15.2 *Gothic Revival* :: Anti-Modern and Back to Nature

1) **Johann Wolfgang von *Goethe*** (**1749**-**1832**) - a rock-star writer and intellectual, and famous
at an early age.
- Wrote essay *On German Architecture* (1773) proclaiming Gothic to be the
product of German genius. The area we now know as Germany was called Prussia at
that time. Goethe reinvigorates interest in Gothic Architecture.
- We recall that the *Gothic* actually emerged in France and then was exported to Germany.
- Construction began again on Cologne Cathedral in 1832, after a 300 year hiatus,
and was completed by 1880, about the time of the German unification. Thus,
this example of the Gothic had a strong association with a unified Germany.

- Refers to **architecture** as **frozen music**, but it's not clear that he was the first to actually
say this as there have always been connections between the creative realms, such as
rhythms, cadences, points and counterpoints, octaves, chapters, beginnings and ends,
conclusions, codas, master-strokes… etc…

- Schelling also attributed as saying this famous quote (1802)

- M.C. Escher enigmatic drawings of architecture (impossible looping sequences such as
perpetually rising canons of J.S. Bach)

2) ***Augustus Pugin*** (**1812**-**1852**)
- Wrote essay **Contrasts** in *1836*, which compared and contrasted medieval
life (pre-modern) with the modern life emerging from the early decades of the
Industrial Age and established that the medieval life of honest labor, hand-made
crafts, etc, was morally superior.
- This established a Gothic cultural sensibility, that underscored the Gothic Revival
architectural style.
- This *strong cultural sensibility* evolved into a *sense of Gothic revivalism*
- The English Houses of Parliament were burned in 1834 in an accidental fire
- **Charles Barry** (**1795**-**1860**) wins competition for British Parliament buildings
with the assistance of Pugin in **1840**. Competition called for Gothic style or Tudor style.
- Includes clock tower called **Big Ben** (**1840**)
- Pugin did the Gothic Revival interiors
- Of course, as one might suspect, the Gothic Revival Parliament led to
an identification of the national character of Great Britain with the Gothic

3) ***Gothic Revival in America***
- **Trinity Church** on Wall Street, New York City (**1846**). Replaced a wooden Trinity
Church that was there during George Washington's inauguration (1789). First
Trinity Church at that location burned in 1776.
- **Richard Upjohn** - Later on in the 1860s one of the Founders of the AIA
- Very Gothic. Gothic details, load-bearing masonry, steeple and spire,
buttressing, tapering of masonry to reduce weight with height (no
Wheel Window however).
- **Benjamin Henry Latrobe** creates an early design for the **Baltimore Cathedral**
in **1804** in the Gothic Revival style. May be the earliest

4) ***John Ruskin*** (**1819**-**1900**)
- Art & Architecture Critic, Essayist, Oxford Professor, accomplished watercolorist
- Wrote about connections between art and culture and nature - and as one who
advocated for naturalism, hand-crafted, strong communities devoted to honest
labor, and a similar sort of moral stance as had Pugin — Ruskin essentially
was a primary voice in support of the **Gothic Revival** as an architectural
movement, an art movement (the **Pre-Raphaelites**), a subject for his own
artistic endeavors (he was an exquisite watercolor painter), but as an entire
way of life.
- As the **Romantic Movement** was a reaction against **The Industrial Age**,
and so was the Gothic, the Gothic Revival at its core was a part of the
Romantic Movement
- Gothic Revival: expression of nature
- Structure and ornament had to be derived from nature
- Things that were hand-crafted were better and more desirable
- Ruskin's ex-wife Effie Gray was well-known at the time as well, and remarried a
Pre-Raphaelite painter **John Everett Millais** — and a movie was even made

about Effie starring Emma Thompson

- Ruskin book, ***The Seven Lamps of Architecture*** (1849)
  - Gothic Revival underway by 1849, but this book helped to summarize
      the movement…. ***Seven Lamps*** were….
  - **Sacrifice** - Dedication of man's craft to God
  - **Truth** - Handcrafted and honest use of materials and structure
  - **Power** - Buildings assessed by their massing (hence power), but also by
      their genesis as the product of the human mind at work (an expression
      of power)
  - **Beauty** - Aspiration towards God, ornamentation from nature
  - **Life** - Buildings should be made by human hands
  - **Memory** - Buildings should respect their culture of origin
  - **Obedience** - No originality for its own sake, instead follow the finest of English values

- Ruskin book, ***The Stones of Venice*** (1853)
  - Ruskin uses Venice as an example to prove the earlier book *Lamps,*
      by describing the nature of the Gothic as expressed by the architecture
      of Venice. A very influential book.

- Ruskin's book *Seven Lamps* influences All Saints Church on Margaret Street
  in London as a ***premier example of the High Victorian Gothic***
  - **All Saints (Margaret Street)** by **William Butterfield** (**1849**)
  - Inventive and elaborate use of brick in a Gothic structure that kicks the Gothic
      Revival up to the next level - so-to-speak
  - Decoration and structure are derived from nature
  - Very colorful use of material but still using Gothic detailing

5) ***Victor Hugo*** (**1802**-**1885**)

- ***Notre Dame of Paris*** published (**1831**)
  - Chapter II an essay called *This Will Kill That*, on the death of architecture
      due to the advent of the printing press. Novel takes place in middle ages.
      It's essentially a novel about the nature of the Catholic Church as symbolized
      by a Priest, a "half-formed-man" (Quasi-modo), and an innocent, i.e., Esmerelda.
  - The idea is that the word of mankind, the history of mankind, was, up to a time,
      carved into the facades of the great cathedrals. With the advent of printing press,
      the **stories of history** are now communicated differently because they now are
      published on paper, and thus are easier and cheaper to disseminate, and much more
      ubiquitous
  - Hugo's novel leads to interest in Notre Dame, and eventually the restoration of
      Notre Dame about 1840.

6) **Eugene Viollet-le-Duc** (**1814**-**1879**)
  - Very talented painter and artist who became a self-taught architect by
    traveling with an uncle.
  - Not long before he became France's premier authority on the history of
    French Gothic architecture and France's collection of cathedrals and
    chateaux.
  - Preservation work of V-L-D leads to establishment of the field of
    preservation as thought of now.
    - **"To restore a building is not to maintain it, repair or remake it; it is to
        reestablish it in a complete state which may have never existed at any
        given moment."**

    - Four core principles of preservation according to V-L-D ::

    - **(1)** Architecture had to be documented
    - **(2)** Preserve not just appearance but structure
    - **(3)** May exclude modifications contrary to evidence
    - **(4)** May include older modifications

  - Preservation projects included:
    - St. Denis north of Paris
    - Saint Sernin in Toulouse
    - Chateau of Pierrefonds north of Paris
    - Notre Dame in Paris

- Book: **Analytical Dictionary of French Architecture from the 11th-16th Centuries** - **1854**-**1868**
  - V-L-D's work on cathedrals and chateaux

- Book: **Discourse on Architecture** - **1875**
  - V-D-L's work on **structurally rational architecture** (cast iron columns etc) doing the structural work found in cathedrals. This book, with its detailed drawings of iron and masonry **structural rationalism**, greatly influenced the next generation of early modernists (such as the architects making the first skyscrapers)
  - **Form Follows Function** advocate (along with Lodoli, Latrobe, Durand, etc)… this will become a mantra for **Modernists**

7) **Henri Labrouste** (**1801**-**1875**)
   - **Library of Sainte-Genevieve** (**1843**)
     - *Structural Rationalism* and cast iron structure inside the Reading Room.
     - Building **mass** = the Reading Room **volume**
     - Exterior of Library is cubic and rational masonry evocative of Boullée or Ledoux buildings of the visionary period in the 1770s and 80s. Inventive classical motifs, use of unrelenting thermal windows and consistent use of classical language. Names of great people carved into building's exterior front facade.
     - Labrouste advised Victor Hugo on the Chapter *This Will Kill That*