

Presenting ASU's Ethos
Old Main as a Seat of Argument

by

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ABSTRACT

Scholarship on the rhetoric of place and space provides ample precedent for the study of structures as rhetorical texts; real and imagined places which convey meaning or memory, particularly monuments, memorials, and museums have been extensively studied, but loci of identity and history in institutions of higher education are under-examined. The following analysis of Arizona State University's Old Main building seeks to fill a gap in the study of place and space. As an entity which produces its own powerful discourses, Arizona State University expresses its historicity and institutional goals through varied and numerous media, but Old Main is one of the most critical, for the structure acts as an ethical proof in ASU's argument for its character, endurance, and worth. This examination addresses how ASU's *ethos* is articulated through the experiences of Old Main's past and current users, the instructional historical texts and artifacts displayed in the structure, the way that the building is mediated by ASU discourses, and the agency of the edifice itself. This work endeavors to answer Henri Lefebvre's call to improve widespread understanding of spaces as texts and their dialogue with users, and builds on the work of Carol Blair, Richard P. Dober, Diane Favro, and Bruno Latour, as well as that of Henri Lefebvre. To provide full context, this analysis integrates scholarship from the disciplines of campus planning, architecture, classical rhetoric, and the rhetoric of place and space.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my grandfather, without whom this would have been impossible.

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EXPLORING OLD MAIN

Due south of the Fulton Center, the hub of Arizona State University's administrative activity, stand the oldest buildings on the Tempe campus: the University Club and Old Main. These two Victorian-style structures, in coordination with the more modern Durham Language and Literature building, partially enclose a stately lawn dotted with trees: the "Old Quad." Old Main faces north, and to reach its distinctive sweeping staircase, a visitor must pass within a few feet of a circular fountain, a decorative element which has graced the quad for a hundred years ("The New ASU Story: Landmarks"). The entrance to the building is, and has always been, on the second story, which sits atop a split-level ground floor. Although the bottom floor was originally built to sit two feet below ground level, the entire building has clearly sunk several feet over the last century, as one can note in a visit to the semi-basement (Hopkins and Thomas 117). Once visitors ascend the stairs to the second-floor landing, they face an inscription on the landing's back wall which reads: "Normal School 1894," displaying the year the cornerstone of the building was laid and the name of ASU's earliest incarnation (115). Once inside the building, visitors may turn to the left and find large prints of two 1911 articles on ex-president Teddy Roosevelt's speech from the steps of Old Main, a plaque on the history of the building, and the front desk for the ASU Alumni Association. To the right of the entrance stands an enormous case of ASU-themed paraphernalia and photos. Nearly the entire entrance level of Old Main is dedicated for the use of the ASU Alumni Association, though the floor is open to the public. Visitors can, in a straight shot from the entrance, reach the Whitman Hallway, which features dozens of black and white photographs of the Old Quad and Normal School students from the ASU archives. Under

each photo is a small plaque with general information on the shot, and several framed appendices provide additional context (Fulton).

In the center of the second floor stands the wooden staircase leading to the third floor. Although the orientation of the staircase has been reversed from its original position as part of renovation efforts, the materials and design hold true to the original appearance (“Arizona State University’s Old Main”). The stairs branch to the east and west along the front edge of the building; the third-floor balcony is accessible by doors adjacent to the top of the staircase. The east wing of Old Main’s third story is home to the Carsten Ballroom, a spacious, elegant room with a high, lofted ceiling, which is consistently used as a venue for a wide variety of non-ASU and university-affiliated events. On the opposite end of the floor are the Basha Family Library and the Tooker Boardroom, which likewise serve as event spaces. The two rooms feature murals commissioned as part of the New Deal in 1934, Joseph Henninger’s *Spanish Influence in Arizona* in the Basha Family Library and *Industrial Development in Arizona* in the Tooker Boardroom (“Old Main”). As the murals’ titles indicate, the themes of these works are the colonization of Arizona and the development of the state’s population and commerce.

Between the naming scheme of Old Main’s spaces and the display of historical artwork, photography, and newspaper articles throughout the building, the historicity of the building is clearly conveyed to visitors. Another discernible element are the placards naming each individual section: all of the spaces in the building, including the conference rooms, staircases, balconies, and hallways, bear the name of major contributors to the building’s restoration campaign, which took place in 2000. The brief history of the

edifice directly inside the main entrance establishes the age of the building and the significant events in its history, and the curious visitor has the opportunity to peer into this past via the photos displayed down the Whitman Hallway. The murals on the third floor are historical artifacts in and of themselves, in addition to depicting important events in the formation of Arizona. Henninger's works were originally placed in one of ASU's libraries, but moved into Old Main after it was refurbished ("Old Main"). The objects placed in Old Main provide material evidence of the building's age, and add a museum-esque quality to the space. The choices of pieces on display throughout Old Main—the murals, photos, and articles—point out the moments in Old Main's past that the university deems most relevant: Roosevelt's speech dedicating the Salt River Dam and moments from the university's earliest years. The renovation also constitutes an important chapter of the structure's life, an event attested to by the numerous and prominently placed donor placards.

The way that Old Main is used, in addition to the displayed evidence of the structure's historic role and indicators of its renovation, conveys the building's character to its audience. The objects arranged along the Whitman Hallway, the old-fashioned fixtures of the Carson Ballroom, the soaring stone façade, etc., contribute to create an experience for the 'locals' of the ASU community, visitors, even car-bound travelers who briefly glimpse the building from University Drive. Henri Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space*, notes that the constituent pieces used to construct space have long been deployed to invoke feelings or ideas:

[designers] have at their disposal both materials analogous to signs (bricks, wood, steel, concrete) and *matériel* analogous to those 'operations' which link signs together, articulating them and conferring meaning upon them (arches,

vaults, pillars and columns' openings and enclosures; construction techniques; and the conjunction and disjunction of such elements). Thus it is that the architectural genius has been able to realize spaces dedicated to voluptuousness (the Alhambra of Granada), to contemplation and wisdom (cloisters), to power (castles and châteaux) or to heightened perception (Japanese gardens). Such genius produces spaces full of meaning...(137)

However, as Lefebvre explains later in his work, the full nature of a space is more than the sum of its physical parts; there are several other factors to consider in truly understanding a structure or area. Through the combined use of several elements, Old Main fulfills the crucial role of establishing its university's legitimacy, broadcasting the school's important role in pioneering education for central Arizona, and using the aspirations of its past to project an equally ambitious future. In short, Old Main acts as an ethical proof in ASU's arguments for its upright, nuanced, and potential-rich character. This work examines the experiences of the structure's past and present users, the instructional historical texts and artifacts displayed in the Old Main building, the way the building is mediated by ASU discourses, and the agency of the building itself to examine how Old Main conveys the *ethos* of ASU.

This work conducts an analysis of Old Main and its role in presenting the *ethos* of ASU, which required the consultation of sources from several distinct areas of inquiry. Research on this topic necessitated examinations of the history of Old Main, the varying uses of the structure, how the building is deployed in ASU discourses, the rhetoric of place and space, and theory on university architecture, planning, and heritage. The arrangement of the findings presented in this analysis is based upon the approaches used by several scholars of material rhetoric, including Diane Favro, Kathleen Lamp, Bruno Latour, and Kirk Savage. In an effort to make the, quite abundant, information on Old Main as cohesive and clear as possible, the research findings presented here are arranged

into the four sections mentioned earlier: the experiences of the building's users, how the structure functions as a text and how the texts contained within it contribute to the larger text, how the edifice is mediated by ASU discourses, and how the agency of the structure itself contributes to its overall effect.

THE RHETORIC OF PLACE AND SPACE

Before discussing the particulars of Old Main's status as an ethical proof, one must first attend to the extensive scholarship that establishes the rhetoricity of places and spaces—and, for that matter, how one differentiates between the two terms. Carole Blair has contributed significantly to this topic, and offers a helpful framework for considering what counts as a rhetorical text. In her work "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as exemplars of Rhetoric's Materiality," Blair defines rhetoric as "any partisan, meaningful, consequential text, with the term 'text' understood broadly as a legible or readable event or object" (18). Blair's relatively wide definition of what constitutes a rhetorical text is shared by countless scholars and theorists, including Henri Lefebvre, who makes the additional assertion that "an already produced space [as opposed to those still in the process of being created] can be decoded, can be *read*" (*The Production of Space* 17). Work in material rhetoric, the rhetoric of museums and memorials, and any sort of inquiry into the rhetoric of place and space have compellingly demonstrated the rhetorical qualities of non-traditional texts, showing that objects and places can inform, persuade, and delight just as effectively as any Ciceronian speech. For example, Diane Favro and Kathleen Lamp have examined how a city can engender an argument, Kirk Savage and John Bodnar have explored how monuments convey meanings to their audiences, and Gregory Clark and Brian C. Taylor have unpacked the rhetoricity inherent to museums.

Places can deftly instruct, persuade, and forbid in addition to serving their more mundane, overt purposes. It follows, then, that a place such as Old Main can be read as a rhetorical text, with an intended audience, a message or several messages to convey to its audience, and an internal organization that helps achieve this end.

It is important to note that, among scholars on the rhetoric of place and space, there is some variation in how the “place” and “space” are defined, and debate regarding whether the two ideas are truly distinct, or, more generally, how these two concepts interact. Some scholars characterize space as a blank slate, an empty area between more distinct places, whereas Lefebvre and others use space as a catch-all term which can then be broken down into many categories, including social space, physical space, and mental space (14). In the introduction to *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, and Brian L. Ott observe that often, distinctions made between the two terms have to do with “physical situatedness”: “a *place* that is bordered, specified, and locatable by being named is seen as different from open, undifferentiated, undesignated *space*” (23). However, Blair, Dickinson, and Ott make the point that to frame place and space as mutually exclusive is to be overly reductive: it is more productive to examine how place and space work synergistically, to explore how the concepts form and complicate one another. For the purpose of understanding how Old Main functions rhetorically, this paper will primarily follow Blair, Dickinson, and Ott’s lead, while incorporating Lefebvre’s concept of space as endlessly multifaceted. Space will be considered a wide term relating to an area in which actions can occur and objects can reside, in both the physical and abstract senses, and place will be considered as a bounded location.

ASU's Old Main is a place in that it is a destination, a building to travel to for campus tours, a venue for private and official university events. One can find it on a map, spend time within its walls, glimpse it as one passes on University Drive; moreover, it has a definite location, a name, and distinctive boundaries. Old Main is also a space: it is an area that regularly serves a wide assortment of purposes and functions as the base of operations for several university enterprises. Old Main's most critical role is, however, that of a conceptual place: the structure's historical value—and the clarity with which that value is conveyed to visitors—renders it a seat of imagination and argument, a window to the past and a symbol of the ASU's enduring legacy.

Lefebvre comments that social space, which he terms “real” space, is both a “*product* to be used, to be consumed, [and] also a *means of production*”; networks of exchange and flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it” (85). The presence of the Alumni Association in Old Main and the constant deployment of images of the structure by ASU's leadership lends credence to Lefebvre's observation that space is also a “means of production”: the building is an immense nexus of fiscal and representational power. Funding for the university flows through Old Main via the Alumni Association's fundraising efforts, and the material and symbolic fabric of the place is used to attract and generate pride in the people who make up ASU's community—students, faculty, alumni, and other contributors. In seeking to understand the mechanics of Old Main's function, one can inspect the individual elements that give it power, but these individual parts function synergistically, rendering the building's overall impact a near-ineffable blend of experiential data and conceptual substance.

The image of Old Main and the concepts embedded in the building underpin the character of its institution. In ancient Roman culture, the concept of the *genius loci*, or resident spirit of a place, was used to account for the inherent qualities of a given locale. In “The *Genius Loci* of Hamar,” Ivo Strecker invokes Christian Norberg-Schultz’s articulation of *genius loci* as a way to convey a place’s “character,” specifying that “All places have character, that is, distinctive features, for example, ‘festive,’ ‘solemn,’ or ‘protective’ for buildings...people perceive the characteristics of their environment as a kind of ‘environmental image’ that provides them with orientation and a sense of security” (86). ASU’s “spirit of place,” given the varied ages and architectural forms of structures found on the Tempe campus, may seem dilute or self-contradictory. In the midst of mixed forms and evolving policies, ASU’s identity is stored safely in a single representational space: Old Main. The Victorian structure is a kind of *basso continuo* in the composition of ASU’s self-presentation: its presence is subtle but persistent, a driving force that reinforces the structure of ASU’s image. Old Main illustrates ASU’s past, which helps it act as a mode of production for ASU’s future, and allows the structure to function as a compelling symbol of the school’s established and enduring commitment to educational progress.

OVERVIEW OF CONSTRUCTION, RESTORATION, AND CURRENT USE OF OLD MAIN

The Arizona State Story, penned in 1960 by Ernest J. Hopkins and Alfred Thomas, Jr., provides a wealth of data on Arizona’s Old Main, including a thorough accounting of the drawn-out construction process. The structure was originally proposed by Edgar Stormont, the fourth President of the Normal School, who reputedly sketched a

preliminary design himself, though the hand-drawn document has since been lost to time (Hopkins and Thomas 117). Plans for a new building were proposed in response to a growing student population, which was fast outgrowing the school's original four-room home. Enrollment numbers attest to this need: between 1886 and 1900, the student population had ballooned from 33 to 131 (Smith and Terrill 118). The Normal School Board approved Storment's plan, resolving "to erect a three-story, fireproof building, the lower story being of brown stone, 12 feet high, 10 feet above and two feet under the ground, the two upper stories to be constructed of such materials and to such heights as may hereafter appear best" (Hopkins and Thomas 117). Not only was the building to be substantially larger than its predecessor, but its final plans included several state-of-the-art features, including "[the] beautiful inner stairways, the unprecedented plumbing, and other last-word features" (125). Most significantly, its height rendered it the "tallest structure in the territory," and it was the first building in Tempe to be wired for electrical lighting (Dober 35). It is worth noting that the initial plans for the building were flimsy, and several elements—such as the height of the building—were left undecided, even long after construction had already begun. As the structure's plans developed, however, several state-of-the-art features were added, including a "fancy roof," and electrical wiring (Hopkins and Thomas 115). As the plans for its construction matured, Old Main changed from a much-needed, practical solution for the Normal School's overcrowding to an ambitious project that would change the profile of the entire surrounding community.

Although the School Board and the Tempe community immediately showed strong support for this plan, its enactment proved difficult. A truly impressive array of

pitfalls and complications materialized throughout Old Main's creation, causing construction to span January 1893 to February 1898. By the time of the building's dedication, it had required the expertise of several architecture firms, countless contractors, and even legal/financial intervention by "a group of Tempe's leading citizens" (Hopkins and Thomas 115-119). The problems with Old Main's construction included the use of sub-par materials, disputes with contractors over worker pay, wait periods between tax income payments, complications due to weather, and even a plot—successfully enacted by a shady contractor—to make off with approximately \$4,000 of local investors' money (117-125). In spite of these pitfalls, the structure was completed, and dedicated with fanfare on February 4th, 1898 (125). For the dedication, a crowd of Normal School students and faculty, as well as members of the surrounding community, gathered to hear the Territorial Governor Myron H. McCord deliver a speech from the second-floor balcony on the power of knowledge and its benefits to the nation. Hopkins and Thomas state that, looking back on the four years of construction, the audience "had every reason to believe that something very real had been accomplished...Main Building was a symbol of maturity and success, and was accepted as such throughout Arizona" (125-6). The stature of the building was taken to augur well for central Arizona's future, in terms of educational advancement and material/technological progress. Old Main's completion proved the tenacity of the Normal School and marked a milestone in the development of central Arizona; moreover, the completion of the project provided evidence of the high aspirations of the Normal School and the city of Tempe.

Practically immediately, the Main Building became a locus of activity for Normal School students and faculty, as well as members of the surrounding community

(Spindler). The building was a prominent landmark, and a symbol of the Salt River Valley's growth and prosperity. Three months after the building had been completed, the Normal School Alumni Association—a group that was first formed by President Storment—sent a petition to the School Board, asking that the educational standard of the school be raised. This ultimately successful effort was spearheaded by a group of now-famous alumni, including Carl Hayden, and Joseph T. and John Birchett. Scholarship on ASU's early years consistently ties the physical increase in the Normal School's stature to the Alumni Association's request to improve the school's intellectual stature (Hopkins and Thomas 126). In 1908, a Science Hall (now the University Club) was constructed to east of the Main Building, followed by the establishment of an Auditorium/Gymnasium (which has been replaced by the Durham Languages and Literature Building) to the west in 1909 ("The New ASU Story: Landmarks"). These three structures partially enclose the "Old Quad," an area that acted as the heart of campus for over fifty years, until President Grady Gammage's massive building initiative in 1950-51 moved the center of campus southward. It is noteworthy that, despite the expansion of campus and the creation of the "new quad," or Hayden Lawn, Old Main itself is still referred to as "the centerpiece of the ASU Tempe Campus" (Smith and Terrill 117). The physical center of the campus has moved, but the "Old Quad" remains the conceptual heart of campus, which attests to the perduring relevance of Old Main to ASU.

From the time of their creation, Old Main and the adjacent quad not only served as the home of the Normal School's academic endeavors, but also served as loci of civic engagement. By virtue of the momentousness of the events it hosted, and its innate symbolic value as an academic institution and tangible evidence of progress, Old Main

quickly attained impressive significance to the members of the school and Tempe communities. For example, in 1911, the lawn in front of the Main Building was chosen as the venue for ex-president Theodore Roosevelt's dedication of the Salt River Dam, an enormous project which exponentially expanded the valley's agricultural potential. Roosevelt's speech, delivered from Old Main's front staircase, addressed the region's bright future, exhorting the audience not to squander the opportunity ahead: "You have [a] great material chance ahead of you. You can throw it away if you do not have the right kind of men and women. Do not flinch, do not foul, and hit the line hard" (Hopkins and Thomas 182). Robert Spindler, ASU's head archivist, remarks that Old Main was "the biggest grandstand space available for a U.S. President to speak [in the vicinity of the Salt River]" and "a really distinguished setting." The following year, a convocation was held on campus in honor of Arizona's newly-granted statehood, which drew crowds of locals to the Quad. Over fifty years later, ten Tempe citizens were arrested for being part of a war protest in front of Old Main, which housed the University's ROTC offices at the time (Spindler; Wakeland). Considering the previous, it is clear that Old Main—the anchor and *raison d'être* of the Quad—is a place of power. The building's educational purpose rendered it an instant center of culture, and its prestige is compounded by the material and technological achievement it embodies. This symbolic clout has been present from the building's inception and has grown steadily with each event held in and around it. Old Main's cachet makes it a resonant point of reference when assessing the legitimacy and established character of ASU, a point that will be addressed at more length further on.

Up until 1952, the Main building was a critical part of the Normal School's function, and contained, at various times, an assembly space, library, museum, and auditorium, dedicated Geography and Music classrooms, conventional classrooms, laboratories, and even an "armory" ("The New ASU Story: Landmarks"). As space was made available in the Auditorium/Gymnasium and the Science Hall, specialized rooms in Old Main were increasingly adapted for use as classrooms and faculty offices. In *From Normal School to New American University*, Dean Smith and Marshall Terrill note that, "virtually every student for a half century attended classes in Old Main" (118). However, by the early 50's, the several parts of the building were in poor repair, especially the front balcony and staircase. President Grady Gammage had, in 1949, gotten the Arizona legislature to approve a record-breaking grant of \$3.7 million for campus improvement, but these funds were almost entirely dedicated to the construction of new buildings—as opposed to the preservation of older structures. To maintain Old Main, Gammage approved a "quick fix": the demolition of the north balcony and staircase and subsequent replacement with a modern brick facade (Smith and Terrill 118; "Arizona State University's Old Main"). A central element of the obsessive urban renewal efforts of the mid-1900's was a rejection of old forms, and the repairs to Old Main illustrate the undervaluation of non-modern architecture typical of this period (Austin, Forrester, Steward, and Woodcock viii). In "Learning from the Past: Historic Districts and New Urbanism in the United States," David Hamer explains that "support for historic preservation in countries such as the US was, for a long time, weakened by a predominating belief in progress and a disposition to see the past as a hindrance to that progress and as something which society should be regarded as having evolved beyond.

The past has been seen as irrelevant...” (108). Even though the structure played a critical role in the early years of the Normal School, and continued to prove useful fifty years after its construction, its perceived importance did lapse. As Hamer notes, historic preservation was not a priority during certain periods—such as the mid-1900’s. Despite Old Main’s centrality in ASU’s early years, it was relegated to the background from 1960 until the mid 1990’s. During this time, Old Main was simply an aging structure with a modern facade, recognized for neither its venerability nor its modernity.

In most of the accounts of Old Main’s history, there is a lacuna on the use of the building between 1960 and 2000. A difficult-to-find exception, an ASU University Archives web page entitled “The *New* ASU Story: Landmarks,” observes that Old Main housed “Military Science, ROTC, and Aerospace Studies academic offices” starting in 1963, and that “University telephone services was established on the first floor ca. 1976,” but does not offer any additional data. The neglected structure was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985, and brought back into the view of the ASU community in 1996, when President Lattie Coor unveiled a \$5.7 million campaign to refurbish the building, headed by the ASU Alumni Association (“Preserve Old Main: History”). The ASU Office of Media Relations and Public information released a pamphlet on the renovation, which identifies the elements of the building and its history deemed most noteworthy: Old Main’s status as tallest building in the territory in 1898 and the first in Tempe to be wired for electricity, Roosevelt’s 1911 address on the steps, and the structure’s addition to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 (“Arizona State University’s Old Main”). The booklet also includes several quotes from members of the renovation committee and Alumni Association Board of Directors. Recurring themes

in these statements include the idea that the preservation of Old Main attests to Arizona's tradition of education, the centrality of the building in ASU's early years, and the assurance that the symbolic power of the building bolsters the future of the school. Overall, the pamphlet makes a vigorous effort to highlight the admirable, historic qualities of the building, a topic that had been neglected for several previous decades. The release of this packet coincided with Old Main's return to relevance in the eyes of ASU's stakeholders, and their determination to reestablish the building's prominence to the rest of the community.

Upon reviewing Old Main's history, one notes that the structure's relevance has waxed and waned several times, though it currently enjoys a celebrated status as a prestigious venue and the heart of ASU's Tempe campus (Hopkins and Thomas 117). Old Main spent its early years as an example of central Arizona's growing sophistication, educational capacities, and technological capabilities, but faded into near-obscurity beginning in the 1950's, which persisted until its historicity was publicly acknowledged in 1985. The shifting importance of the building seems to come full circle with the advent of its renovation, completed in 2000. Recently published scholarship on the building, including the section on Old Main in *From Normal School to New American University* and current ASU websites that discuss the edifice, emphatically attest to its importance. One may note that the resurgence in the prioritization of Old Main, especially in the context of the previous silence on the topic, is a significant rhetorical gesture; as Cheryl Glenn observes in *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*: "Like the zero in mathematics, silence is an absence with a function, and a rhetorical one at that" (4). The absence of ASU discourse on the topic of Old Main between 1960 and the 1990's indicates the

school's relatively low prioritization and/or valuation of the structure. Old Main's reemergence into the community's consciousness, as prompted by the efforts to refurbish the structure in 2000, suggests that a new exigency arose for reviving the building and its symbolicity. The gesture inherent to a lack of crucial use for, or attention to, the edifice for approximately thirty years is significant, especially when the trend dramatically reverses at the end of the period of neglect. By virtue of the previous progression, the artifacts and texts displayed in Old Main and the way that the post-renovation structure is mediated by ASU discourses, provide evidence that ASU's stakeholders have—recently—taken conscious ownership of Old Main and the ideas that it embodies.

THE EXPERIENCES OF OLD MAIN'S USERS

Old Main's history shows that the building has been utilized for a wide range of purposes, with varying levels of importance to the university. In the school's early years, the structure contained classrooms, labs, the library, etc., providing the most basic asset a school requires: learning spaces. Additionally, the ambitious design of the structure—and the growth of the school that rendered its construction necessary—made it a landmark, a symbol of cultural and technological progress for the school and surrounding community. As the building aged, and the “old quad” developed around it, the structure remained the center of the Normal School's activities, and the subject of great fondness for both current students and alumni. A short letter from a graduate of the class of 1918, written to the University Archivist in 1973, includes a photo taken from the second-floor balcony of Old Main—used by her classmates as a study hall—and mentions how Normal students would often sing a piece called “In the Vale of Old Tempe,” the lyrics of which nostalgically allude to Old Main and the Old Quad (Wakeland). Beginning in the 1950's,

between the building's increasingly problematic age and the abundance of new buildings on campus, Old Main became less relevant, eventually becoming a spot to which the university's odds and ends were relegated. In 1996, Lattie Coor and the ASU Alumni Association brought the historic value of the building back into the public view with the launch of the renovation project, and Old Main was once again presented as meaningful, not as evidence of progress—as it first was—but as an affirmation of ASU's endurance and storied past.

Old Main's current uses render it critically important to the operation of its institution, though largely for non-academic reasons. As of 2000, the first floor houses the ASU Emeritus College and ASU Origins Project (a research and lecture initiative) offices, and most of the second floor of the building is allocated for the ASU Alumni Association's offices and meeting rooms. A thriving Alumni Association is crucial to the continued health of any university, especially if it is a public institution. The location of the ASU Alumni Association in Old Main is quite appropriate: the building's clout as a symbol of ASU's endurance aligns perfectly with the Alumni Association's push for the continued prosperity of the institution. The large rooms on the third floor can be reserved for special events, available for official University use and for rent by both university-affiliated and non-affiliated groups. Some of the uses of the third-floor spaces include: new faculty orientations, lectures, sorority gatherings, university donor events, and various STEM disciplines' poster sessions. Additionally, Old Main regularly serves as a setting for weddings, receptions, and other private parties (Fulton). Interestingly, the building no longer serves its original purpose: no courses are taught in the building or have been since the renovations were completed. It is worth noting that several

University-managed websites that are top Google results for “Old Main ASU,” such as www.asu.edu/tour/tempe/main.html, <http://alumni.asu.edu/services/old-main>, and <http://alumni.asu.edu/support/preserve-old-main>, prominently display links to the venue-booking site, www.oldmainasu.com. One notes that the historic structure is both utilized by the university for its own consequential events, and is soundly marketed—by ASU through the aforementioned websites—as a meaningful setting for members of the outside community to use for momentous occasions. Thus, the importance of the building is extended beyond value to alumni, current students and faculty: ASU’s presentation of the structure asserts its near-universal meaningfulness and utility.

In *University Architecture*, Brian Edwards offers an observation on how University campuses and the ideas of place and space interact: “[they] bring into particular focus the difference between ‘place’ and ‘space.’ The latter requires people and memorable design, the former is abstract and lifeless. The university centre is a place in the full sense of the word, and the role of building and landscape design is to express its uniqueness and character” (47). Although Edwards’ definition of ‘space’ clashes with Lefebvre’s, and implies an emptiness that Blair, Dickinson, and Ott would likely dispute, his observation on the role of a university campus and its importance as a place is valuable. The identity and prestige of an institution is demonstrated by its physical characteristics, to newcomers and members of its community. Campus stakeholders, the members of the university’s community who have an interest in the success of the institution for any number of reasons, are identified by Richard P. Dober as

Campus Planners and Campus Designers; Architects, Landscape architects, artists; Physical Plant administrators and staff; Admissions and retention staff; Alumni directors and staff; Development Officers and Staff; Senior

Administrators and Staff, Institutional Trustees; Buildings and Grounds Committees; Campus Historians; Campus and Community preservationists; and Students and Faculty (3).

For stakeholders, or natives, as well as newcomers to the ASU community, Old Main affirms the endurance of the school and the length of its traditions. Campus tours, even those designed to focus on far disparate parts of the Tempe campus, dependably stop in front of Old Main, demonstrating to visitors that the school, despite its heavy branding as the “new American university,” has a long history in addition to its conspicuously modern amenities. The establishment of a relatively longstanding set of traditions is critical to ASU’s *ethos*, especially in light of the university’s efforts to market itself as cutting-edge. Old Main’s reemergent prominence upon its renovation, as encouraged by ASU discourses, allows tourists to the university to easily grasp evidence of the school’s relatively lengthy endurance.

An in-person visit to a location that testifies to the venerability of a larger entity has enormous impact. Cicero relates this phenomenon in *De Finibus*: in this work, Marcus Piso asserts that “whether it is a natural instinct or a mere illusion, I can’t say; but one’s emotions are more strongly aroused by seeing the places that tradition records to have been the favorite resort of men of note in former days, than by hearing about their deeds or reading their writings” (qtd. in Favro 48). Similarly, when an individual reads about the attributes of a place, they can connect with it conceptually, but personally visiting the site creates a visceral connection that cannot be evoked by the printed word. When a visitor surveys Old Main in person, especially if they enter the building and take in the articles and photos displayed, or see it as part of a campus tour, the impact of the background information—provided by the tour guide and/or historical texts—is greatly

amplified by the physicality of the building. Even though words and images of a place can indicate its importance, and may be enormously compelling, images and words cannot create the situated experience of physically visiting a site. This phenomenon is also noted by Rosenzweig and Thelan, cited by Blair, Dickinson, in their introduction to *Places of Public Memory*: ““approaching artifacts and sites on their own terms, visitors could...feel that they were experiencing a moment from the past almost as it had originally been experienced”” (26). An individual’s physical presence in a historic place gives it veracity, allows the structure or area to assert its ‘real-ness,’ making its history more imaginable and hence more plausible. Classical scholars such as Richard McKeon and Daniel E. Mortensen emphasize the physical roots of *loci*, or the “places” from which an argument can be generated, and compellingly claim that ideas, despite their intangibility, rely on spatial references to attain efficacy. Ultimately, Old Main’s physicality magnifies the clout of the claims made by ASU regarding its historic beginnings, literally solidifying the university’s assertion of a unique and intriguingly distant origin story. *Ethos* may be claimed verbally, but it is insisted upon, literally shown, by physical evidence of the established expertise of the author—in this case ASU—on the topic of the argument. Old Main serves this purpose neatly.

OLD MAIN AS A HISTORIC TEXT, AND THE HISTORIC TEXTS AND ARTIFACTS IT CONTAINS

Both the contents and architecture of Old Main convey the building’s argument to observers. The photographs, murals, articles, and carefully restored original components of the structure attest to the age of the structure and its institution, granting both historical value and cachet. This point is then solidified by the explanatory plaques, which add

supporting details to the impressions offered by the artifacts, ~~which act as ‘windows’ into the building’s early years~~. In *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome*, Diane Favro provides exigency for this display, pointing out that “historic environments [provide] richer experiences and images than modern cities” (13). As a community, a university functions much like a small city, and as such, Old Main and the other remaining parts of the “Old Quad” function like a historic district for ASU. Old Main, and its slightly younger neighbor the University Club, are the locations that natives of the community and visitors—which could also be thought of as tourists—can reference as concrete evidence of the institution’s past. The basic aesthetic value of Old Main, in conjunction with the inherent lure of old places which Favro references, is crucial to the university: without a historic core, an institution is vulnerable to appearing ephemeral, unestablished, inconstant, and hence less respectable/desirable. Old Main, by the very fact of its being, attests to the historicity of ASU and the school’s concomitant value. In terms of the argument the building presents, Old Main’s obvious age functions as an ethical appeal, advertising ASU’s experienced, persistently successful character.

The intrinsic meaning of a structure can be difficult to identify, especially to the casual observer. However, “Old Main” buildings, with their self-explanatory name and guided deployment by college stakeholders, convey their message with unusual clarity: Old Main structures are aged buildings, typically conspicuously so, that were previously put to use as critical administrative or academic venues for their schools. In *Campus Heritage*, Richard P. Dober uses the surprisingly congruous utilization of these structures to identify “Old Main” as a campus trope (35). Not only are Old Main buildings a common element between even wildly divergent college campuses, these structures are

also consistently established as quasi-monuments to their institutions' storied pasts. It is typical for Old Main buildings to store and display items of historic value to the school: some colleges' Old Mains, such as the University of Colorado at Boulder's Old Main, even contain a dedicated museum or "Heritage Center" ("Campus Master Plan"). The display of historical texts in ASU's Old Main is less direct—considering that the Whitman Hallway is not explicitly identified as a museum or exhibit—but the walls lined with artifacts are likewise intended to offer material evidence of the university's relatively distant past. Dober observes that, "Historically, if not architecturally, few campus landmarks have stronger claims on status, symbolism, and saliency than Old Main" (29). An Old Main augments its college's status by way of the popular connection between the age of a school and its legitimacy, the contents and story of an Old Main symbolize the virtues and early mission of its school, and the materiality of the structure provides emphatic evidence for the aforementioned "status" and "symbolism."

Paying homage to a college's early years, Old Main buildings' symbolic purpose does much more than acknowledge history or use longevity to support legitimacy. As scholarship on memory, such as James E. Young's *The Texture of Memory* and W. Fitzhugh Brundage's *The Southern Past* attest, the acknowledgement of the past is ever used to support the specific needs of the present. Dober observes that "campus heritage supplies the tangible and tactile evidence of a deep-rooted allegiance to institutional missions. It serves as the trophies of ambition and attainment, and provides incentives and encouragement for those assigned to continue the work of earlier generations" (6). In other words, evidence of an institution's past helps impel its community to work diligently in the present. Acknowledging the past and establishing longevity is a means

for schools to prove their vitality and to demonstrate historical inertia to assertively prophesize a strong future. ASU's Old Main significantly contributes to the *ethos* of its university by establishing ASU's longstanding existence. Moreover, like many other Old Main buildings, ASU's Victorian venue attests to the established nature of the institution's mission, demonstrating the inertial force behind the school's goals.

The ability to forecast a stable future is critical to the continued prosperity of a college. Attracting and retaining a large and diverse student base, cultivating faculty and community pride, and procuring financial support would be exceptionally difficult—if not impossible—if an institution were not able to convincingly claim that it can persevere, ideally into the distant future. Old Main buildings soundly demonstrate a school's past, hence the likelihood of its survival, but so do alumni centers, another recurring element of university campuses. Alumni centers guarantee the continued existence of their universities in what is possibly the most prosaic way possible: by facilitating a school's acquisition of funds. In his analysis of the Alumni House at Mills College, Dober observes that: "Prized as heritage, the building contributes functionally and emotionally to the college's advancement programs. A development officer noted in 2002, that as a statement of heritage, it helps 'channel the power of thousands of alumnae into support for the college'" (13). A school's alumni base, especially when gathered into an association, forms the core of their institution's support system: college loyalty, especially for high-achieving graduates, can be astonishingly persistent. Moreover, by promoting the value of their own educational experiences, alumni market their alma mater to investors and prospective students. Hence, an alumni center—really, any space dedicated for the use of a college's graduates—is a considerable nexus of power for a

university. Smith and Terrill observe that “Throughout America, and for several centuries, such sentimental symbols [as ASU’s Old Main] have moved former students to give generous support to their colleges” (117). Alumni pride attracts future students and bolsters endowments, scholarship funds, and growth endeavors; by setting aside a building for the alumni, the school provides material evidence of fealty to its mobile army of zealous marketers and investors. In this way, not only ASU but also its proxies, its alumni base, reap the benefits of the strong, experienced *ethos* substantiated by Old Main.

The decision to house ASU’s Alumni Association in Old Main was canny for reasons beyond the aligned purposes of alumni associations and Old Main buildings. The ASU Alumni Association had been endeavoring to acquire a fitting structure to use as its base of operations, so when the prospect of restoring Old Main arose, the Association jumped at the opportunity (Smith and Terrill 160). Grady Gammage, Jr. stated that he accepted the co-chairmanship of the “Old Main Campaign” to “atone for [his] father’s mistake” by helping to lead a project that would not only remove the modern façade Gammage Sr. had installed, but also, as Smith and Terrill put it: “restore Old Main to its original glory” (119). The authors of *From Normal School to New American University* go on to comment that, “because it struck a chord on the heartstrings of former students and others who bled maroon and gold, it had a special appeal for alumni”; indeed, ASU’s Alumni Association led the effort to raise the \$5.7 million needed to restore the aging edifice. The connection between Old Main and ASU’s alumni is emphasized in a pamphlet released by the university’s Office of Media Relations and Public Information. In this pamphlet, Ed Carson, a major donor to the Old Main Campaign, is quoted as

stating: “Old Main was the original gathering place at Arizona State. It’s only fitting that it be refinished to become a place where alumni and supporters can gather (“Arizona State University’s Old Main”). Old Main’s ability to evoke ASU’s past made it the ideal home for the organization that celebrates former ASU students’ memories of their college years. The structure and the Association have a remarkably symbiotic relationship: the building dignifies ASU’s campus and attests to its history, and the Alumni Association invokes Old Main’s symbolism in order to legitimize the traditions the Association sustains. The Alumni Association’s leadership of the restoration campaign brings the cycle of mutual benefit full circle.

Old Main buildings, as a trope of university architecture, provide evidence of their schools’ historical worth. ASU’s Old Main serves this purpose, but it has the added benefit of housing the ASU Alumni Association. Functioning as both an Old Main and an Alumni Center is incredibly efficient: the display of a school’s early beginnings provides legitimacy for the college and evokes pride from its stakeholders, effects which are perfectly harmonious with the prosperity and pride-related objectives of its alumni association. The trends shown by a college’s past, its staying power and individual character, are embodied in an Old Main. Alumni groups use the character of their school and their personal nostalgia to strengthen the future of their institution. Essentially, Old Main buildings and Alumni Associations form a mutually beneficial relationship based upon the production/demonstration of a worthy, enduring *ethos*, and the deployment of this assets for the sake of the institution’s future. ASU’s Old Main, stately, serene, and unassuming, is the infinitely dense center of a future-generating singularity of memory.

THE MEDIATION OF OLD MAIN

As discussed above, Old Main plays a vital role in ASU's self-presentation; further evidence of this role can be found in ASU's online presence. For example, on *asu.edu*, the "About ASU" section displays selected statistics on the university and a slideshow of four photos, one of which can be clicked to play a short video. The film features interviews, marketing graphics listing the school's assets, and a speech by ASU's President Crow synched to images from the university's campuses; Old Main 'bookends' the video as one of the opening still shots, and the background for President Crow's last comment before the video switches to infographics ("About ASU"). When one navigates to ASU's "online tour" of the Tempe campus, images of Old Main are prominently featured in the video that auto-plays on the main page ("Tempe Campus Online Tour"). On this page, categories such as "academic buildings," "administrative buildings," and "athletic facilities" allow a visitor to narrow the scope of their search to particular buildings; information on Old Main can be found under the section "Points of Pride" ("Points of Pride"). The page explains that the Tempe campus' eight "Points of Pride" are "...campus locations that embody the university's commitment to academic excellence, inclusion, and societal impact," and features an image of students conversing on the lawn in front of Old Main. From here, one can follow a link to the page dedicated solely to Old Main. The succinct commentary the page offers begins with: "Constructed before Arizona achieved statehood, Old Main represents a rich tradition for Arizona State University and the state" ("Old Main"). The description goes on to mention Roosevelt's speech on the building's steps, Old Main's status as first in the city to be electrically illuminated, and the current placement of two 1930's murals—both of which feature symbols central to Arizona's statehood narrative—in the structure. Both the text and

placement of images of Old Main in the previous ASU websites show the centrality of the structure in the university's image, literally and conceptually. Old Main's page on the Tempe campus tour site states that Old Main symbolizes ASU's traditions, and the "points of pride" page indicates that ASU's priorities, the pursuit of "academic excellence, inclusion, and societal impact," are attested to by memorable sites such as Old Main. Images of Old Main enjoy consistent prominence in literature on ASU, and serve as evidence of the school's historicity and relevance, and a symbol of the university's current institutional goals. The reliability of the statements made on ASU's websites is bolstered by the ethical underpinnings provided by Old Main, a mechanic that is surely not lost on the websites' designers and overseers.

Another text that provides context for the role Old Main plays in ASU's self-presentation is the aforementioned packet released by ASU's Office of Media Relations and Public Information at the time of Old Main's renewal, though this text is much more direct in its treatment of the historic structure. This pamphlet contains a wealth of data, including floor plans, graphics illustrating changes made in the renovation process, and a list of major donors. Despite the usefulness of this information, the more verbose sections, such as the list of "Points of Pride," "Quotables" from donors and administrators, and a short essay on "The Life of Old Main," are more rhetorically significant ("Arizona State University's Old Main"). If one closely reads these sections, several central themes become clear: the—previously discussed—connection between alumni and the structure, the idea that the structure is a "historic treasure," and the assertion that it articulates early Arizonans' commitment to higher education. Perhaps most importantly, these materials assert that the "restoration" of the edifice will allow it

to serve as a touchstone to ASU's identity for future members of the university's community. For example, "Quotables" includes a statement from ASU's 15th president, Lattie Coor, asserting that "There is nothing more important for a university than the history, tradition, and wisdom with which it connects its past and future. This building reflects the longevity in which Arizona State University has helped shape our community and state. The predominance of Old Main will dignify ASU for decades to come." In this rhetorically rich statement, Coor clearly conveys belief in the existence of a persisting ASU "tradition" and the connection between Old Main and the development of Arizona, and theorizes that Old Main's articulation of the past will project into the future. The idea that Old Main will communicate, even bolster, ASU's character and durability for future stakeholders is a concept intimately connected with the university's *ethos*. The concept that Old Main "will dignify" ASU's future resounds throughout this short packet, which aligns emphatically with Dober's ideas on the role of Old Main buildings in college campuses.

The publicity pamphlet covers a great deal on the changes made to Old Main during the course of its rehabilitation, casting light on the steps taken, leaders of the initiative, and indicating the qualities that render the structure valuable to its university. However, despite the fact that the project is repeatedly named a "restoration," the project is more accurately deemed a "renovation." In "Site and Situation," an essay in *Adaptive Reuse: Issues and Case Studies in Building Preservation*, Joseph P. Luther uses Melvin Gamzon and Thomas Martin's definitions as a baseline for distinguishing the two processes: restoration "return[s] the building's original character by restoring the original architectural details as closely as possible" whereas renovation "upgrade[s] a building's

materials and support systems while retaining its original appearance” (49). Viewing it from the front, Old Main appears to be an impeccably maintained Victorian building, with no signs of modern tampering. If one walks inside or around to the rear of the structure, however, one notes extensive upgrades, such as the catering kitchen on the third floor and the conspicuously modern bathrooms built into the addition at the rear of the building. Less obvious—as most of the space is not open to the public—are the sleek, utterly typical, modern offices dedicated for the use of the Alumni Association on the second floor. The compromises made between authenticity and modern needs in Old Main falls in line with Luther’s description of the process of “adaptive reuse”: “a process by which structurally sound older buildings are developed for economically viable new uses.” The author goes on to note that, “Within the context of adaptive reuse, the building may be *restored* or *renovated*.” Luther also notes that, although restoration and renovation are discrete processes, there are cases in which both terms apply. The efforts made to rework Old Main in 2000 could be classified as a hybrid renovation/restoration, since it has been adapted for reuse in such a way that it largely adheres to period standards while enhancing the building’s infrastructure. It is, however, hard to disregard the rather high proportion of contemporary elements and amenities in the structure. Upon review of the scholarship on adaptive reuse, in conjunction with an assessment and study of the architectural changes made, the 2000 changes to Old Main rather clearly constitute a renovation.

Even if one allows that Old Main’s refurbishment could be a hybrid case, a compromise, one may note that the changes made to Old Main are referred to as a “restoration” with near-perfect consistency, and that there is an utter absence of the word

“renovation” in any descriptions given of the 2000 rehabilitation efforts. Other descriptions from ASU-produced literature indicate that the edifice was “refurbished” and “refinished”; “renovation” is used once, to describe smaller-scale work done on the building during the “early 1990’s” (“Arizona State University’s Old Main”). Given the magnitude of this project, the obvious expertise of the architects involved, and ASU’s sentimental and fiscal investment in the building—not to mention the astonishing, nearly verbatim consistency between all official descriptions of the building, even across wildly different media—it is beyond question that all documents produced by ASU on Old Main were carefully deliberated and fine-tuned before they were released. To put it bluntly, it is nearly impossible that the choice to present the work as a “restoration” was an accident; on the contrary, this selection is a significant rhetorical gesture.

There are benefits in naming a process a restoration, as opposed to a renovation: it allows the responsible parties to claim minimal agency in the refurbishment, and to tacitly state that they are reestablishing the original product to the appearance intended by its designers. The renovations are hence established as a return to historical correctness as opposed to the carefully deliberated adaptive reuse of an aging structure. Naming a project a “restoration” appeals to the importance of preservation, an unassailably worthy goal; naming the project a “renovation” casts it as the sum of a series of decisions that may become vulnerable to questioning and critique. A renovated throwback may show a school’s efficiency and quietly attest to its age, but a restored “historical treasure” is a centerpiece, a highly visible wellspring of pride for its college (“Arizona State University’s Old Main”). In *Monument Wars*, Kirk Savage proposes that analyzing the process by which a monument is brought into being “subverts” its monumentality by

disrupting its aura of timelessness, which stands to reason, given that monuments are invariably the work of fallible, often quarrelsome, factions of people, and the history of any given monument's genesis is often messy (10). The evocation of reverence is encouraged by a monument's uncomplicated aura of permanence, its transcendent celebration of past excellence. Similarly, Old Main's monumentality, its status as witness to ASU's persisting success, is fortified by the idea that it stands apparently unchanged by the passage of time over a century after its construction—all thanks to its “restoration.” In terms of *ethos*, the gesture made by terming the changes made to Old Main a restoration is comparable to a gambit frequently used by Cicero: an experienced orator drawing parallels between a past victory and their current argument. The rhetor emphasizes the similarities between the past and the present to remind the audience of their previously demonstrated competence, renders the two cases as identical as possible, and hence demonstrates that current success is a foregone conclusion. “Restoring” Old Main's “original glory” attests to the ambitions of the young university, and implies that ASU's traditions and aspirations have persisted, unbroken, for the century since the structure was built.

Individual buildings such as Old Main assist in the projection of a university's image, but it is important to keep in mind that separate structures cannot be considered in isolation: the fabric of an entire campus is its own legible text. In “Classic Nuance: Simon Hall at Indiana University,” Gregory Hoadley explains that the type of “academic architecture [used in a given campus] invariably projects an identity about campus and community to building users and to the world beyond” (614). Because the physical attributes of an institution attest to its character, cohesiveness is a high priority for

campus planners. If trends between buildings are not visible to observers, the school's image may appear fragmented, difficult to identify. Overall, inconsistency makes a campus difficult to align with the personality of the school itself. Creating and maintaining a match between a college's appearance and its identity is no small task: as a school ages, retaining consistency between sections of the campus becomes increasingly difficult, especially due to the expectation that universities' resources include state-of-the-art facilities. Hoadley explains that, among those who have a stake in the design of a campus, there is some contention over whether new buildings should match the design of their older neighbors, or contrast with them in an effort to create distinctive spaces. In the case of Simon Hall, the architects went to great lengths to match the design of the new science building to the "established vernacular of the historic Bloomington campus" (Hoadley 614). In the case of ASU's "Old Quad," the Victorian-style architecture was preserved in the University Club and Old Main, but the old Auditorium/Gymnasium was demolished to make room for the Homer Durham Languages and Literature Building in 1956 ("The New ASU Story"). Considering the administration's decision to construct the extremely modern Fulton Center directly opposite the "Old Quad" and their continued acceptance of a 1950's building on the third corner of the quad, it is clear ASU's campus planners decided to opt for a multivalent appearance.

It seems that ASU's Tempe campus follows Hoadley's second option for layout: distinctive spaces. However, this analysis is complicated by ASU's substantial efforts to market itself as "The New American University": this relatively recent push for re-branding emphasizes ASU's focus on inclusivity, entrepreneurship, and forward-thinking initiatives. This campaign surfaced with the placement of Michael Crow, the 16th

president of ASU, in 2002. According to ASU’s site for the Office of the President, the “New American University” is: “an institution that combines the highest levels of academic excellence, inclusiveness to a broad demographic, and maximum societal impact” (“About Michael M. Crow”). Following Crow’s initiative, the school started “greening” itself, added a School of Sustainability, and began work on dozens of state-of-the-art construction projects. Overall, the current branding for ASU heavily emphasizes its modern resources, the most valuable of which are structures. Despite this, Old Main remains heavily deployed: the building itself is used as a venue for important university events and the building’s image—as noted earlier—crops up with incredible frequency in ASU websites and informative films.

When one considers the scope and variety of ASU’s structures, it is immediately clear that Old Main and the University Club are the oldest buildings on campus, by a large margin. Moreover, the structures added in President Gammage’s immense construction plan of 1950-1 have been replaced or updated, it seems, with every opportunity. The resulting visual effect is that of an extremely modern university, with a few structures built in the 1950’s and 60’s, and two pristine Victorian-style buildings standing, conspicuously, on the lawn opposite the new administration building.

Hoadley’s idea that campus planners may opt to create contrasting ensembles does not quite appear to have been the objective of ASU’s planners for the Tempe campus. There are a handful of building types that are repeated throughout campus, the most prominent of which are cutting-edge, made of glass, steel, and other LEED-certifiable materials. There are indeed countless memorable, contrasting buildings on the campus, but they oscillate between a few recognizable forms, and are arranged in ensembles. Essentially,

ASU's campus planners used a third option, unmentioned by Hoadley: pick a few types of distinctive buildings, and arrange them in consonant ensembles. The ensembles differ greatly from one another, but each set of structures creates a relatively consistent, distinctive space.

The result is a variegated campus, with pockets that exhibit design harmonious with most of their neighboring structures. This layout manages to achieve the effect of a “university masterplan,” which Brian Edwards refers to in *University Architecture*; Edwards notes that the aim of this design is to “promote communication between parts of the campus, to create adaptable yet coherent urban structures, and to provide the means of achieving a quality image for the university. The latter is largely fashioned by the nature of buildings and spaces which form the centre” (46). If successful, a college's masterplan will form a recognizable “image [which] is the result of memorable, vivid or coherent buildings grouped around lively, ordered or serene external spaces.” Note that Edwards, in allowing for “vivid *or* coherent buildings,” aligns himself with Hoadley (emphasis added). Even by conservative estimation, ASU's Tempe campus has multiple “centers,” but the presence of matching—and mostly-matching—groups of buildings still manages to create a recognizable campus image.

It is worth noting that most of the trees in the “Old Quad” were removed around the same time that “The New American University” was beginning to be realized. It does not require a great cognitive leap to find a connection between the realization of the “New American University” and the clearing of the vista that includes Old Main at its rear: showing ASU's historic roots became a high priority when the university's leadership opted to enact a dramatic modernization of its material/visual and conceptual

substance. ASU's rapid change in priorities, to favor advanced structures and progressive endeavors, could very easily undermine its credibility as an established institution that participates in the traditions embodied by its often older competitors, hence the necessity of highlighting a "historic treasure" like Old Main ("Arizona State University's Old Main"). ASU vies with hundreds of other schools for students, faculty, and funding. Unfortunately, many prospective students will find the appearance of ASU jarring, with its desert landscaping, predominantly modern architecture, and distinct lack of stately stone buildings, arbors, bell towers, and other typical elements of university campuses. Likewise, donors and parents of prospective students may find ASU, a comparatively young institution with predominantly modern design elements, hard to relate to. Old Main and the University Club, accompanied by a graceful fountain at the rear of a sweeping lawn, constructed of brick in a recognizably old style, creates a tableau familiar to alumni of older schools. By virtue of this, Old Main is a crucial anchor for the institution, with its "readable" design and serene, conspicuous location on the Old Quad. Ultimately, ASU's discourses deploy Old Main in order to lay claim to the recognizable *ethos* of an old university.

THE AGENCY OF OLD MAIN

Blair, Dickinson, and Ott observe that sites of memory come with an "expectation of and investment in 'authenticity'", a demand that is satisfied by Old Main's status as "restored" (26). The anachronistic structure frames ASU's relatively distant past, acting as a visual aid: Old Main allows its audience to "see" ASU's beginnings as the Normal School. Beyond providing a window into the school's beginnings, Old Main also symbolizes the value early Arizonans placed on education, the school's tenacity, and the

“New American University’s” pride in its past, despite its conspicuous modernity. However, attending to the symbolism inherent to a text is not sufficient to fully understand its argument: in “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric’s Materiality,” Carole Blair cautions her audience against focusing too closely on a text’s symbolicity, as it neglects the text’s potential to cause change. She posits that “the material character of rhetoric is not reducible to its symbolicity” and “materiality implicates [the audience] in issues of consequence and partisanship beyond that of the rhetor’s goals” (23). Later in the same article, Blair states: “Rhetoric’s materiality constructs communal space, prescribed pathways, and summons attention, acting on the whole person of the audience” (48-50). In this, Blair aligns herself with Bruno Latour, who in “The Berlin Key or How to Do Words With Things” exhorts his readers to “abandon the mad idea that the subject is posed in its opposition to the object, for there are neither subjects nor objects”; instead, Latour suggests that objects and their users both possess agency (10). Blair and Latour illustrate how a text, especially a material text, acts as an agent as opposed to a static object or a mere vessel containing the intent of its creators. Instead, a material text collaborates with its “users,” trading roles as “subject” and “object,” to create an effect that is more than the sum of its parts. Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook, who integrate Blair’s research into their own work on places of protest, specify in “Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest” that “locations, bodies, words, visual symbols, experiences, memories, and dominant meanings all interact to make and remake place” (277). A material text such as Old Main can only be understood by interrogating not just what it symbolizes, but also what the structure does,

which is not limited to the intent of its creators or current keepers. On the contrary, Old Main as a text is also constituted by its users: the natives of the ASU community.

Old Main's overall rhetorical function remains elusive, even if its readers successfully deduce how it functions symbolically, according to the research of Blair, Endres and Senda-Cook, and Latour. Combining this with the knowledge that Old Main buildings are a campus trope—hence anticipating the types of embedded meaning that typically adhere to the type of structure—a reader will still fall short. Ultimately, it is the deployment of the structure by university stakeholders in conjunction with the everyday use of the building by natives of the ASU community and tourists to the camps that combine to render the text experientially and conceptually whole. There is, fortunately, a precedent for understanding tropes as more than finite, “communicable clichés” (McKeon 2007). Richard McKeon, in “Creativity and Commonplace,” discusses how commonplaces are often incorporated into rhetorical texts for their utility as relatable appeals, but as the grounds for considering an idea, tropes also have immense generative potential. This observation, when used in conjunction with Blair, Endres and Senda-Cook, and Latour's assertions that material texts have agency, suggests that considering Old Main buildings as tropes identifies the structures as infused with recurring themes, but does not preclude the edifices from having unique, powerful generative capabilities. Hence, examining the intentional uses of Old Main by ASU's stakeholders is only a part of understanding how the building functions as a rhetorical text: the remainder of the text's argument is understood experientially, by users who create meaning by accepting, refuting, and otherwise navigating the physical experience of the structure.

Lefebvre divides space into general categories, which include: “‘ideal’ space, which has to do with mental (logico-mathematical) categories...[and] ‘real’ space, which is the space of social practice” (14). Old Main is defined by its conceptual substance, or “ideal” qualities, as well as the facts of its existence demarcated by its practical applications, its “real” applications. Old Main is constituted by its theory and its practice: the ASU administration deploys it as a symbol of ASU’s best qualities and traditions, while the building’s users experience it in terms of practical use. Lefebvre, commenting on the mutually constitutive relationship between “real” and “ideal” space, asserts that “In actuality each of these two kinds of space involves, underpins and presupposes the other.” Considering the oft-used symbolism of Old Main and how the structure acts upon its users, the structure’s conceptual weight is nearly incalculable.

In practical terms, a full understanding of Old Main is reached by those who interact with it for innumerable, widely varied reasons. For example, the guests of weddings held on the front steps, the audiences of seminars given in the ballroom, the Alumni Association employees who work on the second floor, prospective students who view it from the lawn with the rest of their tour group, language and literature faculty who pass it en route to office hours or class, and innumerable others reach an understanding of the building based on how it acts upon them and how they act upon it. Old Main’s users find that the building prohibits certain actions and encourages others, discouraging the artifact-as-object vs. human-as-subject binary that Latour finds so suspect. Lefebvre relates how “Robert Venturi, as an architect and a theorist of architecture, wants to make space dialectical. He sees space not as an empty and neutral milieu occupied by dead objects but rather as a field of force full of tensions and

distortions” (145). Members of Old Main’s audience interact with the physical facts of its existence—its height, solidity, and questions of its accessibility—and also with its conceptual substance in what could be termed a dialogue or negotiation. Ultimately, the audience assessing Old Main’s argument interacts with the structure and the institutional discourses that mediate its meaning, shaping the resultant text and acting with it to articulate the *ethos* of ASU’s assertion of historical importance, uniqueness, and vitality.

CONCLUSION: OLD MAIN IS AN ARGUMENT FOR THE ETHOS OF ASU

Old Main stands in the background of the “New American University”’s identity, a silent yet omnipresent and surprisingly compelling argument for the length of ASU’s ambitions and traditions. Beyond attesting to the university’s past triumphs, the structure also springboards off of the building’s role in the development of central Arizona to indicate an ongoing trend. Old Main projects a prosperous future for its institution, via its deployment as a symbol and the considerable force of the Alumni Association it houses. As William Hochgraef, a previous chairman on the ASU Alumni Association’s Board of Directors put it, “The grandeur of Old Main symbolizes the value early Arizonans placed on education. Everyone who sees this building will understand education has been important to this community for a long time. Our investment in education has shaped our quality of life and will continue to shape it” (“Arizona State University’s Old Main”).

The full impact of the edifice is realized through the experiences of its users, the display of historical texts within its walls, the mediation of the structure through ASU discourse, and the agency of the building itself. Students, faculty, administrators, and other stakeholders—past, present, and prospective—who observe Old Main from a tour group, attend lectures or orientations in the Carsten Ballroom, participate in weddings on

its steps, or even work in the Alumni Association's offices, experience the stature and historicity of the structure. The prestigious nature of the events hosted within Old Main's walls attest to the importance of the building, rendering it a point of reference for the long-past origin of ASU and the richness of its traditions. The historical texts displayed throughout the edifice instruct visitors—new and recurring—on the quaint beginnings and early aspirations of the school; additionally, Old Main, as a college campus trope, acts as a historical text in and of itself to convey the embedded traditions and values of the institution. ASU's administrators, web designers, historians, and other stakeholders mediate the presentation of Old Main via online and physical texts, casting the renovations executed in 2000 as a "restoration" campaign, and ensuring the high recurrence and centrality of Old Main's image in illustrations of the school's identity. Finally, the agency of the building itself collaborates with the agency of its users to generate meaning and solidify an identity for the university. The previous factors work in concert with one another to represent a unique, enduring, and worthy *ethos* for ASU. The *ethos* of ASU, thus bolstered, works to grant legitimacy and contend for the value of the school's mission, which becomes increasingly important as the school seeks to market itself as an institution at the forefront of the evolution of higher education.

Scholarship on the rhetoric of place and space offers a substantial precedent for such analyses as the place-reading executed in this work. However, despite the wealth of profound analyses executed by scholars on the rhetoric of place and space, there is an urgent need for further investigations on the topic. Lefebvre, referring in particular to symbolic or monumental spaces, bluntly states that,

the error—or illusion—generated...consists in the fact that, when social space is placed beyond our range of vision...its practical character vanishes and it is transformed in philosophical fashion into a kind of absolute. In face of this fetishized abstraction, ‘users’ spontaneously turn themselves, their presence, their ‘lived experience’ and their bodies into abstractions too. Fetishized abstract space thus gives rise to two practical abstractions: ‘users’ who *cannot recognize themselves within it*, [hence] cannot conceive of adopting a critical stance towards it...[it] become[s] clear that the critical analysis of space as directly experienced poses more serious problems than any partial activity, no matter how important, including literature, reading and writing, art, music, and the rest... (94, emphasis added)

The material illiteracy to which Lefebvre alludes circumvents widespread critical analysis of symbolic structures or locales—such as Old Main—that present telling, complex arguments. The analysis of material texts yields information far beyond their purported messages, which can illuminate the true depth of these spaces’ purposes, and may even grant a deeper understanding of the social forces that have contributed to their creation and/or stewardship. Continuing to develop knowledge and explore ways of knowing depends upon a willingness to identify arguments, even in nontraditional or under-investigated forms. With this in mind, it is clear that there is acute exigency for the continued examination of places and spaces, especially in the context of institutional discourses.

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