” In the extended plans made for his written *Life*, Haydon sought to build his own site of memory for prospective commemoration: creating the means for his own future memory to be crystallized and secreted. Using the scraps of paper he fashioned to store and shape himself he forcefully delivered on the promise of *every man his own monument.*

---


Figure 5.1 Sanctifying Dickens; the making of an unwilling national icon: “The Grave of Charles Dickens in Poets’ Corner, Westminster Abbey.” Engraved drawing in *The Illustrated London News*, vol. 56 (Jan to June 1870). By courtesy of Sussex University Library.
5. Conclusion: self-made immortality in perspective

Dickens’s denouement
The unexpected death of Charles Dickens on the ninth of June 1870 prompted an outburst of commemorative energy. News of his sudden departure quickly became global, circulating “across Europe” and “the distant continents of India, Australia, and America” to reach what his close friend and biographer, John Forster, bombastically summarized as “every country of the civilized earth.” Even Queen Victoria had telegraphed her “deepest regret” from Balmoral upon hearing the news. 547 An important part of this press coverage had involved making the case for Dickens to be buried at Westminster Abbey: a place pointedly described here as “a shrine in which, from age to age, the last remains of many of our noblest, bravest, wisest, and best have not unworthily been laid.” 548 This “public homage of a burial in the Abbey” came to be enacted on the fourteenth of June, where, after a brief private funeral ceremony, the grave was subject to the attention of considerable “crowds” flocking to pay veneration. 549 Dickens’s gravestone was placed in Poets’ Corner in close relation to monuments for Shakespeare, Chaucer and Dryden, “the three immortals who,” Forster explained, “did most to create and settle the language to which CHARLES DICKENS has given another undying name.” 550 Within less than a week of his death he had thus been installed to a central position within the prestigious space of the national great; the insertion within this putative genealogy of English literature complete, his consecration to official immortality deftly realized.

That Dickens came to be canonized in this way was hardly surprising. The infrastructure and protocols for producing this type of immortality were firmly established by this point, consolidated over the course of the nineteenth century since those earlier instances of Reynolds and Nelson discussed in the

opening parts of this study.\textsuperscript{551} Similarly, the degree of popular support for such measures of public sanctification was largely to be expected for an author like Dickens, who had assiduously pursued an intimate engagement with his audience across more than three decades as a celebrity.\textsuperscript{552} Yet what was so remarkable about these arrangements for securing him an elevated place in the nation’s cultural memory was the extent to which they fudged the careful plans he had himself made for his future commemoration.\textsuperscript{553} Indeed, Dickens had formulated his will precisely as an attempt to control such practical questions of legacy. One significant desire expressed there was avoiding the elaborate material props of mourning variously satirized and castigated throughout his novels, in favour of a service carried out in “an inexpensive, unostentatious, and strictly private manner.”\textsuperscript{554} More strikingly, he had also pursued this inclination in relation to the specific types of memorial work he was willing to be subjected to in the longer term, imploring:

\[
[...]\text{my friends on no account to make me the subject of any monument, memorial, or testimonial whatever. I rest my claims to the remembrance of my country upon my published works, and to the remembrance of my friends upon their experience of me thereto.}\textsuperscript{555}
\]

He sought in other words to distance himself from exactly the type of self-monumentalizing practices that have provided my focal point in this study. Dickens thereby used his will to offer a public expression of his rejection of these practices: proclaiming he would \textit{not} be making his own monument—at least not in the material sense of an artefact to be designed, produced, and commemorated by future publics.

\textsuperscript{551} For the significance of Westminster Abbey as a site of invented tradition within this larger process, see Connell, “Death and the Author,” 578, and Matthews, \textit{Poetical Remains}, 222.

\textsuperscript{552} He had thus come to be considered a friend to many among his readers. See the opening sentence of his obituary: “One whom young and old, wherever the English language is spoken, have been accustomed to regard as a personal friend is suddenly taken away from among us.” The article similarly described Dickens as “the intimate of every household.” “Editorial,” \textit{The Times} [London, England] 10 June 1870: 9, \textit{The Times Digital Archive} (accessed 22 September 2018).

\textsuperscript{553} As George Orwell noted, “[e]ven the burial of his body in Westminster Abbey was a species of theft, if you come to think about it.” Here Orwell was referring to the fact that Dickens had hoped to be buried at Rochester Cathedral, before his body came to be appropriated as a focal point for national commemoration. George Orwell, “Charles Dickens” [1940] in \textit{The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell}, vol. 1, \textit{An Age Like This: 1920–1940}, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 454; Michael Slater, \textit{Charles Dickens} (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 613.


\textsuperscript{555} “The Will of Charles Dickens,” 517.
Rather than making his own statue, bequeathing his house as a museum, or leaving behind his *Life* in paper form, he insisted his posthumous reputation was to depend solely upon the “published works.” In marked contrast to the spectacular self-made monuments I have considered here—at least two of which he had intimate knowledge of—Dickens thus took a more parsimonious approach to shaping his legacy. In doing so he assumed a position closer to Hazlitt’s version of the posterity doctrine, with its dismissal of the material paraphernalia of celebrity culture and its insistence upon the work alone in determining lasting value. But in an age when the practices of self-monumentalizing had become more widespread, even such an apparently modest claim could be subject to scorn. While registering his resistance to these recently-established practices, Dickens nonetheless came to be admonished in the periodical press for the presumptive “ostentation” of self-made immortality.

**Encapsulating the regime of *every man his own monument***

That Dickens adopted such a firmly articulated stance against the material practices of self-monumentalizing is significant and serves as a pertinent frame to my concluding remarks here. For what this example so vividly suggests is the degree to which these practices—and the principles underpinning them—had become a given part of the wider commemorative landscape by 1869 when Dickens sat down to formulate these testamentary requests opposing them. This sense of a larger process of naturalization is reinforced if we take a step back and consider the broader panorama of such memorial projects over the course of the nineteenth century: from the varied efforts of artists like John Trumbull, Bertel Thorvaldsen, David d’Angers and Antoine Weirtz to create museums for their own works, to Augustus Comte’s insistence that his will be published and circulated posthumously together with his biography and correspondence; and from Goethe’s earlier attempt to institutionalize his personal archive, to J.M.W. Turner’s bequest to finance his

---

556 Dickens had actively engaged with both Bentham’s and Haydon’s legacy projects: coming into close contact with the Auto-Icon when visiting Southwood Smith, and writing a set of parodical letters imagining his own future auto-iconization; while he would later satirize Haydon’s vanity through Harold Skimpole in *Bleak House* (1852–3), a character who likewise left behind a diary “with letters and other materials towards his Life” to be published. For Dickens and the Auto-Icon, see the engaging discussion in Wood, *Dickens and the Business of Death*, 160–161.

557 As one critic of his legacy project censoriously observed, “[t]he ostentation of unostentatiousness is as offensive as the display of the most exaggerated love of posthumous honours and expensive obsequies”. The author of this acerbic critique of Dickens’s will then proceeded to castigate this apparently self-effacing position as but “the pride which apes humility.” “Mr. Dickens’ Will,” *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art*. 30, 30 July 1870, 134; Wood, *Dickens and the Business of Death*, 162.
own statue, and Isabella Stewart Gardner’s later endowment of her painstakingly-fashioned house museum.558

Taken together this array of projects points to the successive establishing of the notion of every man his own monument that took place in this longer period. My principal analytical work in this study has been to characterize the earlier stages of this development as the emergence of a self-made immortality regime. Instead of treating my empirical examples from early and mid-nineteenth century London as isolated oddities to be understood simply in terms of biographical eccentricities, one of my central interpretative claims has been that these cases constitute striking early instances of this broader phenomenon. Rather than emphasizing uniqueness I have focused upon highlighting the sense in which the projects of Bentham, Soane, and Haydon were typical of the workings of this wider regime.

In this concluding chapter I reflect upon the significance of this claim as a means of placing the story I have told here in perspective. I do so in two steps: firstly, by elaborating upon the key implications of this account for the existing historiography of this period; and secondly, by reflecting upon the present parallels prompted by these arguments about the historical coming into being of a self-made immortality regime. Before embarking upon this closing discussion I begin with a concise reformulation of my principal results. What were the characteristic features of this new regime? What was it more

558 The American history painter John Trumbull (1756–1843) had thus founded the Trumbull Gallery at Yale University in 1832, beneath which he was later buried along with his wife. Similarly, the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (1760–1844) had elected to be buried in the courtyard of his own, publicly-financed but personally framed, museum in Copenhagen. His fellow sculptor in France, David d’Angers (1788–1856) had established a museum at Angers that would reproduce his entire oeuvre in plaster, while Antoine Wiertz (1806–65), the later Belgian Romantic painter, had secured an arrangement with the state that his studio would be preserved as a museum for his works.


While hard to gauge just how widespread these self-monumentalizing practices had become, it is revealing that by the opening of the twentieth century such practices and their underlying logic were made the target for satire—as the instance of Schmit’s Buribunks (1917) demonstrated. That this remained the case through the latter decades of the century is suggested by the parodic efforts of Italian pop artist, Guglielmo Achille Cavellini (1914–90), whose project of “self-historicization” (1971–90) simultaneously employed and satirized these practices for producing individual immortality. For a sense of Cavellini’s project, see Raphael Rubinstein, “Guglielmo Achille Cavellini,” The Silo, 1 October 2013: http://thesilo.raphaelrubinstein.com/artists/cavellini (accessed 22 September 2018).
substantively Dickens had been opposing when he dictated no “monument, memorial, or testimonial” for the structuring of his future legacy?

The self-made immortality regime I have posited in this study has three constitutive components. Using the empirical details of my case studies I have characterized these in the following terms: (i) self-consecration, (ii) the making of the self-made monument, and (iii) the practices of self-commemoration.

The first of these components captures the challenge to existing operations of consecrative authority fundamental to the enabling of this new regime. As the every man his own genre suggested, this was a system in which the instantiation of authority essential to the production of lasting value had been shifted from centralized institutions such as church and state towards the Do-It-Yourself perspective of the individual. When immortality was no longer taken to be determined either by the central administrative instances of state authority or by patient submission to the “test of time,” it became rather a prospective concern: a potentially achievable and open future target to be strived towards. Integral to this foregrounding of posthumous recognition as a site of aspiration was the imperative for every individual to do their own memorial work. The practices of self-consecration this resulted in were therefore markedly entrepreneurial in character: with individuals not only assuming responsibility to make their own claims upon lasting value, but also investing considerable efforts and resources to materialize these claims.

The second component of this regime concerned the making of the material artefacts of memorialization. Here a significant part of the planning entailed by individual responsibility for securing lasting value was the selection of which media form to invest one’s claim upon the commemorative attention of the future. No longer beheld to the consecrative protocols and media repertoire of the established authorities, new emphasis instead came to be placed upon deliberating the design and material basis of the self-made monument. Indeed, in the increasingly crowded market for posthumous recognition that had so concerned the mid-century author of the Bentley’s Miscellany text, the question as to which particular form might best avoid the ignominy of memorial oblivion assumed a pressing urgency. Rather than trusting in conventional media such as the bust or the portrait, more innovative solutions to this posterity problem thereby came to be pursued.

But securing self-made immortality was not only a matter of designing a monument; the question of how such artefacts were to be used was likewise of central importance. Beyond making the monument, it was also incumbent upon the effective DIY claimant upon immortality to specify the practices via which this artefact’s continued significance would be maintained into the future. The third characteristic element of this regime was therefore the prescription of self-commemoration: the efforts to structure the future use and reception of the self-made monument, which drew upon the widespread contemporary awareness of the role of commemorative practices for the
continued presence of reputation over longer stretches of time. It thus fell to
the individual to direct the physical arrangements of their own posthumous
publicity campaigns. Making immortality within this regime also demanded
attention to sustaining it.

New directions in the history of nineteenth-century renown
In identifying these features I have provided a new account of the making of
immortality in Romantic Britain. Rather than simply adding further details to
the individual research traditions of Bentham, Soane, and Haydon, it is at this
aggregate level that my study offers new insights and perspective. What does
this account mean for our understanding of nineteenth-century recognition?
What is the broader significance of this characterizing of self-made
immortality? I suggest that in looking beyond a Romantic understanding of
the relation between present and future renown, we need to think again about
how these modes could interact.

The principal implication of this study concerns the problematizing of the
dichotomy between present recognition and future renown that has been a
constitutive reference in my analysis. As we have seen, this distinction had
been a central part of the Romantic posterity doctrine and was encapsulated in
Hazlitt’s concern to separate the “popularity, the shout of the multitude, the
idle buzz of fashion, the venal puff, the soothing flattery of favour or
friendship” he associated with modern celebrity from the lasting value of
proper “fame.”559 This has typically been used in subsequent research as a
marker to date the emergence of modern concerns with canonicity, on the one
hand, and a distinctive celebrity culture, on the other, with Antoine Lilti’s The
Invention of Celebrity (2017) a characteristic recent example.

Accounts such as Lilti’s suggest that from the beginning of the nineteenth
century monumentality and celebrity were clearly demarcated and
distinguishable: each with its own operative logic, each its own temporal order
and set of practices.560 Echoing the separating force of Hazlitt’s argument, two
largely distinct fields of research enquiry have long since developed to explore
each part of this dichotomy in the nineteenth century and beyond. Literary
scholars such as Bennett and Newlyn have thus turned to Hazlitt to show how
poets deferred to the future appeal of a place in the canon as a defensive
response to the emergence of a mass public; while recent histories of Romantic
celebrity have made a concerted effort to explore the other side of his contrast
in exploring the making of popular celebrity.561

561 Bennett, Romantic Poets; Newlyn, Reading, Writing, and Romanticism; Mole, Romanticism
and Celebrity Culture.
In this sense, this distinction has a continued force upon the very structure and emphases of research on the fame and memorial cultures of this period. This understanding of the relations between these forms of recognition has long since become naturalized to the point we no longer see the work it does, and the degree to which it continues to shape how we look at such matters today. The way in which Lilti frames the traditional notion of posthumous glory as a foil to define an ephemeral modern celebrity is but one striking case of this. For a text preoccupied with the secular afterlife of words, Hazlitt’s essay can therefore be understood as having enjoyed its own notable survival.

But the status granted to Hazlitt in this context is far from unproblematic. Using his division in the way outlined above treats this as an empirical judgement upon his times—that celebrity and monument were separate concerns. But his separation was not descriptive but rather normative: an attempt to claim that proper fame ought to be bracketed from popular renown, as a response to a specific set of circumstances concerning the problem of lasting value in an age of mass reproduction. Interpreted this way, this distinction between posthumous renown and ephemeral celebrity becomes as much a matter of hope than a fait accompli. Despite the force of Hazlitt’s arguments to the contrary, it has been a principal claim of this study that it is possible—then as now—for celebrity and monument to interact beyond simply binary opposition.

Once the opposition of lasting fame and popular renown is no longer assumed, we can redirect our attention towards understanding how these forms of recognition could co-exist and interact. The empirical instances of self-made immortality considered here make clear that the boundaries between celebrity and monument were messier and more complex than Hazlitt’s neatly-drawn borders: with Bentham’s appropriation of the display protocols of popular exhibition to fashion his own monument an especially striking case of such a convergence. But in moving away from this constraining dichotomy we also need to interrogate other possible relations and engagements of these forms in this early nineteenth-century period and beyond. How did fame and celebrity come to interact and to what effect?

In short, we need to think about new histories of celebrity-monument interactions: ones prepared to look beyond the assumptions of this Romantic inheritance in their framing and writing. As the examples of Bentham, Soane, and Haydon suggest, approaching this demands an alertness to the presence of such interactions beyond the confines of modern disciplinary boundaries. While the recent turn within literary scholarship to examine the engagement of Romantic poets with the workings of the celebrity system is undoubtedly

---

562 Lilti, Invention of Celebrity, 5.
one possible lead in pursuing this history, there are numerous other fields of
cultural production where we might productively seek such interactions.563

The many forms of public exhibition in this period provide a suggestive
starting point for further reflection on these questions. Given that commercial
and canonizing concerns were so closely interwoven in an exhibition like
Madame Tussaud’s, this offers a particularly apposite case to explore the
interdependence of celebrity and monument—of commerce and canon—in
this period. Once these are not regarded as diametrically opposed regimes of
value, new lines of historical enquiry become possible. Bringing into focus
the shifting entanglements of celebrity and monument, we might finally be
able to move beyond the long shadow cast by Hazlitt and the Romantic
posterity doctrine in our understanding of these matters.

Digital immortality and the curating of the individual life

Examining the political economy of immortality thus prompts new historical
questions but what does my elaboration of self-made immortality in early-
nineteenth-century Britain have to say to our present moment? If the logic,
forms, and practices of this regime came to be normalized over the later
nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, how might it continue to shape the
making of immortality? Turning our attention towards the present, I bring this
study to a close with some broader reflections upon the resonances of the
history of self-monumentalizing for us today.

Do the conditions that enabled this regime still exist? In the closing decades
of the twentieth century, there was considerable doubt that this was the case.
While celebrity had undoubtedly proliferated, history and pantheon seemed to
have retreated in the aftermath of the Cold War, when claims about the “end
of history” were rife. Mona Ozouf pointed to the essential failings of the
Parisian Panthéon as a project of national memory over the two centuries of
its operation, highlighting how passé the notion of a site to embody the cult of
national greatness had come to appear.564 Writing around the same time in the
early 1990s, Bauman likewise insisted upon the basic inconceivability of
permanent value in a postmodern world without recourse to “history.” In this
context, he argued, immortality had become “as transient and evanescent as
the rest of things.”565

At first sight, the emergence of social media has forcefully confirmed
Bauman’s prophesy as to the death of immortality. The forms of digital
renown produced and circulated online seem definable precisely in terms of

563 i.e. Eric Eisner, Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Literary Celebrity (Basingstoke: Palgrave
Macmillan, 2009). Principally focused upon examining the interactions of what are now canonical
poets within the contemporary celebrity system, Eisner’s study does not consider the type
of overlaps between celebrity and monument I discuss here.
565 Bauman, Mortality, 164.
their transience. What the social space created by platforms like Facebook emphasizes is communication in the present, a continual updating of content in the here and now. This is predicated upon the immediacy of present recognition, as captured by the time scale of Instagram Story in which a user’s photos and videos are scheduled to disappear after but 24 hours of visibility. Such contracted horizons have prompted a range of attempts to theorize new types of temporality. According to Hito Steyerl, for example, a fragmented and distracted “junktime” combines “the demand for total presence and immediacy” with the scattering of causal links.\(^{566}\) Consideration of social media as a medium for a self-fashioning primarily focused on the present hints at the creation of a world mirroring Hazlitt’s earlier fears, in which “the caprice of fashion, the prejudice of the moment” and “fleeting reputation” now predominate over lasting fame.\(^{567}\) Seen from this perspective, immortality has come to be superseded by the ephemerality of celebrity.

But while the contrast between social media and the types of self-monumentalizing examined here might seem compelling, this is not the whole story. Even within the present-oriented space of digital recognition, the older temporal concerns of memory and lasting value have become notable. Facebook profiles of the dead are thus increasingly coming to be used as shrines by their digital inheritors, in a trend recently formalized by the introduction of a specific function for appointing an online executor.\(^{568}\) Digital legacy services also offer various forms of social media presence beyond the grave, allowing users to schedule future delivery of the posthumous content they wish to share.\(^{569}\) As one of the terminally-ill people turning to such sites noted, these provide a pointed form of digital survival: “you can make sure


the essence of who you are remains on the internet. It cheat’s death.”570 With individuals engaged in making their own immortality, these services outline precisely the sort of universal access Bentham envisioned for Auto-Iconism, as well as the DIY mediascape he proposed for producing commemorative value without the elite materials of stone or marble.

Where digital culture has enabled new projects of self-made immortality, it has also created a novel politics of memory with distinctive fault lines. At the centre of which is the charged question of who gets to control what is to be remembered, and an underlying assumption that the individual life can now be the sum of its digital traces and personal data (“the essence of who you are”). This was notably at stake at a broader level in recent EU efforts to legislate a specific “right to be forgotten.”571 But it also plays out in more intimate settings between generations, as the instance of children growing up to encounter their unauthorized digital footprints suggests. The concern with an unwanted online presence, be it via Google or a parent’s Instagram feed, has in turn generated new forms of memorial practices concerned with just self-erasure. This was sharply exemplified by the protagonist of Elena Ferrante’s recent Neapolitan novels whose urge “to disappear without leaving a trace” was embodied in the following desire: “I want to leave nothing, my favourite key is the one that deletes.”572 While such an instinct might seem some distance from the recording compulsion of the Buribunks we opened with, it still speaks of a powerful will to exert control over the particular traces of a life to be left behind. Even shaping how to be forgotten requires a sustained investment of memorial labour on behalf of the individual.

I prefaced this study with a quotation from Hazlitt that formed part of his attempt to insist upon the priority of lasting fame. Faced with an encroaching mass-media celebrity culture, he had sought to protect immortality by bracketing it from the workings of this more popular, present-centred renown. Looking towards contemporary theorists of social media we appear to have gone full circle. It is often the ephemerality of online celebrity that is granted centre stage today, with the endlessly renewed efforts of self-fashioning in the here and now taking the place formerly reserved for lasting fame. Yet just as Hazlitt’s dichotomy ignored the entanglements of these forms, this emphasis upon the primacy of the present risks overlooking more complex temporal configurations. To gain a better understanding of the culture of publicity we

live in today we need to think more about how celebrity can be accompanied, if not complicated, by types of renown with markedly different claims upon permanence and the future.

In this study, I have shown the overlaps of celebrity and monument in the early nineteenth century by excavating the political economy of immortality in the legacy projects of Bentham, Soane, and Haydon. If we want a more thickly-textured sense of how such entanglements continue to shape our digital present, we should start by taking a closer look at the history of the Romantic regime of *every man his own monument*. 
Acknowledgements

This thesis has been a long time in the making, and now that it is finally finished it is a pleasure to acknowledge the many people and institutions that helped make it possible.

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors Frans Lundgren and Peter Josephson, who have guided me through this process with critical sympathy and unerring patience (even when I was most uncertain about what I might have been fumbling for). I have learnt a great deal about the craft of doing historical research from our discussions, and I am particularly grateful for the many insights, suggestions, and encouragement they have given me over the course of this project. I would also like to thank Tom Mole for invaluable feedback in leading my Final Seminar, Andreas Nyblom for much needed reassurance in commenting upon my half-time manuscript, and Per Widén for pertinent reflections upon my unfolding interest in self-monumentalizing. Brian Young inadvertently put me on the trail of Bentham during a visit to Oxford in late 2014, having previously taught me much about the place of style in historical writing.

The Department of History of Science and Ideas in Uppsala has proved a congenial and stimulating research environment, and I wish to express my gratitude to all my colleagues for their help and guidance these last few years. More specifically, I have benefited greatly from discussion with Petter Hellström, whose curiosity and verve have invariably given me fresh impetus. Emma Nygren offered social and intellectual orientation when I was new at the Department, while Annelie Drakman and Carl-Filip Smedberg have been similarly generous office mates. I am further grateful for feedback during writing workshops from Helena Franzén, Pia Levin, Morag Ramsey, Andreas Rydberg, Linnea Tillema, and Hampus Östh Gustafsson. For critical suggestions at the departmental research seminar, various help with teaching, and general encouragement, I am also indebted to Jenny Beckman, Maria Björkman, Maja Bondestam, Thomas Brobjørk, Jens Eriksson, Torbjörn Gustafsson Chorell, Hjalmar Fors, Thomas Karlsohn, Solveig Jülich, Simon Larsson, My Klockar Lindar, Helena Tinnerholm Ljungberg, Julia Nordblad, Jacob Orrje, Mats Persson, Otto Sibum, Ylva Söderfelt, Petter Tistedt, and Sven Widmalm. I am likewise grateful to Bodil Axelsson at ACSIS,
Linköping University, for two particularly stimulating doctoral courses, as well as to Karin Fast and Anne Kaun for their teaching on one of these.

The practical undertaking of this research has depended on the knowledge and assistance of many librarians and archival staff. I would especially like to acknowledge the generosity of Sue Palmer, Archivist to Sir John Soane’s Museum, who went far beyond the call of duty in dealing with numerous requests for material, images, and references, and my many questions about Soane’s project. I have also received help from staff at the Royal Library in Stockholm and the Karin Boye Library in Uppsala, where thanks are due to Marika Wikner Markendahl for assistance with acquiring new studies.

While the final stages of writing up this thesis have proved an uphill struggle, I have been very fortunate in the help I have been able to call upon. Proofreading and editorial comments from Armel Cornu-Atkins, Miranda Cox, Helena Franzén, Petter Hellström, Martin Jansson, Morag Ramsey, Thor Rydin, Carl-Filip Smedberg, and Hampus Öst Gustafsson have improved the text vastly. Petter Hellström, Martin Jansson, and Morag Ramsey further assisted me with the final versions of the abstract and blurb texts. Ben Burbridge and Linnea Tillema provided pertinent comments on an earlier draft of the conclusion. Justin B. Jacobs offered detailed feedback on large parts of the manuscript, while my parents checked through the study as a whole. Beyond proofreading, Annelie Drakman has supported me enormously in this closing phase with practical tips, encouragement, help with an index page, and a general sense that things will all work out in the end.

Closer to home, I have been sustained—at times carried—by a web of friends and family. Eva Flemström and Hasse Rohlin have borrowed my children on numerous occasions to create writing space, as have Christer and Helene Ersson. Åsa Karlsson and Anders Bengtsson provided a haven for a week in Dalarna this summer so I could ignore my familial duties with less of the usual sense of guilt. Justin B. Jacobs and Anna Plassart have given me Skype supervision from the UK, while Colin Macleod offered welcome Skype distraction. Ben Burbridge has long since provided inspiration from afar. My brothers Alastair and David, and their respective partners Martin and Svenya, helped remind me of the important things, and my parents Rodney and Lesley have always supported me unconditionally. The pram in the hall is often taken as a hindrance but my children William, Clara, and Theodore have taught me a lot about creativity, curiosity, and perseverance, as well as giving a close hand example of self-collecting in their treatment of toys. Without my wife Elin this would not have been written. For all the patience, love, and strength you have shown me, this book is for you.

C.H.
Traneberg,
September 2018
List of images


2.2 Henry Hall Pickering, *Jeremy Bentham* (1832). Lithograph by Weld Taylor. Photo CC BY 4.0/ Wellcome Collection: https://wellcomecollection.org/works/gjfm2g3m.  39


2.5 “The seated figure of Jeremy Bentham in the original case.” Corporeal monument. Photo: C.F. Marmoy (March 1948) © Cambridge University Press.  71

2.6 Effigy of Frances Teresa Stuart, Duchess of Richmond (1703), by Mrs. Goldsmith. Westminster Abbey, London. Wax effigy. Photo © Dean and Chapter of Westminster.  73

2.7 Effigy of Catherine, Duchess of Buckingham (c. 1736), Westminster Abbey, London. Wax effigy. Photo © Dean and Chapter of Westminster.  74


2.11 John Field, “Portrait Silhouette Memorial Ring of Jeremy Bentham” (1822). Photo: Tony Slade © UCL Digital Media.

3.1 “View of the Entrance Front.” Soane, *Description* (1835), Plate I. Lithograph. Photo CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 © Trustees of the British Museum.


3.3 “View of the Museum (looking down to the Belzoni sarcophagus, and towards the Picture-Room).” Soane, *Description* (1835), Plate XXVIII, SM 6220. Lithograph. Author’s photo. By courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum.

3.4 Soane’s bathtub as storage device. Author’s photo. By courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum.


3.10 Soane’s ticket to Nelson’s funeral (1805), as part of newspaper clipping book. SM NC/ 2. Author’s photo. By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum.

3.11 Soane’s display case and inscription for Napoleon’s pistol, in the Breakfast Room at the museum. Author’s photo. By courtesy of the trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum.


3.15 Soane’s collage display on stair wall of his house. Author’s photo. By courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum.

3.17 John Martin, *The Fall of Babylon; Cyrus the Great defeating the Chaldean army* (1819; 1831). Mezzotint by J. Martin, 1831. Photo CC BY 4.0/ Wellcome Collection: https://wellcomecollection.org/works/pc9e75j3


4.5 Letter from Henry Fuseli to B.R. Haydon, 15 June 1805. Photo: MS Eng 1331.1 (153), Houghton Library, Harvard University. 200
Archival sources

I have consulted the following resources in undertaking research for this study.

**Bentham Collection, UCL Library Collection**

The Bentham Papers Database: http://www.benthampapers.ucl.ac.uk/


**Haydon Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University**


**Soane Museum Archive**

SM Archive NC/ 1–21 [Soane’s newspaper clipping books; plus loose sheets].

SM Archive Soane Case 11, 12, 13 [Soane’s notebooks with recipients of 1830 and 1835 Description catalogued].

SM Archive SNB 205 [Soane’s diary, referenced March 1831].

SM Archive Priv Corr I.H.11 [Soane’s correspondence with William Hazlitt and related materials].

SM Archive Priv Corr III.C.3.14 [Soane’s correspondence with Francis Chantrey].

SM Archive certified copy of Soane’s will, 11 May, 1833.
SM Archives Curatorial Papers Bonomi Box 1 [list of items in sealed receptacle, 1866].

Typescript transcript by Susan Palmer, Archivist, lists of items in sealed receptacles opened in 1866, 1886 and 1896.

SM Archive post-1837 press coverage of the museum.

**Printed sources at the Soane Museum Archive**


SM 6598: Soane, John. *Memoirs of Mr and Mrs John Soane, Miss Soane and Captain Chamier: Also a Brief Description of Pitzhanger Manor-House and Domains, so Far as They Are Concerned with These Memoirs* (London: privately printed, 1835).


**Other manuscript sources**

Periodical and press sources


Digital resources

Historic Hansard


National Portrait Gallery


Oxford English Dictionary


**Sir John Soane’s Museum Collection Online**


**The Times Digital Archive 1785–1985**


Digital literature


Published sources and literature


250


Tussaud, Madame. *Biographical and Descriptive Sketches of the Whole Length Composition Figures, and Other Works of Art, Forming the Unrivalled Exhibition of Madame Tussaud*. Bristol: J. Bennett, 1823.


Index of names

This refers to the principal names in the main body of the text and does not include those mentioned in the notes.

Allen, Matthew 20, 21
Bann, Stephen 85
Bauman, Zygmunt 11, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 75, 100, 128, 154, 160, 173, 192, 193, 210, 222
Bennett, Andrew 23, 24, 25, 89, 180
Bentham, Jeremy, 14, 19, 22, 36, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 51, 54, 55, 58, 59, 62, 64, 66, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 93, 94, 95, 97, 99, 100, 103, 106, 109, 111, 113, 119, 135, 136, 140, 157, 161, 165, 166, 172, 173, 175, 176, 177, 178, 180, 188, 196, 204, 212, 218, 220, 221, 224
Bonaparte, Napoleon, 33, 75, 126, 127, 131, 135, 170, 190, 199, 204, 207
Bourgeois, Sir Francis 100, 108
Bouwers, Eveline G. 29
Braudy, Leo 182
Britton, John 112, 119, 128
Buckingham, Duchess of 74
Burke, Edmund 27
Byron, Lord 33, 49, 50, 51, 66, 164, 176, 177, 202, 206
Chantrey, Sir Francis 161, 162, 163, 166
Clérisseau, Charles-Louis 150, 152, 154
Desenfans, Noel 100, 108
Dickens, Charles 212, 214, 215, 216, 217, 219
Fairburn, John 40, 41
Flaxman, John 28, 31, 41, 69, 70, 100, 133, 136, 176
Franklin, Benjamin 57
Fritzsche, Peter 143, 146
Gamer, Michael 23, 24, 82, 84, 120, 128, 167
Gandy, Joseph Michael 114, 115, 118, 119, 120, 124, 126, 127, 139, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 151, 152, 153, 154, 157, 158, 159, 162, 165
Gates, Amy L. 45, 55
Gitelman, Lisa 79
Godwin, William 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 60, 62, 64, 68, 87, 90
Harrison, Robert Pogue 87, 146, 211
Haydon, Benjamin Robert 36, 38, 169, 170, 171, 172, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187,
Institutionen för idé- och lärdomshistoria
Uppsala universitet
Uppsala Studies in History of Ideas (Nr 1-32: Skrifter)

Editors: Sven Widmalm och H. Otto Sibum

38. Torbjörn Gustafsson Chorell, Fascination (2008)

Beställningar gällande nr. 1–32 skall ställas till:
Inst. för idé- och lärdomshistoria
Uppsala universitet
Box 629
751 26 Uppsala

Beställningar gällande fr.o.m. nr. 33 skall ställas till:
Uppsala universitetsbibliotek
Box 510
751 20 Uppsala

ISSN 1653-5197