

Through Athena's Eyes:
The William Henry Sage Collection of Casts

Senior Honors Thesis in Anthropology

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Fig. 1: Bust of Athena #204, currently in off-campus storage

Introduction

This story begins with a young Cornellian's first exploration of Goldwin Smith Hall. She is excited and nervous for her first days on campus and begins her four-year adventure with a journey to the Arts Quad. This large green space surrounded on four sides by academic buildings, belonging mostly to the humanities, is the heart of the College of Arts and Sciences (one of five academic colleges within Cornell University). It is where our Cornellian will spend much of her time in class, at the library, and when dining. It will be her veritable home. She realizes how important the campus will be for her new life, and decides to peer into her new world before the start of her courses. She leaves her dorm on North Campus, and walks over Thurston Bridge, loftily positioned over Fall Creek Gorge below. She then veers to the right and approaches the Arts Quad. Many of the buildings are brick and dark stone, but it is the building to the left that catches her eye. It is a large neoclassical, limestone building marking the west end of the quadrangle. She heads forward and pauses to observe the building, its large columns, and grand entryway before her. She climbs up its central stairs. Our Cornellian enters the buildings through the middle of three sets of large double doors, walks through the lobby, and up the eight steps in front of her. To her right and left are long corridors with many wooden doors, concealing the classrooms in which she will spend some of her next four years. She begins walking down the South hall to her right. In her walk, she has missed the metal statue by Professor Seley in the alcove by The Temple of Zeus Café as well as the plaster statue of Athena residing at the other end of the main lobby, both of which stand sentinel in front of the entrance. However, upon reaching the end of the hall, she notices a large glass case. In it there are four white figures crouched and standing, ready for a hunt or attack. She is drawn to the statues, but neither knows about the pieces, nor whence they came. She is curious, and wonders if she has missed any

others. When she lifts her head and begins to look around, the other casts begin to reveal themselves to her. She realizes that unmarked, unexplained, and hidden in plain sight along the walls, recesses, classrooms, and ceilings live Greek and Roman statuary. She, like many Cornellians, is curious about these beings, but is not able to know their story. She cannot know the ways in which the now scattered William Henry Sage Collection of Casts has inhabited Cornell University, and how the collection's history encapsulates the school's voice and the changing opinion of its attendants.

The statues and friezes, which our Cornellian, whose story was crafted from the experiences of those I interviewed, saw in Goldwin Smith Hall are casts of Greek and Roman statuary that belong to the William Henry Sage Collection of Casts. A lack of publicity and cogent narrative has created a gap in knowledge, and unanswered questions in the minds of the viewers who see the Cast Collection for the first time. Because there is little exposure to the history of the collection in either social or academic settings, there are very few students who really know anything about the statues that they see. Of the twenty-four students whom I interviewed and surveyed, twenty-two had seen the casts, but only five knew anything about the individual pieces, or the collection in general. The stories and words of student interviews are present in this thesis, but the speakers' names have been changed. Those who responded affirmatively to the question: "Do you have any previous knowledge about the casts themselves or the collection?", had gleaned a sense of the general history from courses taken within the classics department, where Professors Annetta Alexandridis and Verity Platt seek to expose their students to the form and value of the Cast Collection. They focus specifically on how the collection shows "artistic interpretation of iconography and the importance of classics in the past"(V. Platt, December 2, 2013). In addition to Professors Alexandridis and Platt, Professor

Bertoia, in the College of Architecture Arts and Planning, is the only other professor who teaches on the casts. He shows the collections to his sculpture students so that they may begin to learn about human proportion, design, and the technique of casting, which he teaches to this day (R. Bertoia, November 27, 2013). Although their students are introduced to the collection, these professors are exceptions to the rule when it comes to the distribution of knowledge. One of the only other sources for consolidated information on the Cast Collection is two guides produced by the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art explaining the classical holdings of the institution. The work entitled *A Guide to the Classical Collections of Cornell University* is one of a few places where some of the history of the collections has been consolidated and divulged to an audience (Kuniholm et al 2010). In this guide, five pages are devoted to a brief description of the collection and its acquisition.

My interest in this collection began because the pieces of the Cast Collection seemed like forgotten and neglected relics of the past, rather than purposefully placed pieces of art. I wanted to understand the process through which the Cast Collection had traveled before ending at this point, so I began with three central questions: 1) what was the impetus for the acquisition of the collection?, 2) What is the collections role in the development of the University?, and most importantly 3) How have students related to, understood, and interacted with the collection over time?. In order to find answers, I focused my research on two sources. The first was archival research. Because there was not a written account of the Cast Collection that fully detailed its story, the search for its history was much like a scavenger hunt. I cobbled together archived photographs of the collection and statues, Cornell Handbooks, University Registers and course lists, student journals, general histories of Cornell, A. D. White's autobiography, a biography of Ezra Cornell, and many other sources. In order to understand the effect of the casts on the

Cornell community, I read journal entries from the past, and conducted interviews with current students, professors, and museum staff members, curators, archivists, and educators (The History Center in Tompkins County, The Johnson Museum of Art, and The Cornell Anthropology Collections). These interviews made up my second major source. I spoke with students an average of twenty minutes each and spoke about their understanding of art, history, value, authenticity, and their familiarity with the casts or the Cast Collection. I also surveyed students in Goldwin Smith Hall both in hallways in front of the casts, as well as within The Temple of Zeus Café. These short one-page surveys allowed me to reach a wider audience and asked the same questions of familiarity and interpretation of art and value that I asked to those I interviewed.

Through my research I discovered that the Cast Collection and its history are full extremely complex and seemingly contradictory elements, and while they may not fit smoothly together, they are expressed concurrently. First and foremost, the statues in Goldwin Smith Hall seem simultaneously to grow out of the walls, and to be a decorative afterthought. They belong perfectly inside the neoclassical building, and yet do not fit with modern concepts of education, which focuses more on literature and shuns exoticisms. Because the casts are so stylistically similar to the building, they seem to belong in the niches and shelves of Goldwin Smith. However, the lack of labeling and placement at irregular intervals points to item placement for ambiance and show, not academic intrigue.

Additionally, the statues are hollow casts of bronze and marble statuary, and yet they often seem to come to life for the viewer with animation and emotion. If observed from a purely pragmatic view, the casts are simply objects or replicas: artistic forms of plaster and water. However, viewers rarely see the collection in this light. All but one of the students whom I

interviewed found the collection to be valuable, and many expressed personal attachment to the faces and forms of the statues. Many students feel watched by the casts, and some even greet the statues as friends when they pass by (Eliza, November 18, 2013; Erin, December 1, 2013).

Similarly, Professors who have the pieces in their offices, often think fondly of them and some believe that they watch over them as they work (C. Barrett, November 28, 2013). These members of the Cornell community do not understand the casts as simple inanimate artifacts, they see them as interactive members of Cornell life.

A third important point of struggle demonstrated by the collection is the push and pull between egalitarianism and elitism. This university is in the Ivy League and can boast a high ranking in the United States. Yet, it was founded on the idea of pragmatic education in all subjects. The motto “I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study”, spoken by founder Ezra Cornell, continues to be the academic goal of the university. Although not mutually exclusive, these two objectives do not always fit together harmoniously. The Cast Collection is the embodiment of an attempt to merge these two elements. The collection, as will be illustrated in following chapters, is an elite collection of expensive and well-made casts. It was purchased for \$20,000 in the early 1890s, a sum that is more than one hundred times the annual allocation of funds for casts at Oxford University in the same period (New York Times 1894; Bishop 1962; Kurtz 2000). Despite the obvious elite nature of the collection, The New York Times reported that the collection was brought to Cornell to promote study for all students. It was not only a prestige item; it was also a teaching collection for the public. Depending on the style of curation and the years of exhibition, one can see the collection dancing between awe-inducing and scientifically pragmatic, and then falling into disrepute for

representing antiquarian ideals of the classic world. These paradoxical elements and others marked the collection as an extremely interesting body of work to study.

Let me clarify what I define as ‘cast’. The term refers to a plaster cast. Plaster casts have been used since antiquity for a variety of reasons ranging from Egyptian masks of the dead to mediums for modeling small-scale statues, and also as a means of copying a pre-existing three-dimensional piece (Kurtz 2000: 1-100). The William Henry Sage Collection of Casts consists of one-to-one replicas of original Greek, Roman, and Byzantine statues and friezes (Emmerson 1890s; Kuniholm et al 2010). These replicas are made of Plaster of Paris, which is ground and baked gypsum powder. The powder is mixed with water, then poured or spread into a mold that has been taken of a statue, and finally left to dry. The result of this process, when done by skilled artisans, is an almost exact copy of the original marble, bronze, or other material statue (Bertoia, November 27, 2013). These casts have been made for millennia, but became especially popular as collectable items for European museums or private collections, especially in Italy, France and England, between 1500-1900 CE (Kurtz 2000: 37-52). They were used as a proxy for the original, and displayed with pride. The creation of a museum exhibit was one of multiple sources for the purchase of Cornell’s collection in the early 1890s. Because the casts are ‘not original’ and may be considered ‘copies’, their authenticity and value have been interpreted, assigned, and re-interpreted over the past hundred years both on this campus and in other institutions.

For this collection, understandings of educational and cultural value have dramatically shaped use. Many scholars in fields such as economics, mathematics, history, philosophy, archaeology, and anthropology are now focusing much of their works on the definition and understanding what creates, perpetuates, and is defined by ‘value’ (Graeber 2001; Lindholm 2008; Sinha 2010; Marx 1973; Adam Smith 1776 (2009); Sraffa 2010; etc). Thus, there exists an

immense cornucopia of possible definitions for ‘value’. For many, including those within museum institutions, ‘value’ is the amount of money that is necessary to replace or purchase an item (Emily, November 17, 2013). In *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith writes that “At the same time or place, therefore, money is the exact measure of the real exchangeable value of all commodities” (Smith 2009: 55). The amount of money that it costs to exchange an object should, theoretically, follow the importance of the object to individuals. Through the combination of these appraisals, societal importance can be calculated. It is important to point out that this form of valuation operates, as Smith states, at one time and place alone (Smith 2009: 55; Sinha 2010). For objects that were created in antiquity or by foreign communities, value is attributed and ascribed not by the object’s producers, but by the customer’s desire to possess such objects. Although this definition is helpful when insuring an object or studying an open market of exchange, this criterion is limiting for my purpose.

Instead of using value as that which encompasses price, my arguments are related to social engagement and significance to a community. I will employ an understanding of value as a form of symbolic capital. Pierre Bourdieu defines symbolic capital as, “...capital – in whatever form – insofar as it is represented, i.e., apprehended symbolically, in a relationship of knowledge or, more precisely, of misrecognition and recognition, presupposes the intervention of the habitus, as a socially constituted cognitive capacity” (Bourdieu 1986: 241-258). This form of capital is distinct to the culture and time whence it comes and creates difference in valuation that is separate from monetary capital. What may be symbolically valuable to one community or time may be worthless to another. Thus, value and interpretation always alters and over time and is produced and reproduced by the consensus of a group. The value of the Cast Collection is imagined, produced, and altered in this way. Therefore, I am concerned with their value as pieces

in the construction of educational and intellectual view, personal relationships, and campus identity and form.

My intention for this thesis is two-fold. I wish to create a cogent narrative of the history and lives of the Cornell Casts and to tease out the intertwined and complex narrative of interaction, intended voice, and control, as well as to understand the collection's place in the world of Cornell. The casts, brought here by A. D. White in 1894, have been subject to tremendous changes, and their current scattered state is certainly not what was intended by A.D. White. However, advocacy, while it may seem fitting, is not the goal of my thesis. It would be simple to argue that a collection currently out of favor should be returned to its original glory, I do not intend to make the argument that the current value placed on the collection is wrong, or that it should be changed. Instead I argue that the university - casts relationship is defined by institutional use and control of three elements: high art, knowledge, and institutional legislation. The triangulation and alternating deployment of these three characteristics has worked over the past one hundred-and-twenty-five years to redefine continuously the use and value of the Cast Collection in order for the institution to control the expression of its communal voice.

The first chapter of this thesis will give a history of the collection and its movement throughout the Cornell Campus, and will describe how students interact with the collection in its varying forms over time. This chapter represents a new consolidated narrative of the William Henry Sage Collection of Casts. It brings together all partial narratives in existence along with archival data and evidence. Because the history of the Cast Collection is unknown to most, and there is not another full history, this chapter will fill the void. For the purpose of this thesis, it will allow readers to become acquainted with movement and history, and will provide the basis for analysis and the context in which my interpretation will be based.

The second chapter examines at the casts themselves and the manners in which viewers interact with the pieces. Despite the diverse motivation for the placement of the casts, each statue has a resounding ability to connect with viewers. The humanoid form of the casts and their expressive nature place them between living person and object. They transcend the inanimate and move towards human. The perceptible state between human and inanimate is commonly referred to as “uncanny valley” and is repeatedly referenced by both students from the past, in journal entries and letters written home, and by modern students who see the sculptures during their daily lives (Kammen 2008; Eliza, November 18, 2013; Erin, December 1, 2013; Anna, November 20, 2013; Seyama 2010). The casts act as a vessel for possession by the original stone or bronze statue that manifests in the same way as traditional and modern religious practices such as Darshana in the Hindu faith, which refers to being in the gaze of god when looking at a sighted icon. By being imbued with a spirit and a persona, the casts become actors in the lives of viewers. Alienation caused by discovery of the uncanny, projection that influences friendship, and dismissal of the casts as space-defining decoration are all forms of interaction between statue and human on this campus. While each is different, most viewers still speak of the casts as sentient beings that watch, have presence, and, most importantly, issue an aura into their world.

The third chapter will define and analyze how this aura can be and has been used to create ritual space specific to the desires of the time. The collection has existed in multiple forms and presided over spaces in various buildings on campus. In each instance, the collection or group of casts has received a different name and use. Each of these curatorial changes has changed how students interact with the statues, and can shed light onto changing perception and

local valuation. Through the observation of shifts in use, as well as changes in the names and locations of the collection, curatorial styles and the intended mood of layout becomes obvious.

The fourth chapter demonstrates the similar function of the Cast Collection at Cornell as a large museum in a nation. By controlling the ways in which the casts are curated, and therefore perceived, Cornell University has used the collection to enhance and convey its prestige as an institution of higher learning to the Campus, and the outside world. The collection served to establish elite credibility in an egalitarian manner, to provide for the building of a separate and powerful center for intellectual inquiry. This goal was achieved through the strategic use of the personas of the statues that make up the collection, and the manipulation of their space to create the desired environments. Because the collection could morph to become what was needed of it, it served a fundamental role in the creation and maintenance of the institution. The narrative of employment and use that is seen with the Cornell Cast Collection is not unique. In fact, the establishment and curation of museums and awe-inducing collections is commonly deployed by the state and nation. The use, alteration, and abuse of the collection can be best understood when it is viewed through the lens of a state-like entity attempting to establish precedent for education, a collective voice, and an insular identity.

Therefore, the casts do not simply tell us about how we as scholars and citizens of the modern world have changed our perceptions of what is original; they are, in effect, capsules that hold the identity of this place of learning. Their fractures, breaks, treatment, and history are those of the institution, and mirror that of the outside world. We can use this collection of casts of statues and sculptures as a proxy from which to study the construction of Cornell University, as it is similar to that of a nation in form and function. Furthermore, this collection, more so than any other, helped consolidate the university as an institution at once elite and egalitarian, as an

autonomous entity that is self-governed and possesses characteristics that resonate with general contours of nation building. By controlling the dual qualities of elite and egalitarian, living and inanimate, religious and scientific, and valuable and unwanted, the university and its founders (Ezra Cornell and A. D. White) have used the collection to imprint the Cornell that we see today. Students' opinions of the position of the collection in the art and historical worlds alter and shift depending on the intellectual trends of the time. But an enduring theme that is persistent over time is the ability of the collection to speak to its viewers. Regardless of artistic impression each individual sculpture in the Cast Collection has a character and a history that is different from others, and interacts with members of the community in a surprisingly consistent and eloquent manner. It is this characteristic that made the collection invaluable to the founding of the institution and explains why its presence continues to create and represent the humanities at Cornell.

Because this paper will focus on the Cornell centric William H. Sage Collection of Casts, I have included a glossary of Cornelliana at the end of this work for reference. The reader will find there descriptions of people, buildings, places, and traditions that may not be familiar. Should the reader come to any Cornell term that is not completely defined in context, I recommend turning to the end of this work to the glossary.



Fig. 2*Museum of Casts #2, Casts in McGraw (above); Fig. 3**Museum of Casts #1, Casts in Goldwin Smith Hall (below)*

Chapter 1

New Phases, New Places: A History of Movement

"The great quantities of furniture, apparatus, and books which I had sent from Europe had been deposited wherever storage could be found"

– A. D. White 1905

Unequivocally entangled with the history of the cast collection is the story of their use by their paramount viewers: Cornell's students. We first find the traces of casts owned by the university in course Registers for drawing courses. As early as the 1870s and 1880s, some ten – to fifteen years after the founding of the university, we can see mentions of casts in art contexts (Registers; Kuniholm et al 2010). Men and women enrolled in fine arts and in drawing would be exposed to casts of body parts, many of which were considered "antiques and antiquities" in the late 1800s. From drawing courses students began to learn how to represent three-dimensional form in two dimensions. In the late 1800s, it was not the presence of the casts as a collection that was important; rather it was their use as instruments of education (Registers 1883). There are neither records of exactly which casts were present then, nor can we tell if they had some kind of social value outside of the classroom, but this understanding would soon change.

In the 1880s, the university was beginning to rest on more assured ground. They were building and rebuilding structures on campus to house and to teach a growing student body. "...An opportunity to acquire an art gallery was now offered. The residual estate of Jennie McGraw Fiske, to which the university was entitled, under the terms of her will include her mansion and its thirty-acre site. The mansion still contained the art objects she and Willard Fiske had purchased in Europe. The university had received an offer of \$10,000 from White for the purchase of a collection of casts provided the mansion was purchased and a suitable gallery

added" (Parsons, 1986:138). Unfortunately, the construction of an art museum was not to occur, as the estate was sold and later burned while in the hands of Chi Psi fraternity.

However A. D. White's offer and desire to have a designated museum on campus was neither entirely denied, nor forgotten. The McGraw Museum of Natural History and the collections therein did boast many art forms and objects. In the years leading to Cornell University's opening ceremony in 1865, Ezra Cornell had sent A. D. White to Europe with the instructions of purchasing anything that he thought necessary for the education of the students (White 1905: 306). He states in his autobiography "As to equipment, wherever I found valuable material I bought it" (White 1905: 338). Bishop in *A History of Cornell* written by Bishop states,

in March of 1868 White went abroad, to visit model institutions, to buy books and equipment, to collect professors. In France, Germany and England, White spent his days in a happy flurry, like a mother given carte blanche to purchase a trousseau. A stream of packing cases flowed to Ithaca, containing chemicals, laboratory apparatus, anatomical, architectural, and engineering models, a collection of miniature plows of all ages and nations, pictures and statues of the nobler sorts and of course books, whole libraries of books (Bishop 1962: 84).

The collection was assembled so that all who attended this institution would have access to all necessary learning materials to provide "...poor ambitious boys like [Cornell] the opportunities which would have been precious to himself" (Bishop 1962: 26), and to stimulate a type of learning that emphasized passion and reality. A. D. White states that he "...took pains to guard the institution from those who, in the higher education, substitute dates for history, gerund-grinding for literature, and formulas for science..." (White 1905: 342). Upon the completion of McGraw Hall in 1871, all of the items collected by A. D. White were placed together as one museum collection. The McGraw museum was devoted to the education of the students in an

apparently thrilling manner. Jessie Mary Bouton from the class of 1883 wrote during her freshman year in 1879 of an outing she took with a close female friend and a male acquaintance. She said, "Mr. Wilson took Miss Yost and myself through the museum and library in McGraw on Thursday morning. I think that was a place, which you missed, and you missed a treat too. They have almost everything you would want to see in the museum" (Kammen 2008: 36). Her enthusiasm for the collection was echoed by other students who used these collections, and also evokes a sense of mystery and the awe of the ancient world. Evidently, the institution deemed such collections necessary and sought to add to the Museum of Natural History.

The 1891-1892 Register contains the first mention of a new Museum of Classical Archaeology. It states that it is located on the first floor of McGraw, and contains Casts, Gems, and coins. Additionally, it states that both sculpture courses and classics lectures, specifically Greek, will be conducted on the floor of the museum (Register 1891-1892). These casts, gems, and coins were brought to the university to add to the archaeology collection in McGraw towards the close of the nineteenth century. However, the casts are not mentioned in Registers from earlier years, although the Museum of Archaeology and the Museum of Natural History, located on the basement, first, and second floors of the central column of McGraw continued to be touted as excellent by Cornell handbooks and registers. This inclusion would seem to point to an initial small number of such objects that was supplemented later, and grew to be of substantial number.

In 1891, a section of the museum was then devoted to them and they were made distinct from the other objects. A potential cause for the supplementation of the classical collection is outlined in A. D. White's autobiography. He states that during his years as the president of the university (1866-1885), "...one of the most bitter charges constantly reiterated against us was that we were depreciating the study of ancient classical literature. Again and again it was repeated,

especially in a leading daily journal of the metropolis under influence of a sectarian college, that I was 'degrading classical studies'. Nothing could be more unjust; I had greatly enjoyed such studies myself, had found pleasure in them since my graduation, and had steadily urged them upon those who had taste or capacity for them." (White 1905: 360-361). Because of these various attacks he took it upon himself to be a vocal proponent for a classical museum. Not only would the development of a Museum of Classical Archaeology give the opportunity to students to develop a love of classics by seeing the beautiful figures of ancient life, but it would also serve to quiet his forceful critics.

Meanwhile, in the world outside of the 'Cornell Bubble' Egypt's tombs were being excavated and major reports of their finds were published in international press (NY Times June 8, 1859). These finds stimulated a trend not only in academic and intellectual circles, but also in fashion and jewelry. Excitement can be seen prominently in the collections of Tiffany & co during this era (Phillips 2008). At Cornell previously acquired items such as the mummy of a man now known as Penpi were given special value. In the course register in 1883 this mummy is noted as "The most valuable object in the Egyptian collection...of the XXIII dynasty, taken in 1883 from the necropolis at Thebes, and presented to the University by the Hon. G.P. Pomeroy, American Consul at Cairo" (Register 1883: 40). Cornell University, as well as the town of Ithaca, were so caught up in this addition to the Cornell collection that an unwrapping party took place with the prominent townspeople and professors in attendance. Because of a cut section from this mummy's wrappings currently held in the collection of The History Center in Tompkins County, and its accompanying envelope, we can determine that the party members were given pieces of this mummy's bandages as souvenirs, and many kept them for a lifetime (C. Duffy, November 30, 2013). Thus, on the back of this social phenomenon the Museum of

Classical Archaeology grew and became noteworthy. It was so noteworthy, in fact, that the New York Times published an article on the eleventh of October, 1891 stating that "McGraw hall, in which the library has been kept, is now being arranged for the reception of a collection of plaster casts to be used in the courses of classical archaeology. The report mentioned with great regret that the President White School of History and Political Science has not yet been fully established, owing to some disagreement as to who should be placed in charge" (New York Times 10,1891). This disagreement is most likely responsible for the location of the cast collection inside of the McGraw Museum. While funds were found to move the library and curate this collection, a new building was not yet built for the humanities, which was later completed and dubbed Goldwin Smith Hall (Parsons 1968).

Lack of funding began to plague the university, an account of which is written in both the Autobiography of A. D. White and in articles of the time. On December the eight, 1892 Robert H. Treman, the same man who gave funds and the vision for the development of Treman State Park, is quoted by the New York Times as stating that the "competition with the great Western universities has of late made the financial management of the university difficult to the extreme...money is needed to increase salaries, to enlarge the number of scholarships and fellowships, to provide for a publication fund, and, especially, to enlarge some of the buildings, and to increase certain equipment" (New York Times 1892). While many feared that Cornell would falter (White 1905), many instances of generous donations by alumni, professors, trustees, interested men and women, and even the government allowed the growth of the university to begin again.

Mr. Sage, who had been exceedingly generous to the university in his donations of funds for the women's college, school of philosophy, and chapel, decided to donate yet again. He

contributed 20,000 dollars to purchase a Collection of Casts to be held in the Museum of Classical Archaeology, reiterating White's goal of previous decades. Upon receiving Mr. Sage's donation, A. D. White himself contacted artists, museums, and craftsmen from around the world in order to choose each piece for the Cast Collection. On March 12, 1893 the New York Times ran an article stating that "Cornell's new Museum of Archaeology is nearly complete, thanks to the Trustees and the generosity of Mr. Sage. It will be the most important museum directly attached to a college or university in this country... special attention has been given to works of Greek art so as to associate the museum closely with the Greek Department". It goes on further to state the layout of the hall. "The hall has been divided into five sections or galleries which are devoted respectively to oriental and early Greek sculptures, athletic and mythological figures, architectural sculptures, Late Greek sculptures, and Italian and roman sculptures" (New York Times 3/4/1893). A later article that was published on the dedication of the museum states that the collection "consists principally of a collection of full-size plaster casts from notable examples of Greek and Roman statuary in bronze and marble. Most of these have been furnished or made to order under the direction of the foreign museums possessing the originals" (New York Times 1894). When the museum was later dedicated in January of 1894, a large feature was similarly written. It stated that the "collection of sculpture [is] excelled by that of no other university - surpassed in this country only by the exhibit in Boston's museum of fine arts...".

It is interesting to note that while it is called a "Museum of Casts" during the course of the descriptive article, the nature of these sculptures as copies or castings is rarely if ever mentioned. Instead writers discuss their merits as sculptures and seem to allow them the honor of being original statues. The sentiment of honor is conveyed not only to the statues themselves, but also to the institution in general. The accolade of "the best in the country" and "surpassed by no

one save the Boston Museum of Fine Arts” is rather impressive and demonstrates the value and merit of such a collection. Perhaps, authenticity, while acknowledged, was not an issue in this period. The modern viewer can see the grandeur of this collection by simply looking at the figures below, which is a photograph taken of the original museum of casts in McGraw hall.



Fig. 4: Hellenistic Sculptures, McGraw Hall 1890s

The grand curtains and pedestals give the impression of wealth, importance and knowledge. They would have been impressive to any visitor even those familiar with museum collections in other institutions and cities. It gave legitimacy to the university as an academic center and catapulted it again up to the top ranks of the oldest universities in this country. The university gained international credibility from this collection, as well as national notoriety. As is documented in the printed guide to the classical collections at Cornell cited in the previous chapter "staff members at the Cornell Daily Sun claim to have found an old Baedeker guide to North America which gave Ithaca a star on the strength of the cast collection alone"(Kuniholm et al 2010: 13).

In the following year, then President Schurman "...had been active in his pleas for funds in the State legislature, and in 1894 an appropriation of \$150,000 was made for the completion of laboratories, museums, hospitals, and other structures..." (Parsons 1968: 180-181). It is possible that the legislature was impressed with Schurman's presidency and focus of the pedagogic elements of campus life, and determined that the government grant was money well spent because of the establishment of facilities like the Cast Collection. This grant aided Cornell University in a number of ways and allowed it to continue the maintenance of their collections for students to study and enjoy. It appears that students frequented the museum both during study hours and spare time. At least one professor at Cornell in the late 1800s, Professor Wilder, seems to have made it a habit to show students around the museum. Gertrude and Ruth Nelson, sisters and members of the classes of 1896 and 1897 respectively, note in a letter to their mother that "a visit to Professor Wilder's zoo in McGraw Hall took us down stairs to see the alligators, the raccoon, armadillo, and the casts...we wandered about the museum and the museum of casts" (Kammen 2008: 54). The association of the museum of casts with the viewing of stuffed animals, which were done onsite by the same professor who showed them the collection (F. Gleach, October 8, 2013), gives the impression that the cast collection was somewhat of a novelty. It was honored and valued as such, and held in high esteem. It was not just a collection meant to be used solely for academic investigation or experimentation. The experience that rivaled sideshows, trips abroad, and to large museum exhibits. The statues themselves were honored and displayed in an awesome manner.

The idea that students and the Cornell community saw the collection as worthy of an intentional trip and respect, as evidenced by student accounts of visits, Registers, and Handbooks praising the museum, is carried through the turn of the century. In 1904-1905 when plans were

being drawn for a new building to be erected across from Morrill, McGraw, and White to house the college of Arts and Sciences. In this building, two floors were designed to house the Cast Collection. Interestingly, the vision for the building was created with the cast collection in mind. The first floor and part of the lower level were intended from the beginning to house the casts. We can see on the floor plan below that the initial iteration of the building included plans for cast installation, conservation, curation, and education.

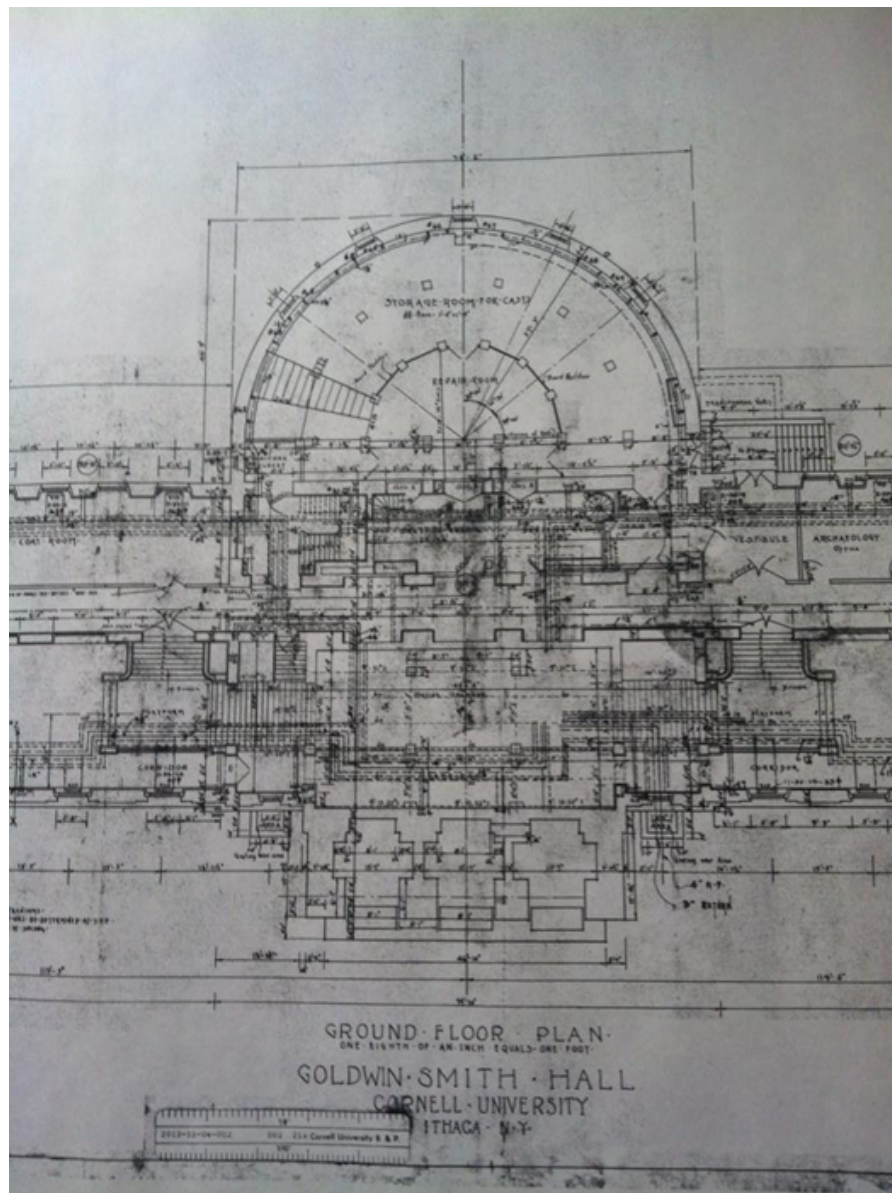


Fig. 5: Goldwin Smith Hall Blueprint, first floor plan

Even the facade of the building echoes the grandeur of the neo-classical style. It is impressive that in a time when most of Cornell's collections were consolidated in one small building, that half of the largest and most prestigious academic building would a museum for one specific collection. Here too students were able to view the collections in exhibits and peruse the statues at their leisure. Gallery-like placements encouraged student visitation. This building was erected in the honor and under the name of Professor Goldwin Smith, who was a renowned classics professor. Goldwin Smith and A.D. White were the guests of honor at the laying of the cornerstone of the building and during its construction (Parsons 1968: 202-203). Once completed, this extremely large building became home to the Museum of Classical Archaeology's Cast Collection where most casts would rest until the 1960s; some remain to this day. The Register for 1907-1908 notes for the first time the "Museum of Casts". It is still labeled as a positive educational addition to the classical department that made it a place worth seeing. Ms. Adelheid Zeller wrote in June of 1916 that she and friends spent a rainy day visiting the museums and Cast Collection on campus (Kammen 2008: 106). The museum seemed to captivate student's appreciation through the first decades of the 1900s.

However, beginning in the 1920s -1930s one detects a disconnect between Cornell pride and the collection. No longer is the Museum of Casts praised so highly in the Registers, although several archived photographs of students visiting the Cast Collection up until the 1950s serve as evidence for students' continued interaction and perhaps fascination with the museum. In the years leading up to WWII, the seeds of modernism and later postmodernism began to take root in the classics department. The casts began to fall out of favor as being from a time far removed from the one at hand. They no longer equaled originals and intellectuals began to think of them as a hindrance to the new way to perceive the ancient world. They were conceived of as

obstructions to proper history that encouraged undue awe of the classics and created a materialized world in the minds of students that never really existed. They were exoticizing the ancient cultures. They were no longer of use (V. Platt, December 2, 2013).

This sentiment continued through to the end of WWII and increased in fervor. After WWII, most of the men of this country had seen Europe. "The money after WWII allowed people to purchase good quality originals and most men had now been to Europe. This is the fall of the value of casts" (A. Palmer, November 27, 2013). They had visited ancient sites, and seen great masterpieces. No longer was the world-tour philosophy necessary for education. With the money generated by the war and the power given to the allied forces, works of art were removed from the ancient world. The United States and individual collectors and institutions could possess "real" antiquities. And the students' opinions followed suit (V. Platt, December 2, 2013; A. Alexandridis, October 15, 2013; A. Palmer, November 27, 2013). In 1946 a young student by the name of Elizabeth S. Warner discussed her visit to the Museum of Casts in a letter home. She thought that the "Museum of Casts where we take this course (history of fine arts) is a regular morgue with horrible statues from the Greeks hanging from every possible place. Just the atmosphere is enough to scare anyone" (Kammen 2008: 161-162). The pieces still inspire, but they are no longer pleasurable. Instead of pleasing, the white casts represent the dead and an uninviting empty space. It appears that the faculty of Cornell may have felt similarly as in this era and immediately following it, as the casts were moved, stored, and broken to accommodate new classrooms and in keeping with the international "Destroy the Cast movement". Those that were left became backdrops for The Temple of Zeus Café and wall decoration for the administration office, classrooms, and faculty studies.

In a way this destruction of the awe-inspiring gallery brought an egalitarian edge to the collection. It allowed for students to view the collection on a daily basis while enjoying the company of others at meals, and imbued their days with art. Many of the pieces were just moved to halls and remained intact, while others became decorations of classrooms and offices. In the 1970s, the Temple of Zeus Cafe found its original home in the Northern gallery, which contained the Olympia pediment, and so received its name (A. Alexandridis, October 15, 2013). During this period, students were able to take their breaks and lunch sitting next to the pieces. The Temple of Zeus Cafe evoked a style of cafe typified in my mind to the MET, Louvre, Musee d'Orsay, and many other well-known museums where the visitor can complete his or her daily rituals in the presence of fabulous art. While such placement allowed for the students to have access to their pieces, it did foster an environment in which they were destroyed and ignored. No more was it the stuffy and sequestered hall. More students were encouraged to see the art. However, the sense of treasure does protect objects, and its removal led to the accidental and purposeful destruction of some pieces. Arms and legs were broken by interaction with overly energetic students, stains appeared, and cracks became apparent. As the university continued to grow, it was determined that more space was a necessary for classrooms.

In the 1970-1980s, GWS was again renovated. The museum halls were cut and auditoriums built, and much of the collection was removed to the A.D. White Museum in the A.D. White House, the new museum's basement, and scattered classrooms and offices (Kuniholm et al 2010; F. Gleach, October 8, 2013; A. Alexandridis, October 15, 2013). Some pieces did remain in Goldwin Smith Hall and can be seen in their original locations to this day. Unfortunately, neither I nor other researchers have found a photograph of the A. D. White museum, where the collection remained until the construction of the Herbert F. Johnson museum

in 1973. A few casts were brought to the Johnson, although only one was deemed acceptable for display at the Johnson. The only remaining cast in the Johnson Museum is a Horse Head from the Parthenon Pediment, which is on display in the stairwell connecting the second and third floors. In this move, 50% of the original 631-piece collection became inaccessible to students, and a large number of casts were injured and destroyed by dampness, mishandling, movement, and a lack of care (A. Alexandridis, October 15, 2013; V. Platt, December 2, 2013; C. Barrett, November 28, 2013).

In the 1980s a few of the pieces were used by resident artist and art professor Professor J. Seley in order to create his bumper statues, which can be seen outside of Statler Hall and in front of the Temple of Zeus Café today. In order to make his sculptures, he brought the giant Heracles casts from GWS and cut it into pieces to cast again. Seley's process destroyed the statue, whose pieces can be found in the current storage unit (A. Alexandridis, October 15, 2013; Specktor 2011). This move is very intriguing as it is "an original piece of art made of a cast of an original by an original artist" (L. Palmer, November 27, 2013).

Student interaction today occurs in a different frame from that in the past and that is certainly different from the intention of the founders. As of 2014, most of the collection rests in a warehouse a few miles from campus. Many pieces are broken, cracked, or shattered. However, we still have full casts of a few sculptures and recent incentives have led to the cataloging of the modern collection led by Professor Alexandridis. Several of the casts, such as a piece known as "The Wrestlers", which was missing the head of one of the men, have even been repaired by a local conservator and regained their places on display. For the most part, students, faculty, and staff see the casts while walking through the halls of GWS, in class, or when climbing the stairs of the Johnson Museum. Most students have simply noticed the casts, but do not know what they

are or whence they came. Some students with whom I spoke feel that they are a representation of snobbery, others find them an important part of their educational environment and struggle for knowledge. While opinions on the beauty of the casts vary, interestingly all students with whom I spoke, interviewed, or surveyed (some 30 students from different departments and majors), retain the same unabashed interest in the collection. The following chapters will interpret the cause for the unabated interest and connection, analyze institutional voice produced by curation, and connect the use of the collection to the deployment of nationalistic elements.



Fig. 6: Athena's Eyes, Goldwin Smith Hall

Chapter 2

Through Athena's Eyes: Forming Bonds Through Communication

"The casts are in a strange position where they are watching you, and when you turn a corner, you are confronted by all of their eyes"

-Eliza, personal communication, November 18, 2013

When one enters a gallery, he or she immediately encounters a certain aura. This palpable sentiment varies from museum to museum, and fulfills the narrative goal of the institution. The design and layout of the space, the protection of the pieces: glass, lighting, sensors, and guards, and the attitude of those employed within all conspire to construct an overall experience. In the elite collection, the feeling often falls within the realm of reverence and sacredness. "Perhaps one of the most important roles a museum can play is to become an environment for generative inquiry. Rather than presenting artifacts or teaching scientific "truths", a museum can create an atmosphere in which exhibits present an phenomena in such a way that they elicit new insights and questions" (Pitman 1999: 90). Each object in a collection is imbued with this aura, making it at once unique and valuable. The viewers will become aware that the bowl in front of them is not the same as the one in their kitchen cabinet. Its placing in the context of the museum signifies a status and value that elicits a sense of awe.

When an object is imbued with a spirit, it is the spirit that is generated through exchange and interaction. By imbuing an item with a spiritual modality, people are able to find true attachment and connection to the piece. Often, such attachment leads to anthropomorphizing objects and non-human life in our world. Artists, owners, and viewers can form attachments to a variety of forms ranging from a living family pet to any inanimate object. Personal symbols may

be unique to a specific person, or may be the result of cultural context. Because most ancient, antique, or culturally diverse objects are viewed within the context of the museum, the spiritual or cultural affiliations of the object may be lost to the viewer. However, if we move away from the academic context and employ a religious frame, it is again possible to see the object as a living thing. This is true not only in some forms of Christianity, where images of Jesus and the Apostles are considered to be alive, especially when the body of Christ is invoked in the Eucharist where wafers and wine are consumed as his body and blood. Other religions, such as Hinduism even more strongly demonstrate spiritual possession of objects.

The Hindu faith is often called that of “one million gods” (Koller 2008: 3; Willford 2013). Such a classification points to the individualization of worship, and the concept that each person, place, and community has a distinct relation with a god or goddess that conveys life and hopefully prosperity to the people. Each of these gods and goddesses are often venerated through its image in a form of “ritual seeing”, which is known as Darshan (Eck 1998: 3). Seeing goes both from the human viewer to the icon, and from within the icon to the viewer, and this mutual glance or “touch” as Eck calls it, begins a relationship (Eck 1998: 60). “In the eyes of most devotees, the icon becomes the deity...” (Huyler 1951: 33). And thus “images are created as receptacles for spiritual energy; each is an essential link that allows the devotee to experience direct communication with the Gods” (Huyler 1951: 36). Just as the modern sculptor considers the living characteristics of his medium before he begins work, in the Hindu religion the material from which these icons are constructed plays an equally important role.

Natural elements that are used by humankind...”combine their innate spirits with the energy believed to be put into the object by the craftsperson...if the object is then used over a period of time, the power if its spirit is thought to increase. If it is used in ritual or in puja, it is

imbued with the energy of the Divine: It becomes sacred” (Huyler 1951: 77). Thus we can see a modern example of the godly possession of an original object in a way that allows interaction between the image and the viewer. Statues and icons both representational and those created in the likenesses of humans, gods, and goddesses have a greater capacity to be imbued with spiritual energy, because of their iconic and recognizable characters. Because participants within a framework of action place energy on an object, the spirit may be seen as an external projection of life. Through an endless repetition of ritual action, viewers transcribe a character to these otherwise inanimate objects. Because the individual does the fundamental transcription of character, even when in the context of large-scale ritual, each participant can develop a specific sense of connection to these venerated icons.

The possibility of human-object connection holds true for all objects, but is most intense in objects that represent the human form. These forms have a capacity to transcend value and possess life itself. In the case of sculptural creation, the sculptor/artist, viewer, and displaying institution each have a hand in the aura and interpretation of the object. For sculptors, a piece of work, whether icon or cast, is the expression of an idea or form, this it is the tangible construction of their desire or thought. The sculpture is an ultimate projection that attempts to create an accurate depiction of the intangible. In order to achieve the desired characteristics, the artist must begin with living material. Each sculpting medium conveys a different identity and natural structure to a sculpted being. Wood’s soft and fibrous nature will create a very different piece than one of cold and stark cement. This basic fact holds true for many contexts including artist handbooks, which explain the process of choosing the appropriate medium for a piece. One such work, *Living Material*, states, “The concept of 'living materials' acknowledges that every material has an active presence, a character, a capacity for change that entitles it to be considered

'alive'. When sculpting, "the question is 'how much do you want to be changed' for if materials are alive, they return the pressure when they are pressed" (Andrews 1983: 1). Therefore, the vitality of the substance, as perceived by the sculptor, creates a being, which can emote and emit qualities inherently foundational to its structure, such as the sheen and opalescence of marble. The piece moves through the liminal state of being carved and shaped, and emerges as one with its structural compounds. The association of material with character is perhaps why we attribute pale, thin skin to marble statues, and natural strength and endurance to those made of wood. These characteristics were chosen by the artist to evoke in the viewer specific emotions grounded in the perception of physical characteristics. In the case of the casts, this would be the stark and regal white of the plaster.

Yet, it is not enough to attribute all emotion and sentiment evoked and expressed by a statue to its formative material. A human connection to or fascination with the image must be established. A viewer approaches as a stranger, and leaves as a friend with a memory of the face or body of the humanoid on display. These viewers often remain fascinated by the similarities between themselves and the statue. One need only observe visitors to a modern sculpture garden, such as that within the Louvre, Musee D'Orsay, or The Metropolitan Museum of Art to see this communication in action. What will make itself evident is that men, women, and children will approach the pieces, as they would with another art form in a museum, but will then lean in and become absorbed. In my own research, I have seen some individuals compare their nose with the marble nose in front of them or their feet with that of the statues, while others will inevitably mimic the stance of the statue. Through this imitation, viewers, especially children and teenagers, puff out their bodies and take possession of the mood and attitude of the statue, in what I believe is an attempt to connect with and understand the emotion of the piece.

While it is easy to establish firmly community interaction with sculpture in modern museums, it is important to note that human and humanoid figurines have been found in contexts that span the last 30,000 years of history (Suleiman 1986: 1). More often than not, these figures have been delineated as representing gods or pertinent characters in the history of the peoples with which they were found. These figures represent a vast array of culture and time, from Venus of Willendorf, Mesopotamian fertility figurines, sculptures of Egyptian gods and pharaohs, to modern religious icons (Suleiman 1986). When dealing with these figures, scholars often state that it is important to remember that for the communities whence the objects came, these figures were alive and real. The gods, goddesses, and personages that they represent were real to the communities and interacted with them through their lives. This argument has been made not only for instances of ancient history, but also in the historical period (Huyler 1999, Koller 2008, Hersey 2009, Morgan 2005, Eck 1998).

In ancient Greece and Rome large and small figures of goddesses and gods decorated homes, temples, shrines, and public spaces. Both current archaeological literature and histories written in the past speak to their presence, importance, and living qualities (Hersey 2009). It was necessary for the invocation of a god or goddess to have a representation of him or her present so that a worshiper could actively communicate with the deity. This ability would have strengthened the bond a living human would have had with a supernatural being, and sets up a world in which gods live among humans through their images. Not only is there an idea in Ancient Greece and Rome that the human worshiper can give to the statue, but also that the statue and the god or goddess can give and communicate with the worshiper. The intensity of a relationship between statue and human varies, where some can even assume characteristics of amorous love. George Hersey spends the entirety of his book *Falling in Love with Statues*

discussing both the place of a human figure of a god in daily life, in ritual encounter, and in loving affairs. He states,

One of the odder things that our culture has derived from antiquity is the love-moral, theological, poetical, physical- of states by humans. Sometimes too, as in ‘real’ life, the love turns to hate. Any number of emotions can develop as well; but the most important for us is love... There are more examples than a single book-length discussion could encompass (Hersey 2009: 5).

For the purposes of this chapter, I illustrate Hersey’s concept of statue-love with one of the most famous examples. In the story of Pygmalion written in Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, a princely sculptor creates a marble statue that is so awe-inspiringly beautiful that he falls madly in love with it. He sees it as alive and strokes and caresses it until it is filled with the spirit of Venus herself and wakens to embrace him (Hersey 2009 91-94). While this Venus was able to transcend her inanimate form to become fully human, most other living statues evoke emotional responses in their viewers while they remain imprisoned in stone. In works by Herodotus, Pliny, and others the forms of statues become beacons for the goddess to enter and interact with the tangible world (Hersey 2009). Such examples powerfully illustrate that these sculptures and statues were not simply objects, but held within them spirit and life.

Plaster:

Since the Cast Collections are reproductions made of Plaster of Paris, I now explore how plaster reproductions of a being have the capacity to establish a spiritual connection. Plaster has a very interesting set of characteristics. Unlike stone, it moves between forms. The plaster begins its life as a solid calcified mineral: gypsum. This material is then ground and baked to dry (R. Bertoia, November, 27 2013; Andrews 1983). When it is in these two states, the plaster is a cool powder that is not active and therefore inanimate. However, when the artist mixes water with the powder to form a paste, it becomes hot from the chemical reaction. It activates and must be dealt

with quickly. The activation can be seen much like the initiation of a being, the heat is so like a warm body that we see it as living. In this state it is alive, but the ratios of water to powder create varying characteristics where no two batches will be identical. Each bowl has a different working time and a different consistency. The artist must work within the limits of the material as it is, just as a person must react and interact with another creature without control of the other's persona. Once the plaster hardens, it cools and holds the shape into which it was poured, spread, or guided. It has a creamy opaque surface that is an easy receptacle for paint and staining, and through these processes, easily breathes new life. Its ability to take on a new form quickly and seamlessly makes it the perfect medium for the design of initial phases of art, and for the reproduction of already extant work.

Touch:

In antiquity, plaster of Paris was used for a multitude of purposes. However, it is interesting to note that it was almost always used as a means to replicate something that was already extant. Writing in the first century AD Pliny thought plaster was first employed in the fourth century BC, during the reign of Alexander the Great, to mold form the face to create realistic portraits, but we now know that it had been employed much earlier. The Egyptians, for example, had employed it for death masks from the third millennium BC, and there is evidence from later periods of its use in Egypt by sculptors (Kurtz 2000: 2).

Therefore, plaster is special in that it has come into physical contact with the face and body of that which it seeks to represent. It is not created through a medium such as the eye of a sculptor or his or her chisel. Instead, it is placed directly onto the muse: the inspiration. The moment of contact allowing for a transference of human energy and character to the plaster. Through the process of creation, not only does the cast represent a one-to-one facsimile, but it

also takes up the power and the history of the model, which is one reason for its use as a death mask. The touch imbues the cast with distinct characters, and thereby lives by revealing each wrinkle and fold of skin.

The idea of touch conveying an invisible force from the touched to the actor or actor to touched is common to many disciplines, particularly that of medical anthropology. The ethnography *The Land is Dying: Contingency, Creativity and Conflict in Western Kenya* by Geissler and Prince focuses much of its analysis on understanding the role of touch in life and healing of the Uhero people. Touch and daily care are the modes through which personhood is formed, illness is treated, and the sick and dying are taken care of (Geissler & Prince 2010: 11, 150-153, 173). According to Geissler and Prince, "...in Uhero, touch is usually understood as a form of merging, in which the substances of one and other are shared..." (Geissler & Prince 2013, 11). Only certain members of the community, such as a prepubescent child picking medicinal herbs, have the power to affect or leave undisturbed another person or thing (Geissler & Prince 2013: 173). While the herbs and medicines themselves remain constant, by altering who comes into contact with them and the intention of that person, both consciously and unconsciously, the outcome may be completely altered. This touch sparks a reaction in the ritual that allows it to either succeed or fail. Thus, it is the spirit of the person who imbues the herbs and gives authority to the prognosis and recovery, not the physical skill. The herbs, act as a medium to absorb the power, knowledge, and characteristics of the user.

Plaster acts as a similar vehicle for the transference of power, although instead of being imparted with the power of the healer and physically absorbed by a third party, the plaster hardens and conveys identity and power to the viewer through its visible physical form. The layer of contact gives the cast a special kind of state: a state between simple human form and

humanity. Thus, we can see plaster and the process of casting as a way to absorb not only form but also character and identity. Because casts act as placeholders for original life or original art, they must fully encapsulate the history and recognizable form of the original. Thus, the sculptor and, more importantly, the viewer come to see the original's past in the copy, and both as, at least educationally, the same. The transfer of past history onto new form holds true for the casting of statues and carvings made in both antiquity and today. Despite the fact that casts are generally made from stone or bronze figures, and can therefore not replicate the exact color and texture of the piece, the process of reproduction still allows the cast to take up the history of the original, in addition to beginning a history of its own.

Replicas:

When we encounter replicas and reproductions of statues and sculpture today, they are generally those that were made for institutions in the past. They are antiques of the classical world, which were displayed in institutions such as museums, schools, and royal estates in Europe and the United States. The abundance of antique replicas from the 1500s onwards is a result of “generations of Europeans [who] were imbued with the teaching that ancient art marked the highest standard attainable” (Wittlin 1941: 48). As evidence of the highest form of art, ancient statuary was coveted, and it was deemed necessary to possess these pieces in any elite collection. Some, like Wittlin, believed that “the only way for us to become great, nay imitable, if that be possible, is to imitate Antiquity” (Wittlin 1949: 48). The various European, and later American, institutions acted as a secondary mediator for interpretation as each owner controlled the way that his or her pieces were curated and honored. The design and placement of objects determines a framework of understanding that can often re-write artistic intent and viewer interpretation. The intended and perceived voice can manifest as national pride in the case of

valued collections, or as strict, almost Orwellian control of emotion and meaning. Because plaster imitations of statuary were made and owned by large institutions, and often given places of honor in a collection, plaster collected the life of the original. In the aristocratic collections on seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, the pieces were not considered inferior to originals, but were instead revered as being one and the same as the object whence they were modeled. This understanding may be a result of the great artistic expertise that is required to create a plaster cast, or it may be a result of institutional control of interpretation. Because institutions would want to have a collection that was praised, it may have served their purposes to surround the casts with the same honor that would be given to an original artifact. Thus, authenticity does not rest inherently in the object, but is a characteristic instilled in an object through human action. Therefore, the collections of plaster casts would serve very distinct purposes that were prescribed and created by institutional presentation.

Cornell's Living Statues:

The above statement is especially true at Cornell University. Our impressively large collection of more than 631 pieces was initially considered a valuable addition to the university. Each piece was handpicked, commissioned, and purchased by A.D. White himself. Current professors of Classics at Cornell have noted that the pieces were not only chosen from the canon of classical Greek and Roman sculpture, but were also picked based on their ability to show various emotive forms and important stylistic alterations. An example of this is a series of Venus statues from a variety of periods, which can be viewed simultaneously for the study of stylistic alterations (V. Platt, December 2, 2013; A. Alexandridis, October 15, 2013). Each of these pieces was placed on display and cataloged by Alfred Emerson, a Classics professor in the 1890s and the first curator of the cast collection. It is within this catalog that we find one of many

allusions to the casts possessing a past that is perhaps not necessarily their own. Emerson's catalog is 76 pages of detailed description of each cast. Although this format is normal for a database of sorts, what is interesting is that he does not focus on the status of the cast as a replication. In many of his descriptions he only states at the very end the name of a museum in which the statue is kept. The catalog is devoid of a discussion of plaster versus the original.

126- Seven Lions' Heads from the Temple of Zeus- These heads, placed on the top of the entablature, which bears the Parthenon frieze, are ornamental gutter-spouts from the exterior cornice of the Olympian Temple. The greatest singularity is the extreme difference in their execution, which indicates the unequal ability of the workmen to whom this part of the sculptural decoration appears to have been unreservedly entrusted (Emerson 1890?: 29).

It is evident from this passage's lack of reference to a difference between the cast, which is described, and the original whence it came that, at least educationally and stylistically, the casts were equally capable of conveying the history and aesthetic aura of the stone original. Thus, while the statues of gods and goddesses may have lost some of their initial religious dimensions, their spirits and capacities to act as vessels remained intact. Where the statues were possessed by gods, the casts became the manifestations of their revered parent sculptures. In this way, they are like a religious icon, with the complete ability to hold a spirit within them.

Despite the later trend that led to the destruction of many of the casts, this unsettling capacity has remained constant throughout time. In 1946 a young student by the name of Elizabeth S. Warner discussed her visit to the Museum of Casts in a letter home. She thinks that the "Museum of Casts where we take this course (history of fine arts) is a regular morgue with horrible statues from the Greeks hanging from every possible place. Just the atmosphere is enough to scare anyone" (Kammen 2006: 161-162). Because Elizabeth states that she is in the galleries for a class, it is possible to extrapolate that she was interacting with the casts through

sight and study for a few hours a week. She had enough time to observe the collection in its home. It would seem that regardless of opinion on the aesthetic beauty of the casts or the contemporary perception of them as intellectually important, many students and faculty who spend time in Goldwin Smith Hall have experiences of connections with the casts.

Interaction Through Projection:

Curiously, even without the regimented framework of interpretation that was prescribed by classes, and museum layout, the pieces still speak to viewers. At Cornell, there are three current modes of person-sculpture interaction. The first is a simple lack of interest, which is typified by the establishment of the pieces as solely object: other. The second is friendship, projection, and love. And the third is fear and alienation. One student with whom I spoke shared Elizabeth's opinion and stated, "The casts are in a strange position where they are watching you, and when you turn a corner, you are confronted by all of their eyes" (Eliza, November 18, 2013). This student felt that the casts could see her and, much as in Darshan, could touch her through their gaze. This unsettling realization is common to viewers and makes it necessary for them to define and classify the statues in their minds. While Eliza admitted to being startled when turning corners, instead of feeling a general sense of unease as was true in Elizabeth's case, she interpreted the casts as progenitors of an aura within the space that allowed her to think of Goldwin Smith as a separate place of learning imbued with history. The gaze of the statues directed their aura onto the space that is visible to them, as if they were truly able to see through their plaster eyes and reach out to touch the space surrounding them. Their presence not only at the entrance to the building, but also within classrooms and offices has led some students to feel as if they were inside a temple of knowledge. They feel that when entering the building they

should act in a different manner than they would elsewhere on campus. Thus, they bring history and antiquity to life.

Similarly, professors who have casts in their offices speak of a similar gaze. Professor Barrett has a large 6ft tall Venus that stands in the corner of her office behind her desk. When asked about her opinion of the statue, she stated that when she first moved into the office she couldn't get work done. She had a strange feeling that someone was looking over her shoulder at all hours. However, when she got used to the statue, she grew to love it. Instead of a judge of her writing, Venus became an inspiration that lived and aided her thoughts (C. Barrett, November 28, 2013). As Professor Barrett studies ancient religion, she stated that having Venus near her connected her to the goddess, and also to the minds of the men and women who created and worshiped her and her icons. Again, the statue seems to emit an aura through presence and the gaze that is palpable to a viewer, and especially to one who is in the constant presence of the piece.

Other professors show similar pride for their figures, and treat them as if they were an office-friend. Through daily interaction, they see the statues as not only a historical face, but also an acquaintance that brings joy, luck, and companionship. Some even go as far as dressing up their statues with clothing and jewelry to complete their personas (V. Platt, December 2, 2013). The act of completing the character of the statue through personal musing and physical dressing is again similar to Darshan, but is also indicative of a sort of projection (Freud 1988). The statues themselves have faces, body positions, and emotive expressions, but they are not inherently full of human personality. Perhaps, the human form is recognizable as kin to a human viewer, that he or she may project onto the piece his or her own inspirations and aspirations. Because she is working and wants to write well, as is the aim of most scholars, Professor Barrett sees Venus as

watching, and eventually guiding her. She places on the statue the mentorship she may need at the time. Therefore, those who see the statues as friends or as creators of aura may be seeing such a connection through projection of mood or personality onto the casts.

Interaction through Alienation:

However, the medium is simultaneously other. It is alien and falls into a category that distinguishes the piece from human. While some people interpret the sculptures as sublime, others inevitably find them “creepy”. They see what is commonly called “uncanny-valley” in the form of the statues. “Uncanny Valley” is a term that has come into existence largely due to advancements in robotics and artificial intelligence. Its premise is that “...people will have an unpleasant impression of a humanoid robot that has an almost, but not perfectly, realistic in human appearance. This feeling is called the uncanny valley, and is not limited to robots, but is also applicable to any type of human-like object, such as dolls, masks, facial caricatures, avatars in virtual reality, and characters in computer graphics”(Seyama 2007: 337). Thus, as a non-human entity approaches human likeness, the viewer tends to notice more minute oddities in the human form that seem atypical. In this case, the uncanny statue is separated from the element of life. The beings are different from the viewer, and so the viewer recognizes a void between him or herself and the humanoid piece. They see the separation between the piece and life, and between themselves and the statue. Because of the close resemblance of a humanoid robot or a statue to a living person, every slight alteration to the norm is amplified as other. Therefore, some people find overly accurate human likenesses profoundly frightening or uncanny.

In the case of the Cornell Cast Collection, each statue replicates human form in a way that is close enough to real to be recognizable as human, but with enough oddities to fall into the category of uncanny. The vacant eyes, oversized bodies, and pure-white facades are three of the

most visible differences. However, it seems to be the eyes that affect many viewers the most.

One student whom I interviewed expressed this discomfort in much the same terms. Emily, who works at a facial recognition laboratory on campus, felt “the casts, and especially the masks downstairs, are horribly creepy...They are uncanny in the way that the almost-human eyes stare at you. I find them really uncomfortable to be near” (Emily, November 17, 2013). Emily felt the eyes staring at her just as Eliza and Professor Barrett did, but instead of developing a sympathetic relationship with the collection, she chose to avoid them. The uncomfortable closeness to reality that is seen in understandings of uncanny valley can be ascribed to definitions of the other, or to the recognition that animals and humans should be alive with a personality or spirit. Because a statue or a robot lacks the living element, while simultaneously mimicking reality, it is uncomfortable and strange to the viewer. Therefore, depending on the predisposition of the viewer, personality can be projected onto the cast, or instead, the absence of life can be profoundly disturbing.

Student Interpretation of Worth:

Although most students’ interpretations of the casts fell within the three groups of apathy, sympathy, and fear, twenty-four of twenty-five responded in the same manner towards the value of the collection. When told of the history of the collection, most students were surprised, and a few exclaimed that then the casts were the history of Cornell. Not that they were a piece of the story, but that they themselves held within their being the knowledge of what had transpired a century before. That they had been watching and observing the school and its students through their plaster eyes.

This fondness and regard is illustrated by Erin’s statement:

I think that because campus is changing so rapidly. We have the Gates building going up now and the whole CS department being revamped. I think we do need a

mainstay to show us where our university came from and where humanity and civilization came from. I think that not a whole lot of people are able to experience a Grecian statue or anything like that in general so when they come here as an academic beacon it would be something to elevate us even more” (Erin, December 1, 2013).

The Cornell Collection of Casts is possessed by various elements. Each piece is possessed by the history and form of the original, which it takes through the process of manufacturing. This history allows the pieces to be helpful in educational and aesthetic studies. Even more importantly, the pieces in the collection emit characteristic emotive personalities that can be interacted with on a personal basis. They watch, they judge, they encourage, and they create and develop an aura that marks Goldwin Smith as a different educational space on campus. But even more importantly, they are the keepers of the University’s heritage and act as repositories of spirit and history, and revealing, through their own fate, that of the vast historical transformation of the university.

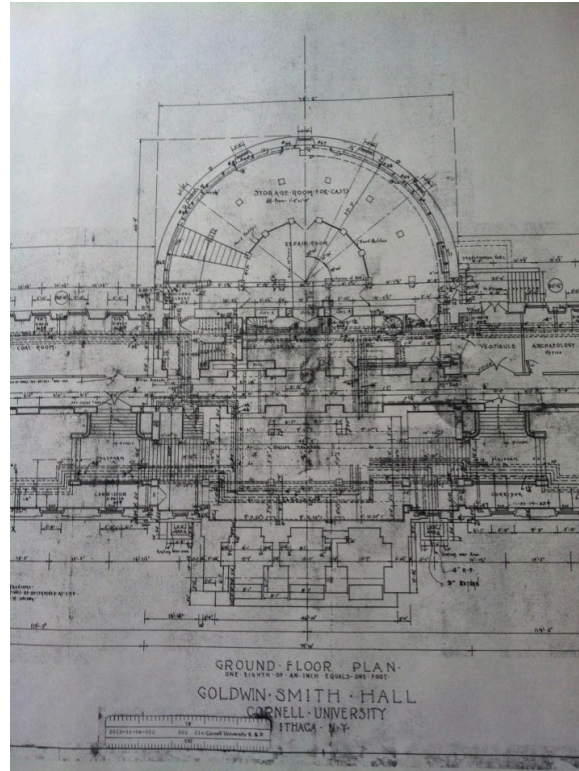


Fig. 5: Goldwin Smith Hall Blueprint (above); Fig. 7: Museum of Casts 1920-1921, South Gallery in Goldwin Smith Hall (below)

Chapter 3

Defining Space, Contriving Aura: Constructing academic perspective

“I thought they were for decoration and I assumed that it was just for the Classics. So, I couldn’t really figure out why they were in Goldwin Smith, because they also seemed way too nice to be there. I thought that perhaps they were an attempt to construct the environment of a higher place of learning”.

– Helen, personal communication, November 25, 2013

The previous chapter dealt with the individual pieces and their perception. It demonstrated the ways in which a plaster cast encapsulates the identity of the original work of art, how their human form allows for personal identification and projection or alienation, and how the gaze and placement of the statues evokes mood and emotion in a viewer. These arguments center on an individualistic connection with the casts, but the collection’s placement and movement throughout time has been variable, and so the aura that the collection creates in a space changed. The aura, while perceived by a viewer, is designed intentionally. Its changes represent deliberate metamorphosis initiated by the curatorial staff, contemporaneous professors, which is governed by the university as an institution. Aura is constructed through layout and arrangement and has the power to impact a space. Scholars and museum staff members are familiar with this and use it to their advantage when designing exhibits (Pitman 1999). While it is familiar in practice, the mechanisms of change remain important to explore. This chapter discusses the construction of aura. I begin by conceptualizing space, and establishing museums as sacred, thus setting a precedent for museums’ power to emit aura. I then go on to evaluate the constructed aura in each curation of the Cast Collection’s. Understanding layout and the intended narrative is important as it will show intended use, and curated voice, which provides a basis for understanding the reason for many alterations to the Cast Collection.

Conceptualizing Space:

Many people in the current era focus more attention on time than space. The future has been the narrative of social progress and personal growth since the industrial revolution, and those born after this time have grown up in a world obsessed with an investment in progress (Anderson 1998). Children in elementary schools are commonly asked to answer the question “What or where will I be in 10 years?”. Instead of environment, ‘where’ is used only in reference to position in time, and students are expected to answer that he or she will be in school, college, working, a mother, a father etc. The teacher does not intend for the child to say that he or she will be on a campus, sitting in a cubicle or office, or in a specific city. In this obsession with past and future, one can easily lose a sense of environment, and move through the world as if the surrounding physical space is of little consequence. However, space and our conception of it have great impacts on daily life. It affects not simply where we can go, but also how we identify ourselves and constructs an image of our place in the world.

Most cultures, societies, and peoples rely on environment for at least a part of their personal identification and communal voice. The ethnographer Keith Basso describes the concept of space and its importance to Western Apache people “... as a repository of distilled wisdom, a stern but benevolent keeper of tradition, and ever-vigilant ally in the efforts of individuals and whole communities to put into practice a set of standards for social living that are uniquely and distinctively their own”(Basso 1996: 103). Whilst it is the participant or viewer who interprets space in order to discover identity, the layout and design of the exterior world evokes specific undercurrents of sentiment. Calmness, power, beauty, fecundity, happiness, plenty, desolation, serenity, re-birth, life, death are all words that can be used to describe a landscape, and through it the people who live inside its boundaries. A relocation or re-description

of the environment would alter the preservation of history and local identity. Thus, the places and their names become ritual symbols that anchor the culture and the community in a continuous web of historical narrative. Because humankind exists within environmental circumstances, regardless of community, human beings interact with environmental space, whether natural or man-made, on a daily basis. Terrain, natural features, and visages converge to form the visual world within which life is created and defined. Although much of the mountains, lakes, and hills are immobile on a generational scale, the alteration of space is constantly employed when designing community, space, and voice. By shaping surrounding buildings and landscape, communities and governed institutions can control internal and external perception.

At Cornell, the entire campus contains evidence of earth movement and changes of physical space. Because surrounding space has the ability to influence identity and individual and communal life. By designing and building a campus Cornell University, which is made of trustees and planners, redefines “Cornell-ness”. Altering space changes spheres of interaction and conveys definition and redefinition of the collective self. The design of the internal spaces of rooms is a second way that the campus develops voice and conveys value. Objects with symbolic capital within academic buildings and rooms also define the ‘Cornellian’. Similar to the mountains and trees of the Western Apache, in the words of Godelier, a “...sacred object combines and unifies the contents- imaginary, symbolic and ‘real’- of all social relations...Because it expresses the inexpressible, because it represents the unrepresentable, the sacred object is the object charged with the strongest symbolic value”(Godelier 1999: 174). As such, the object’s presence, like a large and important mountain on the horizon, defines the identity of the community through the values and beliefs held within it. This projected aura turns any space into one representative of the group. While any object held in any room can change the

aura of the space, religious or otherwise, sacred articles are especially powerful for the definition of space. The physical presence of icons turns the buildings in which they are housed into sacred centers by infecting the space with sacred aura. The idea if sacred space holds true not only for religions such as the Catholic faith, which places great value on its religious structures, but also for secular sacred objects such as those held within a museum.

Sacred Sanctuaries:

In order to draw a true parallel between the effect of a sacred religious center on a community and the effect of a museum, I first situate the gallery within the context of sanctuary. In colloquial convention, a sanctuary can be defined as, “a holy place...a building or place set apart for worship...a piece of consecrated ground...or a sacred place” (Oxford English Dictionary 2014). In each nuance, a sanctuary is something set apart from the rest of the world. It is a physical area that is marked, either by physical walls, communally passed knowledge, or personal sentiment. Additionally, it is described as ‘sacred’. This term seems to be continuously applied to religious and mystical figures and to the church, chapel, temple, or mosque. Emile Durkheim, within his definition of religion, defines sacred objects within the dichotomy of sacred and profane. He says, “sacred things...are set apart and forbidden” (Durkheim 2001: 45). Furthermore:

beliefs, myths, gnomonic spirits, and legends are either representations or systems of representation that express the nature of sacred things, the virtues and powers attributed to them, their history, their relations with each other and with profane things. But sacred things should not be taken to mean simply those personal beings we call gods or spirits. A rock, a tree, a spring, a stone, a piece of wood, a house, in other words anything at all, can be sacred” (Durkheim 2001: 36).

For Durkheim, the sacred embodies the realm outside of the daily public space and is a projection of society. By being removed, revered, and respected objects are demarcated as

different. Thus, a sanctuary is fundamentally sacred, although that which is sacred need not rest within a sanctuary. This difference generally assigns value and importance on pieces, and promulgates them as worthy of care. Although embodied by corporeal things, the spirit of sacred-ness seems to be pervasively intangible. It, like emotion or sentiment, is expressed in a viewer or visitor through interaction with a type of aura. This aura is ascribed to a collection of sacred goods by the society surrounding them.

If it is the community of people that dictates the separation between sacred and profane, then “... ritual space [does] not have to be discovered; it [can] also be created” (Cole 2004: 3). Instead of being supplied only through the “Glory of God” as the Catholic Gospel reading states, what is considered sacred is contrived by man. Thus, it is man who witnesses, identifies, and determines purpose and special qualities, and also man who coaxes the sacred out of place and expands it from individual perception into communal teaching. Moreover, and especially pertinent when dealing with collections, the idea of constructing the sacred can be applied to the buildings we enter daily, which are designated for a specific purpose and hold within them special collections. In the case of Cornell and other universities, the libraries, galleries, and classrooms, with their accompanying paraphernalia of education, represent a kind of division between the uneducated profane exterior, and the sacred center of knowledge: the sacred.

If humans can easily, or at least readily, design and construct sacred space, the question of motivation begs to be asked. According to Susan Cole who studies Ancient Greek ritual space,

There were three occasions for creating ritual space: 1) when establishing a new community, 2) when introducing a new ritual, and 3) when a normally secular space was to be used for a temporary ritual event. When a new city was founded or an old city moved, space had to be formally allocated for sacred precincts, altars, and temples of the gods, both within local settlements and out in the countryside. Sacred objects, portable representations of divinity, equipment for

special rituals, and fire for sacrifice had to be replicated and transported from the home city to a new site (Cole 2004: 39).

According to her argument, sacred space is created by an intelligent and purposeful institutional action and due to a desire to establishment continuity or permanence. In maintaining or creating a sacred space, the Greeks were furnishing different localities with the ability and precedent for the perpetuation of their beliefs and knowledge. Ritual or sacred space then acts as a means to carry identity and establish knowledge. To her analysis of cause, Cole adds a Durkheimian defining factor of a sacred space. She argues, “to avoid inadvertent pollution, a sacred area needed to be easily identifiable. Large, well-established sanctuaries would have been recognizable from their conventional architecture, elaborate entrances, and, in some cases, a specially designated sacred road or procession route leading directly to the sanctuary” (Cole 2004: 40). She claims, that aside from a difference between profane and sacred, it is necessary for a sacred space to be easily identifiable by visual demarcations. If it is not thusly divided, Cole implies that there is the potential for the confusion of a sacred space with a marginal place in such a manner that acts to strip the sacred of its prestige.

Durkheim, too, emphasized an obvious separation between sacred and profane, stating that there needs to be a visible, or known divide in order to identify interior and exterior (Durkheim 2001) Therefore, a sacred space or sanctuary can have an aura and physical presence created by man for the purposes of demarcating something unique from that which is mundane. The space should be identifiable, and separated in such a way as to maintain separation from the outside, to prevent pollution from the mundane or profane in order to preserve its sacred nature.

The Museum as Sacred Space:

Regardless of the scope of the collection, a museum or gallery is a culturally and physically identifiable building or group of buildings that maintains great order. In cases of great museums in large cities such as the Louvre, Metropolitan Museum of Art, or American Natural History Museum, the facade of a museum is marked by large and monumental architecture and obvious separateness from the outside world. In all cases, a museum seeks to prevent the assimilation of external objects, refuse, and space with its sacred interior, and only admits into the collection that which has defined importance to the mission of the center (C. Duffy, November 30, 2013). In addition, an emphasis on education and permanence in the face of societal change is added. As a bastion of knowledge alone, we can identify a museum as a sanctuary or sacred space. However, when the individual objects held within a museum are examined, the connection to such a space is only heightened.

Because museums and galleries are, in effect, repositories for objects that are collected due to their irreplaceable value, whether educational, historical, stylistic, or monetary value, museum objects can be seen as sacred or ritual objects. The pieces are categorized, preserved, and controlled, and visitor interaction is limited. Only the curators and conservators, the high priests if you will, have the privilege and approval to remove, examine, and touch the sacred objects. For those who are interested in this tangible form of connection, education and rigorous processes of training must be performed. Moreover, it is the individuals who have the credentials for personal interaction with the objects who determine how they will be curated, and therefore presented to the public. Not only does this change how the public can see and visualize the collection, but it also has the power to change the emotive aspect of the pieces and place. Therefore, by acting as stewards of object presentation and building construction,

...the staff, trustees, and curators of the museum construct a defined sense of place. Museums, collections, and exhibitions, offer up objects framed by the terms

of apprehension established by the contexts in which they are made available.

These terms of apprehension render meaningful what may be viewed, mediating the relation between that which is visible and the invisible economies of meaning, which underpin it. (Smart 2001: 5).

The manner in which objects are presented to the public, and the way that the interior and exterior spaces are designed both serve to create an identity for the museum. Because of the sacred value of the gallery, this identity causes a perceptible emotive aura that is noticeable both in person and in a photograph. By changing the projected aura, those in control of a museum or gallery may alter definitive use of the sacred objects within. What follows is an analysis of the fluctuating aura of Cornell's Sage Collection of Casts and how this changing sentiment serves to fill a necessary place in history.

Contriving Aura at Cornell:

Cornell University's Cast Collection can be thought of as a sacred group of objects. Not only have they been held in museums, but the collection has been honored by opening ceremonies, the construction of Goldwin Smith Hall for use as their museum, and protection by curators. In keeping with Durkheim and Cole's arguments, the sacredness of the collection only fell through interaction with the outside world: the profane. While the collection remained a special and sacred group of objects, different curatorial styles dictated aura and mood of the gallery. Because Cornell is a University with an academic agenda, the developments on campus and attempts to move and re-curate the Cast Collection have resulted in the alteration of aura. Purposeful changes to each iteration can be looked at as representative of the historical milieu whence they came. By examining the intellectual trends and modes of academic thought implied in each move, it is possible to see change in aura and perception as synonymous with movements

of intellectual trends. Understanding the trends and changes in academic voice, explains how the casts, which used to be prized and sacred possessions, have ended up as forgotten relics.

McGraw Hall: The Museum of Classical Archaeology



Fig. 4: Hellenistic Sculptures, McGraw Hall 1890s

As the reader may recall from the previous history chapter, the William Henry Sage Collection of Casts were brought to Cornell in the 1890s. They were chosen by A.D. White himself, and paid for by Mr. William Henry Sage, who at the time was in his late eighties. The collection consisted of more than six hundred plaster casts that were commissioned and found in museums in the United States and in Europe. The collection was used to create a Museum of Classical Archaeology centered in McGraw Hall. It opened on Feb. 1, 1894 to much pomp and circumstance, and was touted by the New York Times as being the best collection of its kind in the United States outside of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston (New York Times 1894). As was stated earlier, this collection was brought to the school in a time of economic trouble. Cornell University was close to bankrupt and was in dire need of funding. In addition, Mr. White states in his autobiography that he and his university were being slandered by local newspapers that

stated that they were rejecting the classical education that was deemed appropriate for a college in this time period. It is my contention that we may find a second purpose for the collection, aside from an addition to the educational assemblage, in the rebuffing of critics.

Figure 4 depicts one of the five rooms of the Museum of Classical Archaeology in McGraw Hall. Here, one can see the dark surrounding of the collection. The white of the casts stands out next to the dark wooden floors, pedestals, ceilings, and red velvet curtains, which can be seen to the left side of the image. The space sets the same mood as a dark recessed chapel into which one must walk with bated breath. As the halls and galleries lead from one room to the next, a visitor may feel a strong draw and pull into the heart of the space. This movement can be conceptualized as beginning from the profane exterior of the building, and entering into subsequently more sacred rooms as one walks from gallery to gallery. In doing so, the image of a biblical temple comes to mind. In such a place, God or Yahweh resides in a small-enclosed sacred space at the back of the hall, as the worshiper advanced from the public space through to the altar, curtain, and ritual center of the room, the exposure to the sacred increased in potency (Gorman 1990: 56). By continuing forward in pursuit of spiritual awakening or knowledge, in both a divine temple and gallery, the visitor slowly and steadily sinks deeper into the aura of the place.

Additionally, the positioning of the large-than-life statues is interesting. The casts (most of which are 1.5-3 times the size of the average person and stand on two foot pedestals) add a sense of awe to the space. Just the simple act of craning one's neck to look up at an object emphasizes the magnitude of it. To the colossal feature is added the incredible quality of the casts. It is hard for an untrained person to identify the sculpture as being either plaster or replica. The size and quality of the collection would give credence to the teaching that White and the

staff were carrying out, and would publicize the university in a way that could only help the school through the financial trouble they had faced in the 1870s-1890s. The casts themselves speak to an ancient time, and a time that was perceived as truly great and heroic. Unlike images of different iterations of the Cast Collection, none of the images of the McGraw Museum of Classical Archaeology include visitors viewing the Casts. I believe that the lack of photographed individuals too speaks to the awe and respect generated by the construction of space. Visitors are a part of the exterior; they are by association profane in comparison to the Casts. One who wanted a depiction of the collection with its full sacred power would not include a human visitor in the likeness. The act of excluding images of people speaks to the position that the collection held as fundamentally an ode to power and prestige. These large statues were brought to fill a temple.

In his autobiography, A. D. White states that in the first years of the school's history, while he was president, he had much acclaim, "yet, curiously, one of the most bitter charges constantly reiterated against us was that we were depreciating the study of ancient classical literature" and he goes on to add classics in general to this statement (White 1905: 121). If we look at the collection from a different angle, it becomes clear that the desire to disprove critics underlies the collection. It is not as he claimed in the New York Time article from Feb. 1, 1894 solely for the pursuit of knowledge. It is also present so that the university can gain credibility as an intellectual center. By having a collection of Greek and Roman statues at the school's disposal, handsomely curated and held in high regard by both founder and community, critics would no longer have a basis for stating that A. D. White cared little for the Classics. The sense of awe and reverence is indicated not only in the large number of casts belonging to the collection and its opening celebration, but also through the curation of the collection and the

layout of space. Therefore, in this location, the large collection of casts, with its large statues, darkened halls, winding chambers, and hundreds of pairs of eyes would have given the visitor a sense of reverence and awe. This awe would establish the university as a whole as a valuable and important center of learning that had not forgotten the roots of the classics, and is thus an appropriate candidate for support, both financial and intellectual. Therefore, the curation of the collection in this iteration was controlled so as to speak well of the University in general to the community and outside world.

Goldwin Smith Hall: The Museum of Casts



Fig. 7: Museum of Casts 1920-1921, South Gallery of Goldwin Smith Hall

In 1904 plans were discussed to construct a new building on the Arts Quad. Cornell Trustees and President Shurman decided that that building would be Goldwin Smith Hall and would make use of the pre-existing dairy science building, which is now the Northern wing of the building (Parsons 1968). In 1906, the hall was opened, and the first floor housed galleries for what was then referred to as the Museum of Casts. You can see from Figure 7, a photograph of

the South Gallery in Goldwin Smith Hall, that the format of the room has changed. It is more open and light. Instead of sequential galleries, the casts are held within large halls. The windows are also positioned to let in sunshine and the space is much lighter. No longer are there drapes obscuring the sun and windows. Additionally, the color of the room has been lightened. The walls are white instead of wooden and curtained. The pedestals too have been lowered, which allows visitors a better view of the shape and form of the statues. Finally, a multitude of stools have been scattered across the floor. The lightness, openness, and obvious intention for visitors to study the casts are more reminiscent of a laboratory than a religious sanctuary. However, the objects still project an aura of value, safety, and beauty. The collection is thoughtfully curated, and the Casts are still the lone objects in the very large museum.

While there is a continuation of respect for the collection, the move to Goldwin Smith Hall comes at the time of an intellectual shift of value and importance. In a speech from 1901, A. D. White states, “there is need for a truly great university... to afford an asylum for Science” (Bishop 1962: 41), and furthermore that he wishes Cornell to fill the void. The curation of the new museum may follow the change. No longer is the exhibit space a winding sanctuary. Instead, the collection is displayed in the light of Science. One might even call this iteration of the collection a laboratory for the humanities. Because science was then considered to be the bastion of knowledge, the large and prestigious Cast Collection’s curation was altered to construct a new aura that encourages scientific inquiry and can add to the Humanities an analytical tilt. Cornell University Registers confirm this view. Multiple courses on various topics such as Art History, Archaeology, Classics, and Drawing were held in this museum, and students were encouraged to sit on the stools one can see throughout the photograph in order to get to know and appraise the forms of the sculptures (Registers 1907-1908). In this time period,

students were encouraged to engage with the collection through interpretation of form, line, style, technique, and artistic value. The collection grew a new life as a specimen for the Humanities instead of an emblem of the greatness of the Classical world. The mission of Cornell to provide pragmatic education that encourages technical progress in the future has remained the focus since the 1900s, with even more of a shift to the hard sciences. Because of the focus, the collection rested in this location until the 1930-1950s, and slowly depreciated in scientific value with each new success in the scientific fields.

Goldwin Smith Hall: Temple of Zeus Café



Fig. 8: Temple of Zeus Café, Café in North Gallery 1970s

After Cornell University decided that education classroom space was in higher demand than a university Cast Collection, the Temple of Zeus Cafe was placed within the gallery. As you can see from the above image, the dynamics of student interaction greatly changed with the devaluation of the collection. Instead of visiting the collection for the awe and honor of having a museum on campus or as a classroom to discover the styles and techniques of the ancient

sculptors, students began daily informal interaction with the pieces. The space, in this form, loses some of the elements of a sacred sanctuary that are possessed by other museums and by the past iterations of the cast collection. In Figure 8, the outside world has not only trickled into the galleries, but has taken over the space. Most photographs from this period show students and Cornellians as subjects simply within an environment filled by casts. Coats, outdoor gear, books, backpacks, and food are placed on the tables and pedestals inside of the galleries. The collection, seems to have lost its rapturous nature, and we instead look to the activities of the people sharing the space with the casts. There are posters on the walls, coats on the pedestals of the Olympia Pediment, and people's odds and ends.

In a way, this alteration lends a sense of egalitarianism to the collection. It forces individual interaction between sculpture and person, and opens the art to all on campus, not only those who wish to make a separate trip to the museum. This change seems to have occurred as a result of the university no longer needing or wanting to be represented by the classical image of white (and sometimes painted) casts decorating the halls of the humanities buildings. The university had the ability to generate acclaim in other ways through the publishing of papers in other fields, and the recognition that came with identification as an Ivy League school. While this step did represent an introduction of the sculptures to a wider audience, it also was the first stage in destruction of the collection. When a once-sacred place and once-sacred objects lose their renown, they become the subject of rejection, disillusionment, and sometimes violence. What occurred as a result is the accidental and purposeful destruction of many of the casts, the movement of most of them to an off campus storage facility, where most remain to this day, and a removal of sanctioned voice. The absence of a monolithic framework of interaction means that each individual must learn how to interact with the statues for themselves, as there is no set

framework for relationships. This perhaps accounts for varying student perception and connection with the casts, which was analyzed in the previous chapter.

Today: Goldwin Smith Hall – Storage



Fig. 9: Modern Storage Facilities (left); Fig. 10: Imitating Statues, Goldwin Smith Hall south wing (right)

When the A. D. White Art Museum was opened on campus in 1953, many of the Casts were moved into new gallery spaces and into the basement (Kuniholm et al. 2010). The collection was separated and the pieces were redefined as individual antiquities and art, instead of as a body of sacred objects. This museum was short-lived, and there exists very little documentation on either its exhibits or its visitors. Because of this lack of information, I will continue my interpretation to the state of the casts within the past 30-40 years.

Those pieces that could not be moved into the A. D. White Art museum due to size or lack of interest still rest in Goldwin Smith today. Whereas, what was moved, and mostly broken, is now kept in a large warehouse off campus. What can be seen today are the remnants of the collection that is no longer held in esteem, nor understood as sacred and necessary. Throughout Goldwin Smith Hall is a smattering of plaster casts in varying locations in classrooms, offices, and hallways. The casts often blend into the walls to the average student, and are often only

noticed when a pair of eyes is recognized by a passerby. Some of the casts are in cases, others in alcoves, while a few friezes line the stairwells and ceilings. The building lacks labels and curatorial narrative, and there is no indication that the casts once belonged to a large and important collection. This disjointed curation is typified by a lack of general information. The statues are used by a few professors as examples of Greek and Roman art and style, but have been largely forgotten in time and space.

Because of the lack of education, the aura that is created by the space is a disjointed one of antiquity and decoration, not of education and prestige. The casts seem to speak simply to the idea of humanities and the classical world, and have been described by some as looking like standard issue classical decoration (Cameron, November 25, 2013). The sacredness of the collection is lost due to an incoherent layout, and the introduction of the exterior to the sacred museum. However, the casts are still intriguing to those who notice them along the walls while in class or walking through the building. Because there is no one supported narrative or reason for connecting the casts other than their obvious relationship to the classical world, students and visitors to Goldwin Smith Hall, like the boys in the photo above, determine varying personal ways to interact with the collection. As illustrated in the previous chapter, reactions to the statues range from annoyance, to fear, to excitement that there are artifacts lining the walls. Therefore, in the current period the sacredness of the collection has been destroyed due to changing intellectual trends, and subsequently the collection has been reduced and left without a narrative.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, museums around the world function as sacred places in which prestigious historical objects are housed to provide protection and to establish educational narratives that expose visitors to specific intellectual trends and modes of thinking. The museum is recognizable

from the exterior as separate from the surrounding world. The contents of these institutions are heavily policed to discourage the mixing of material that is mundane or profane. Objects held within the museum collections hold honor and respect, and can act as tools to promote specific sentiment and to encourage certain views and perceptions of the museum, community, and world. By changing curation, layout, and labeling, a different story can be conveyed to the visitor. In the case of university museums, the mood and intellectual narrative is specific to the desires and needs of the school. The collections hold prestige and can be used to tout the university as a prosperous and wealthy intellectual center that respects the ancient world, or as an asylum for science that possess the proper group of objects to be analyzed and interpreted to illustrate hypotheses about form, culture, and style. When a collection loses narrative curation, respect, and use, its sacredness dissolves. By introducing the everyday objects into the collection space, the objects become a part of everyday life, and thus mundane themselves. Mundane collections are often no longer considered worth respect and support, and thus the once revered pieces become one with the environment and sink into the walls. However, daily interaction creates a precedent for the formation of individual relationship through curiosity and the absence of a definitive framework of use and intercommunication. At Cornell University, the intellectual peaks and troughs of art, science, and the classical world have culminated within the Cast Collection as a recognizable pattern of respect and neglect that can be read through an interpretation of the curation and use of the Casts over time. Although the institution dictates care and curation of the collection, when the rules of engagement with the collection are removed through abandonment, people still gaze at the objects and wonder about their story and seek relationships with them through animation and projection. The next chapter explores the

cause of Cornell's need for definition and redefinition of the sacred collection as an attempt to establish communal identity, voice, and a precedent for education.



Fig. 11: Nike “Big Red Nation” shirt, sold by Krafttees, Inc and on display in Ithaca (spring 2014)

Chapter 4

“Hail, All Hail, Cornell!”: Understanding the University as a Nation

*Love thou thy land, with love far-bought
From out the storied past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought
- Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

Human beings seem to have an instinctual urge to connect to community. We strive to align ourselves with nations, cities, neighborhoods, and pieces of land in an effort to find ‘home’. For those, like me, who have spent a lifetime moving and traveling, home can be an elusive fairytale. For many, home is a specific region where one was born, grew up, or spent formative years. In either case, home is understood as a specific place that is inextricably tied to an individual. What is it that attaches one to the land and can make a person feel at home? Tennyson, in the above excerpt, points to remembered history as the source of such love. Connection is affirmed, by bringing to the present stories and tales of ancestral connection, which imbeds the individual within the life history of the place through befriending historical or mythical characters by evoking their story. While many communities choose not to settle in one location, in order for a group to establish residence and to feel as although they belong to a place, it is necessary for historical affiliations to exist. In most communities and cultures these histories take the form of oral or written traditions. However, text is not the only means through which history is remembered. Museums, which hold cultural collections, are an even more tangible way of establishing a connection with the past. The possession of a collection, such as the Cast Collection, not only reminds the viewers of the history of humanity and with the history of the nation to which they belong, but the ownership of grand collections also confers prestige and encourages pride.

Although the cultural material held within the museum may or may not be directly associated with the nation in which it is located, the possession of these goods and the connection to the past allows the museum to produce an aura of prestige. Not only does the museum teach the population, but it also serves as a bastion of power because the ownership of a large number of non-utilitarian goods represents high culture. By having so many practically useless objects, a nation demonstrates the value it places on education and shows that it is self-sufficient enough to own and protect excess material. While there are many kinds of museums, Carol Duncan in “Princely Gallery to Public Art Museum” states, “the Louvre was the prototypical public art museum. It first offered the civic ritual that other nations would emulate. It was also with the Louvre that public art museums became signs of politically virtuous states. By the end of the nineteenth century, every Western nation would boast at least one important public art museum” (Duncan 1999: 304). I argued in the previous chapter on defining space that the museum is kind of sacred complex, so the assertion that the museum is a powerful means to hold culture should not be a new concept to the reader. Furthermore, the collections that are shown and displayed create a distinctive identity for the museum and the community that surrounds them. By choosing what will be remembered, the museum influences how people will connect with the past, and subsequently with their present.

The university collection works in the same manner. Janet Solinger, the author of *Universities and Museums* states, “university museums are as different from one another as shells on the beach. Each museum reflects its own unique history, the ambitions of its founders, the richness of its resources, and the skill of its administrators” (Solinger 1990: 59). The Cornell museum and Cast Collection was a bastion of sacred objects displayed to convey “unique history” and the “ambitions of [Cornell’s] founders”. Therefore, it is a fundamental element in

the construction of a university identity as well as the school's intellectual and physical form. The collection and its treatment reflect the establishment of precedent for education, invented and true history, and the creation of an identifiably autonomous, self-governed community.

The Cornell Cast Collection, opened in 1894, and Cornell University's Natural History Museum fall directly into the window of time when national museums like the Louvre were becoming mainstays for civilization. Cornell University as a western community followed the intellectual necessity of having a historically relevant and beautiful collection. However, the permanence of a museum has its drawbacks, as is corroborated by Tony Bennett in "The Exhibitionary Complex":

The space of representation constituted by the exhibitionary disciplines, while conferring a degree of unity on the exhibitionary complex, was also somewhat differently occupied- and to different effect- by the institutions comprising that complex. If museums gave this space a solidity and permanence; this was achieved at the price of a lack of ideological flexibility. Public museums instituted an order of things that was meant to last. In doing so, they provided the modern state with a deep and continuous ideological backdrop but one, which, if it was to play this role, could not be adjusted to respond to shorter-term ideological requirements. Exhibitions met this need... (Bennett 1999: 352).

The Cornell Cast Collection and its movement and changing curatorial aura may fall within the realm of exhibition. By being movable and adjustable physically, the collection had an equally adjustable aura and sensibility. Interestingly, and in alignment with the power ascribed to an exhibit by Bennett, this collection more so than any other at Cornell is responsible for the creation of a physical and intellectual identity on campus.

Casting a Foundation:

The intellectual identity of Cornell University is the first plane on which the collection greatly aided the school. The Collection established ties to the ancient past, to prestige, to art and

science, and finally acted as a form of symbolic capital. Cornell was built on a plot of land surrounded by references to the ancient Greeks and Romans. The town is called Ithaca, our neighbors are Ulysses and Troy, streets are named after Aristotle and other prominent ancient men and women, and to this the founders of Cornell added neoclassical architecture and a collection of Greek statuary. Mr. E. B. White even writes in a famous essay, “I’d send my son to Cornell, Cornell is in Ithaca, N.Y., where Greek meets Indian. The name of the town is Greek, the statues in the basement of Goldwin Smith Hall are Greek...” (Kuniholm et al 2010: 2). The Casts, unlike the Greek names, are tangible and visible to the viewer. They align the university-nation with ancient philosophy of the polis and of education. They surround students with the same artifacts that once surrounded the Greek philosophers and historians. In this way, they created a bridge between the campus and the past, in order to evoke the social milieu of the past in the present. This move allowed visitors and students to draw connections to Cornell’s governance and educational training and the ancient philosophers. The maintenance of classical education gave credibility to the school as a teaching body, and as the Louvre gave Paris and France prestige, the Cast Collection of large, expensive, and beautiful casts gave honor and power to the school. This power was used to perpetuate the Cornell education and spirit.

The casts also acted as a way to establish intellectual value and trend. When the casts are in McGraw and curated as awe-inspiring, the collection is donating to the campus the idea of the importance of art. They structured the intellectual milieu of the community in such a way that allowed for the university to identify itself as a community that valued and cared about antiquity and artistic expression. When emphasis on the ancient world no longer was the goal of the institution, the casts were re-curated to support scientific inquiry. Then, when there was a movement in classics to reject copies and the exotic nature of white marble statuary in favor of a

post-modern approach to the past, they were demystified and became decoration. Therefore, the collection has been used and reused over time as a tool to express a sentiment and to set a precedent for education and to develop a changing intellectual identity. By being privy to alterations in curation and aura, the collection used to establish Cornell University as an independent, self-sufficient, and intellectual whole community.

The Cast Collection not only had a profound affect on the development of intellectual identity and voice, but also dictated the use of space from the beginning. The first Museum of Classical Archaeology took the place of the library in McGraw Hall. In the move, the Cast Collection created the first fully curated cultural heritage museum on campus. The space was completely renovated for the new collection, and the five rooms that were created to house the collection changed the layout and the focus of the whole Natural History Museum. This move established the Cast Collection as an extremely important addition to the Cornell community and one that demanded awe. Students connected the casts to other exotic experiences of seeing live snakes and the taxidermy animals that were housed in the second floor of McGraw at the time.

Even though the McGraw Museum of Classical Archaeology was indeed impressive, perhaps the largest impact the Cast Collection had on the physical community is the design and construction of Goldwin Smith Hall. As has been stated before, Goldwin Smith Hall was designed and constructed with the collection in mind. The physical size and number of the collection of plaster casts made their assimilation into the campus a tricky process. The bottom floors were devoted to gallery and exhibit space and contractors and architects were tasked with creating rooms and fixtures that would allow for the easy installation of the collection. The value of the collection to the university is expressed in the care that was taken to create a home

specifically for them. Therefore, their presence altered the use of buildings and the planning of the campus as a whole.

Cornell-iopolis:

I contend that a group with identifiable character, unique history, tradition, and self-governance holds striking similarities with a nation, especially a city-state or polis. The state-like politics surrounding Cornell University have often dictated the manner through which members of the community and the bureaucratic elements of the school interact within and without campus. In order to more fully understand the use and appropriation of the cast collection for different goals over time, it is important to construct a bridge between polity and university. The university, specifically Cornell, encourages the development of self-sufficiency, distinct history, community pride, and the production of emblems and symbols in a way that mirrors the creation of a nation. Most literature dealing with the nation and the university or museum argues that these institutions function to continue the production of national identity and specific history (Solinger 1990). While I agree that universities often teach curriculum that is in support of national agendas, the strong identification with college or university that is visible in the United States points to a different kind of national pride. Instead, the emotional connection that is produced is an alliance and affiliation with the university campus, population, and alumni. Because a spirited identification with university or college is created and perpetuated through a narrative of historical permanence, simultaneously following most alumni throughout life, the university is more akin to a city-state or nation-state than a supporting faction of a large nation.

The body of literature on the development of national identity and defining a nation could take up an entire life of scholarship. Additionally, some “...debate underlies the attempt to postulate a general theory for the origins of nationalism in the modern world. This requires the

interplay of history, economics, and political as well as social theory” (Boswell 1999: 12). For the purposes of this paper, I focus on characteristics that allow the connection of Cornell and a polity and serve to establish the importance of history and museum collection.

What is Polity:

The idea of “nation” is a term that has become exceptionally difficult to define sufficiently. The terms ‘confederation’, ‘republic’, ‘country’, ‘territory’, ‘polity’, and ‘region’, to name a few, are arguably all words that may demonstrate overlapping meaning. Some of these terms like ‘country’ generally implies others such as ‘territory’ and ‘region’, while others such as ‘confederation’ may or may not. The definition of a community of people living together under some kind of framework that dictates appropriate action has been a point of discussion since, at least, the time of Aristotle and the Greeks and Romans (Caesar 1869; Aristotle 350BCE). The Greek term Polis, meaning city-state or political community, has been used to define urban communities with separate rule such as Sparta, Troy, etc. for more than two millennia (Aristotle 350 BCE). The term Polis refers to the physical concentration of urban dwellings and structures or to frameworks of law. Because a polis includes similar foundational elements to a nation, such as law, grouped people, and identity, it is possible to simultaneously employ literature on nation. Montesquieu in book XX of *The Spirit of Laws* made the claim, “nations are in general very tenacious of their customs; to take them away by violence is to render them unhappy: we should not therefore change them, but engage the people to make the change themselves” (Montesquieu 1952: 138). Instead of the power of physical conquest, Montesquieu points to the power of the law for the creation of national identity and change. He later argues that rules, regulations, and laws change national spirit and identity by making the citizens behave in particular manners.

Therefore, it is the governmental structure produced through the enactment of law by the community that creates nation. This is one way to conceive of community.

A second understanding of a politicized community is conveyed by the word ‘civitas’. ‘Civitas’ is a term originating with the Romans. It is used by Caesar and other authors of the time (Ralston, March 5, 2013; Caesar 1869). While profoundly similar to Polis, this word is less preoccupied with physical urbanism and territory. More specifically, it means the group of citizens who form a state. David Hume followed this understanding of state grouping and stated in his *Essays* on “Of National Characters” that “...a nation is nothing but a collection of individuals...” (Hume 1993: 114). In this assessment, territorial space and government is not a requirement for the development of nation or national identity. He continues, “in small government which are contiguous, the people have, notwithstanding, a different character, and are often as distinguishable in their manners as the most distant nations” (Hume 1993: 117). Perhaps, his point is best understood as an attempt to allow for gradual natural growth of community identity without a rigid and intrusive framework forced upon a population.

Other, more current, authors have taken the idea of a community one step further. Josep Llobera, the author of *Foundations of National Identity* contends that in addition to a group of people, a nation or community is also a family. “...That is, to put it more explicitly, the idea is that the nation is a kinship group writ large” (Llobera 2004: 46). Because ‘kin’ by definition points to genetic liaisons and reproduction, Llobera seems to point to insularity. Not only does a nation necessitate a community of people, but these people must live life surrounded by one another, and therefore form bonds of not only friendship, but also blood. In fact, earlier in his piece, he states that blood relations in community lead to ethnicity, which remains a mode of dictating nation when he says “the history of Europe after 1789 shows that ethno nations are not

anomalous entities or mere vestiges from the past, but rather dynamic configurations with a life of their own” (Llobera 2004: 9). While I agree that nation and community has in the past, and will most likely continue to be occasionally defined and created by consanguineous relationships, I do not believe that it is a requirement for a national identity or national affiliation. In a sense, his deployment of kinship precludes immigrant populations and individuals from being a part of a new community or group.

For the purposes of this paper, I define nation and national identity by a fusion of the above approaches. When I refer to nation, state, polity, or community, I am using the term to highlight both a territorial and affiliative quality. Communities, disregarding those that occur online generally possess landed territories. These regions may be within another political entity, like a state in a country or Troy in Greece, but have a physical barrier. Additionally, the group is defined by the presence of a population of people connected by social interaction and affiliation. It is not important that the people are related by blood, but rather that they possess strong ties to one another through communal dependence and living. If I were to choose a specific term used in general scholarship as the key type-site for connecting the University to a national body, I would choose city-state or nation-state. Both of these terms refer to territory, and also communal affiliation. Because of these two implications, I will most often employ literature on city-state and polities in my analysis, which are connected to the Greek and Roman ideals represented by the Cast Collection.

Characteristics of a self-governed polity or Nation:

Before beginning an interpretation of similarity, I present the characteristics of comparison. While multiple authors present short lists of national characteristics, the one that I deploy is that of Charles Lindholm in his *Culture and Authenticity*. He states:

To accomplish its mission of establishing a sacralized connection with its citizens, every emergent nation-state not only selects, codifies, and publicizes indigenous aesthetic productions as concrete expressions of the national soul; it also writes its own history books recalling its mythical origins, designs a distinctive flag-totem, composes an anthem praising itself, establishes holidays, pageants, and pilgrimages celebrating its glorious past, and constructs all other standard symbols of the nation-state (Lindholm 2008: 99).

In order to break Lindholm's assessment down into comparable parts, I have selected the following five characteristics and one pre-requirement. Before one can call a community of people a political entity, there must first be a self-identification. The community of people must have a way of understanding their group that separates it from the rest of the world. There are several possible modes of separation that may or may not occur simultaneously. The first is land. The nation has a defined region of occupation that not only surrounds its members, but also communicates to the outside world a kind of separation. Secondly, a nation has some form of regulation or sovereignty. In the case of a polis or city-state (the level of government with which I will compare Cornell) sovereignty may not be present when a larger nation or political body surrounds the community. In this case, a body of law and regulation separate from that of the sovereign nation will still exist to monitor citizens. There is a code of law or facilitation that establishes a precedent for community manner and appropriate action. Third, monumental public structures are built in a manner that surpasses utilitarian form to house or convey culture, power, and identity. Fourthly, a nation has its own "history books" and tradition. Whether the history is invented or fully accurate, there is a set of cyclic rites, actions, or expressions of tradition in a nation. Lastly, a nation has national emblems, symbols, totems, flags or other icons/symbols that are visual and auditory reminders of national affiliation or nationalism that act to continuously

connect and reconnect the population. Universities, and Cornell specifically, possess these qualities and the occurrences within their borders (campuses) can be understood in this light.

Cornell As A Nation:

The prerequisite for inclusion within the term ‘nation’ is the possession of a unique community identity. The creation of recognizable groups is a kind of categorical assignment. It distinguishes interior from exterior and belonging from alien. Just as is true for ‘nation’, identity and identification comprise the basis for a large body of scholarship. One focus of this field is the understanding of the root of identification. Llobera discusses nationalism as the foundation for defining a cultural identity in this light by stating that, “focusing on culture as the key to nationalism, an array of historians and sociologists of modernity have undoubtedly located a crucial factor in the development of nationalism in the last two centuries: the need for some sort of cultural identity and adaptation at a time of rapid social and economic change, with its concomitant effects of alienation and anomie” (Llobera 2004: 10). He seems to think that culture and identity develops out of a necessary reaction to external change. While this is intriguing, his characterization of culture and identity is more pertinent to the topic at hand.

When we refer to culture, particularly in connection with the first meaning, we think in terms of the following characteristics: 1. Group self-awareness, with a more or less clear sense of the boundaries of the group. 2. Shared patterns of socialization. Culture is learned within the family, in the school, etc. 3. A system to reinforce values or prescribed behavior. 4. A certain organization, which in the case of the nation-state is formalized, and in other cases may be more indirect (Llobera 2004: 103).

Therefore, a community that defines itself as culturally separate must have some kind of determination of extent and specified behavior. Cornell, and other universities and colleges for that matter, possess self-distinguishing characteristics. Firstly, by simply referring to the

community of students, faculty, and staff as Cornellians and defining the institution and community as Cornell University the campus become separate from the surrounding world. Not only does the university use these terms, but the community, most if not all individuals, and the outside world also recognize Cornell as being an entity unto itself.

Land & Territory

Having established that Cornell is a community that is distinguished from the world at large, the first trait of a city-state or polis, land and territory, will now be compared. For the comparison, images of a walled or confined city-state will be employed as a basis. Below on the left are two images of the Vatican City. Above is an aerial satellite image taken from Google maps, and the second is from the ground. Below are an aerial image of Cornell and an image looking at the campus from the town of Ithaca below.

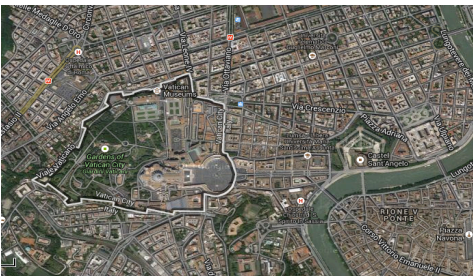


Fig. 12: Vatican City, Google maps (left); Fig. 13: Vatican City Wall (right)

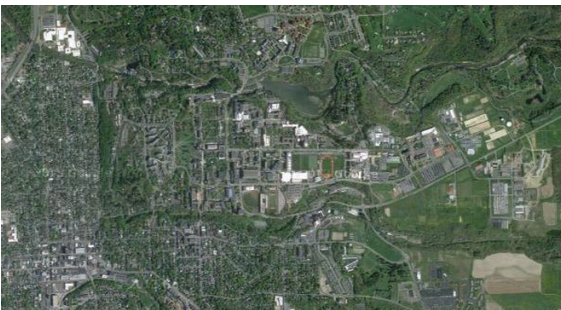


Fig. 14: Cornell Campus, Google maps (left); Fig. 15: Sculling at Cornell University, Cornell Campus from below (right)

Both the Vatican City and Cornell Campus are located on land within a larger political body: the Vatican City in Rome, and Cornell in Ithaca, NY. Yet, both are also distinctly identified and

recognized on a map. Having a definitive realm points to not only a cultural affiliation with a state, but also a recognized territory. In addition, both are visibly different from their surroundings when viewed on an aerial map. The Vatican City is marked by a stone cut wall and the presence of vastly different architecture from the surrounding urban settlement. Cornell is lacking a wall; however, it does appear to be outlined by a large and continuous tuft of trees and two gorges. While the Vatican City is walled in stone, natural boundaries, but still physical divisions separate Cornell nonetheless. Cornell also exhibits the same kind of special use as the Vatican City. Both of these city-states are free of the urban dwelling structures that crowd around them, and both have monumental architecture and large city parks. It is obvious from the air that both the territory of the Vatican City and Cornell University are delineated from their surroundings. This points to alternative use, and to special status. In both cases, the special use is as a small sovereign community with land that is used and built upon with great care and planning.

The views from the ground focus on a different element of separation that is no less pertinent to the demarcation of space. That element is height. The Vatican City fortress raises the gaze into the sky. The buildings, regardless of their foundational level, appear to be elevated from the surrounding ground. The city thus protects itself from invasion, but also requires its viewers to crane their necks to glimpse the interior. By demanding physical movement of the viewer, the walls of the city and its supposed elevation evoke awe and through it the idea of difference. Similarly, Cornell's position atop the Eastern slope of Cayuga Lake, far above the town beneath it, safely isolates the community. Not only is it a feat to reach the summit, as is known by all students who live low on the slope and walk to class, but it, too, calls to mind a loftily separate place. The campus even boasts fortress-like exterior buildings, which the founder

Ezra Cornell intended to act as walls. Morrill, McGraw, and White were originally planned to be connected by a rampart, and were constructed with their entrances facing the hill. These entrances have been predominantly sealed today, but their presence points to design with the viewer and not the user in mind. These features, according to Mr. Cornell, were done in order to give off the appearance of an enlightened beacon, which could be visible to non-Cornellians below. This discussion by the founder is extremely similar to the efforts of differentiation present in city-states whose architectural features are bastions of identity. Therefore, the terrain, physical demarcation, and height of Cornell University are easily comparable to divisions between city-states and their surrounding regions. Because of the present divisions, Cornell exhibits the element of land necessary for consideration as a nation.

Governance & Regulation:

As was Montesquieu's contention, nations and states are governed by a set of laws or regulations that stipulate correct action for a population. Such codes are generally written down in the modern era, but may also be socially policed oral traditions. It is important for a nation to determine rules of engagement, which often develop into culture and self-identity formation. If you examine nations, states, and city-states what they hold in common is the ability to rule and govern according to their own purpose and disposition. Citizens prescribe to the laws and regulations of their polity, and live within the group with the knowledge that they must obey these social and legal norms. Furthermore, nations and polities generally have procedures for maintaining order and regulation. What is important for the identification of law is the presence of punishment for transgressions. Generally, laws are enforced by police and courts, which determine the fate of the transgressor. Many readers may think of codes like that of Hammurabi's stele when imagining codified judicial systems, but the repercussions of actions

need not be so drastic as those listed on the stele (which may have in fact been ceremonial as opposed to practical). In ancient Babylon, elders or rulers decided the fate of a transgressor and carried out their decisions from adopted courts at the walls of the city (A. Kleinerman, October 10, 2010). In modern countries, it is usually the case that military and trained police forces are used in conjunction with judicial systems to pass judgment and dictate punishment.

The University, much like the nation, has written and regulated laws. Upon entrance to Cornell, the student, faculty, and staff members must sign a code of conduct and are given a Handbook to read. These pieces of literature stipulate the appropriate behavior on campus and spell out those transgressions that are considered in direct disagreement with the regulations of the campus. If a member of the community is found not in accordance with the law, either a student committee or the Judicial Administrator (JA) judges him or her. While students are expected to follow state and national laws as well, there are various actions that are illegal on the campus alone. An example of this is the rule that stipulates that underage members of the community may not be in the presence of alcohol (Cornell Code of Conduct).

Another example is the number of caveats on the topic of building use. A Cornell affiliate may neither scale the façade of a building, nor may he or she reassemble a motorbike in a building. While these two acts would be silly if performed, the law against their performance shows the degree to which the university dictates action. These rules, and many others, are imposed on the population by the university. In these cases, the school reserves the right to act and attribute punishment for transgressions. The CUPD is responsible for maintaining order, and even sends weekly emails to the community to remind them about correct action. Anyone who has been a Cornellian in the past two years will recognize the name Kathy Zoner, who is the police chief who regularly contacts the community. A student can be sentenced to a range of

punishment from alcohol counseling in the case of minors in the presence of alcohol, to expulsion, an exile from the state if you will. In this way, Cornell is responsible for controlling the behavior of its population and dictating proper action. Although one may try to rebut decisions made against oneself, the institution is ultimately responsible for judgment. Therefore, Cornell University has laws and regulations that align with those possessed by a nation.

Monumental Structures & Planning

Law and land are crucial factors, but monuments and sacred places are equally important for the establishment of separate community (Llobera 2004: 49).

Indeed, as early as 1868, *The Builder* had urged that, since the ‘stately magnificence of a capital city is one of the elements of national prestige, and therefore of national power and influence’, it was imperative that London’s architecture should become, ‘worthy of the capital of the richest nation in the world’...In Rome, the Master Plan of 1883 sought to create a capital city worthy of a new nation, with grand avenues and boulevards on the Parisian model. And the completion of the massive Victor Emmanuel Monument in 1911 was a further emphatic assertion of national grandeur and pride. In Vienna, that clutch of grand buildings facing the Ringstrasse, most of which were constructed in the 1870s and 1880s, was specifically intended to reflect ‘the greatness of Empire’.” (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983: 126-127).

Planning and constructing impressive buildings, city layouts, and promenades not only demonstrates culture and taste, but also shows power. Power to plan, control labor populations, purchase and move material, and fulfill promises. Landed nations may be judged by their citizens and especially by the outside world by their organization and beauty. As is illustrated in the above passage, many nations, specifically in the late 1800s, have been obsessed with the construction of a discernable identity that projects power and influence into the world. Planning cities allows governments and institutions to speak without words.

Precise planning is another aspect of the physical layout of Cornell that speaks to tendencies towards definition as a nation. The campus has monumental architecture, planned quadrangles, promenades, and defined spaces. Instead of urban sprawl or development based on individual desires converging into city plan. Cornell's layout and architecture was planned to the most minute of details, chosen, and carried out by the institution. Each building and boulevard was created to fit the needs and desires of the institution and to promote the civic growth and function of the campus for posterity. Just as a self-governing nation or city would go ahead and plan for future growth and construction, so too have the boards and trustees of Cornell determined the physical future of the Campus. From the first conception of the school, discussed by Mr. Cornell and A.D. White; the presence of a quadrangle was planned. While some people see Morrill, McGraw, and White as utilitarian, their design with their entrances facing out and acting as fortresses tells a different story. It implies that Mr. Cornell and A.D. White intended the buildings from the beginning to act as beacons for identifying Cornell as distinct and distinguished. There is no doubt that the layout of the city-campus was planned to show prosperity and to evoke a sense of scholarship and awe in visitors. Therefore, Cornell is also in possession of monumental architecture designed to represent the community.

History & Tradition:

The fourth characteristic of a nation is less tangible than the last three, but is arguably the most important and often results in visible affirmation of identity. It is that of history and tradition. A.D. Smith in his article "History, Modernity and Nationalism" writes,

History fulfils various social and political purposes. These include serving as a quarry of cultural materials for didactic and illustrative goals, as a series of moral exempla virtutis, as an arena for the rhetoric of nationalist politicians, and especially of narodniks [intellectuals identifying with populist agrarian socialism],

and as legitimation for the often painful innovations demanded by the needs of industrialism” (Smith 1991: 52).

History establishes a community and government as quasi-eternal, and in doing so sets precedence for existence. This is necessary to the creation and continuation of a nation, because “expressed in positive terms, nationalism emphasizes the need for roots, the need for tradition in the life of any community it evokes’ the possession in common of a rich heritage of memories”(Llobera 9). The presence of a history situates a community in the earth and gives a reason for existence, that links the population with the place and allows the individual to become associated, attached, and immersed in the culture without the fear of being lost. The search for belonging is familiar to many people, and the possession of a history allows a community to feel settled and to feel righteously at home. In addition, it bonds community members to one another. A shared history allows people to see themselves as linked, despite any absence of consanguineous relationship. Sentiments of relatedness is especially important within a community or group like a university or the USA, where according to Hobsbawm in “Mass-producing traditions: Europe 1870-1914”,

...people who were Americans not by birth but by immigration. Americans had to be made. The invented traditions of the USA in this period were primarily designed to achieve this object. On the one hand the immigrants were encouraged to accept rituals commemorating the history of the nation- the Revolution and its founding fathers (4th of July) and the Protestant Anglo-Saxon tradition (thanksgiving Day)- as indeed they did, since these now became holidays and occasions for public and private festivity (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983: 69).

Therefore, tradition is the tool through which history is replayed and re-emphasized on the ground. Traditions may be religious, ritual, or scholarly, but in order for the renewed affiliation of citizens and trust in governmental bodies to remain constant, something of this kind must exist. Interestingly, tradition and history need not be entirely truthful. In fact, it is relatively

common that history and tradition are invented to achieve a desired effect, such as the development of a cohesive nation. According to Hobsbawm, “invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (Hobsbawm 1983: 1). While very intentional, invented history works in the same way as entirely accurate history. Furthermore, because of the nature of history itself as documentation by biased individuals or groups, invented history is all in all the same as reality in its social deployment.

In ancient Egypt, both the religious connection of the Pharaohs to the underworld and the maintenance of a calendar predicting the flooding of the Nile were used to perpetuate unity (A. T. Smith, March 19, 2014). In the USA it is the election, Fourth of July, Groundhog Day, etc. as reported by Hobsbawm that keep people aligned with the USA. Cornell also holds traditions. As in both the USA and ancient Egypt, Cornell traditions are performed on a cyclic schedule. First there is the commencement, then the standard collegiate Homecoming and Graduation, and then more Cornell-specific events such as the daily-played chimes and the academic calendar with semesters, prelims, and finals. While the calendar does serve the basic and necessary task of maintaining organization of lectures and progress, while rigid, the perpetual nature of it with appointed vacations and trials echoes the calendars of other nations. By ensuring that members of the Cornell University community stay on a cyclic schedule, the institution reignites affiliation and unity with every turn.

The idea of ‘forged under fire’ comes into play, especially in regards to exams, and reproduces graduating classes who hold bonds to one another throughout their lives. Maintained connection is seen in multiple places, such as alumni associations, and visitors who bring their

families back to the school they once attended, but I find it no more beautifully summarized than by a phrase carved on a bench overlooking Libe slope. Dedicated by the class of 1892 it reads “To those who shall sit her rejoicing, to those who shall sit here mourning, sympathy and greeting: so have we done in our time”. This particular bench is filled with the initials of alumni who want to leave a piece of themselves on this campus. The beautiful words demonstrate the cyclic and perpetual nature of Cornell’s history and the establishment of tradition and affiliation regardless of kin relations.

Emblems & Symbols:

Besides the presence of territory, laws and regulations, monumental architecture and structures, and history, nations have emblems and symbols, which represent their sovereign identity. In *Medusa’s Hair* Gananath Obeyesekere analyzes the development of symbol, both personal and public. In his discussion of matted hair, he makes the case that there are two kinds of psychological symbols; one personal, and one psychogenetic, where “psychogenetic symbols originate in the unconscious or are derived from the dream repertoire”(Obeyesekere 1984: 43). The human unconscious combines its experiences and environment to create meaning in an object, icon, statement, or representation, which is why every person thinks of a symbol in slightly differing ways, despite equal exposure to it, and why it is possible for many meanings to be pulled from one idea or item. The multitude of connotation entails an infinite number of connections and meanings that can be made to everything in our universe. Because of all of these threads, our society and cultural understanding become often indecipherably complex and interwoven. Public symbols, on the other hand, exist in a state where “the actor and audience share a common symbolic language” and thus develop their meaning through such commonality (Obeyesekere 1984: 43). They come into being where the personal symbolic meaning overlaps,

and thus ties groups together, which can be seen in icons of states such as the American flag.

“The National Flag, the National Anthem, and the National Emblem are the three symbols through which an independent country proclaims its identity and sovereignty, and as such command instantaneous respect and loyalty. In themselves, they reflect the entire background, thought, and culture of a nation” (Firth 1973: 341). Although the piece of fabric printed with the stars and stripes may hold very different experiential meaning and significance for each person in our society, there is a range of common symbolic characteristics associated with it for all.

Examples are the stars representation the states; the colors symbolizing red: valor and blood, white: purity, and blue: justice; and the overall representation of the United States of America.

Symbols can be iconic images, either representational or natural, colors, songs, or written statements such as mottos.

All of these symbols that are used to represent the personal and national, but are echoed in the University. There exist direct connections in school colors, mascots, seals, alma maters, and mottos. Instead of Red, White, and Blue, Cornell University is represented by the colors Carnelian and White. Instead of an eagle, Cornell has the Big Red Bear. Instead of a flag, Cornell has a seal and pundit. Instead of a national pledge, Cornell has the motto “I would found an institution where any person can pursue instruction in any study” often shortened to “any person, any study”. Instead of a national anthem, Cornell has the alma mater. Each of these symbols of personal affiliation represents unity despite difference. They are a battle cry at a sporting event, and the source of affiliation and alliance in the work place. The array of presentations of the printed icon, song, and physical mascot allow the Cornellian to be in constant presence of their emblem. Just as a flag draws a large nation under one identity, so too does a school name, color, and seal unite a population. It is for these reasons that not only

students, but families and other affiliates wear clothing, use stickers, and drink out of glasses, to name a few pieces of paraphernalia, that are embossed, colored, or otherwise decorated with Cornelliana. By aligning oneself with the identity, motto, and protection of the institution, the school's reputation transfer to the individual and he or she becomes one with all other Cornellians.

Nationalism as Religion:

The affiliation with nation or community that is expressed in sometimes obsessive is called nationalism. Many people feel a great sense of devotion to their nation, and conduct their lives in continued support of the whole. They carryout the ritual of national holiday and affiliate themselves with the symbols of the nation. Many scholars have pointed to a connection between nationalism and religion. "The concept of nationalism as a secular religion owes much to Emile Durkheim, who famously argued that religion consists of 'a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden - beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them' (Lindholm 2008: 98). The nation becomes the church, the citizens the parishioners, the history the religious doctrine, and the national symbols the icons of religiosity. Nationally owned and operated institutions are then responsible for the maintenance of the sacred and for the edification of the younger generations, as well as avid nationalists. Institutions, when looking at Cornell are the classes and specifically the campus museums that perpetuate Cornell pride, power, and icons.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Cornell University shares almost every important defining trait with a nation. It holds territory, is self-governing with laws and regulations, builds monuments,

monumental architecture, and has city planning, has a defined history and set of traditions, and has emblems and symbols that are recognizable both privately and publically, and most importantly for identification as a nation, monumental structures and rigid laws and governance. Because of all of these connections, it is possible to analyze the community and the occurrences on campus as one would trends in a nation. Through this view, the Cornell Cast Collection is connected to important national growth. The Cast Collection acted as a bastion for history, symbol, and the creation of independent identity. Through the curation and encouraged individual interaction, the casts conveyed a myriad of intellectual sentiments and generally tied the institution to knowledge, wisdom, and the past. This collection, more so than any other, was altered to achieve specific goals. Therefore, the collection was an important feature in the foundation, growth, and continuance of Cornell University and its national identity.



Fig. 10: Imitating statues, Students interact with statues in GWS Hall (above); Fig. 16: Olympia Metotype, graffiti (below)

Conclusion

“For there is nothing lost, that may not be found, if sought.”
-Edmund Spenser 2006

At first glance, the plaster casted statues in Goldwin Smith Hall seem eerily forgotten. Their chipped facades, haphazard placement, and label-free displays point to decoration instead of collection. The hundreds of students who daily pass through the classrooms and halls of Goldwin Smith may see the statues and become curious about their origin, but until now there did not exist a consolidated narrative of their history and purpose. Thus, even those students who should become curious about the collection would not have been able to learn more unless they serendipitously took a course with Professors Alexandridis, Bertoia, or Platt in their time at Cornell. Therefore, most students have and will graduate from Cornell University never having truly seen the collection for what it is and was, and the collection’s special history will remain hidden to them. In light of the absence of information, it is unsurprising that many Cornellians have never heard of the Cast Collection, and that of those who recognize the statues as casts, only a small number (5% of those with whom I spoke) knew any historical or artistic background.

The William Henry Sage Collection of Casts has ended up in such an apparent state of abandonment, because the Collection has been curated along with changes in intellectual trends. As is the case for any other museum, the layout of the Cast Collection was imagined and devised in order to convey a specific message to the viewer. By altering gallery design, the curatorial staff altered the mood, narrative, and aura projected by the collection. Because a museum gallery space is fundamentally sacred in its separation from the profane, and is ascribed value and advanced care, it becomes a repository for a sacred narrative. The aura and voice of the collection, bolstered by the power given to the sacred space, is emitted into the surrounding

world and becomes a figurehead for the community. When the Cast Collection was held within McGraw Hall in the Museum of Classical Archaeology, the dark and recessed space evoked awe and prestige onto the collection, and subsequently the campus. This occurred originally in a time when Cornell University was trying to firmly establish itself as a prestigious and righteous site of education and teaching. Once the school had reached a level of scholarly recognition and acclaim, the aura of the collection was altered. The collection was moved to Goldwin Smith Hall and became the Museum of Casts, where the light walls and laboratory-like layout redefined the space as dedicated to scientific inquiry. When the hard sciences began to produce published research, the collection was no longer needed so greatly as a scientific laboratory for the humanities. At this point, the profane world was brought into the collection. Remodeling and classroom expansion pushed its way into the galleries, and culminating in the placement of The Temple of Zeus Café amongst the casts. Through the intrusion of the exterior, the statues began to steadily lose their artistic and pedagogic value, and were moved, neglected, and eventually forgotten in plain sight. Each of these moves coincided with changes in the pedagogic and institutional goals of Cornell University, which sought to establish contemporary institutional voice and identity.

Cornell University, as an institution, used the narrative potential of the Cast Collection and its ability to simultaneously hold disagreeing ideologies and ideals in order to purposefully create a museum and collection that was adapted to current views. By using the collection in this way, the university was able to redefine its ideals and identity. This kind of strategically created communal identity is a hallmark of nations and polities. The institution, much like a polis, works to develop insular identity in order to differentiate itself from the outside world. Furthermore, Cornell University also exhibits other traits common to nations and polities. If we understand

Cornell University as a polis with the need to create history, hold prestige, find internal value, self-govern, and create a strong affiliative identity for Cornellians, then the continual movement and alteration of the Cast Collection becomes clear. The Cast Collection works within Cornell campus as a form of symbolic capital in much the same way as a large museum or religious center in a nation or polity.

It is interesting that despite all of these movements and changes of voice, the casts of human form continue to inspire students to this day. The pieces themselves are recognizably human and, hold the power of projection and possession by human characteristics and spirits. The casts work similarly to religious icons in the Hindu faith where practitioners believe that the god or goddess takes up residence in the body of the statue. The god or goddess looks out at the devotee through metal, stone, or plaster eyes, and actively connects with the viewer. So, too, do the statues of the Cast Collection seem to gaze at members of this community. The nearly human form unsettles viewers and creates an environment where the visitors must classify the gaze. Some react poorly and grow fearful of the statues. They see them as “uncanny” and wish to have little to do with them, while others project their own emotional states and human characteristics onto the pieces. Those who project form a relationship with the statues and often think of them as allies. Individual interaction of this kind has been present throughout the history of the casts, and instances of these relationships have only increased with time as the collection has altered its defined frame of interaction.

Because the casts are no longer placed in a gallery designed and curated to produce awe and prestige, students and members of the Cornell community seem to interact with the statues on a more egalitarian basis. They mimic the statues, gaze at them, and become friends with those with which they feel a personal connection. Regardless of opinion of beauty, when surveyed,

100% of students said that the casts were valuable and 93% said that they wanted to know more about them. Reasons for assigning value to the casts generally fell within four categories, supplied by the survey takers. These were 1) aesthetic beauty and artistic value, 2) historical value, 3) the skill of creation and craftsmanship, and 4) the desire to preserve the pieces for the future. Intriguingly, the first three were each answered by 30% of the survey takers, and the fourth question by the remaining 10%. Even though there is no given framework of interpretation and the casts seem hap-hazardly placed within the rooms of Goldwin Smith Hall, students still perceive worth, value, and authenticity in the casts. Perhaps this situation is an instance where the voice of the institution, which seems to ignore the existence of the casts or to reject them for their association with the classical world of antiquities, is not up to date with student opinion. I believe that what the disconnect points to is the cusp of a new wave of change. One student with whom I spoke very eloquently summarized the general opinion of current students in regards to the casts. Erin said,

I think that because campus is changing so rapidly...we have the gates building going up now and the whole Computer Science department being revamped, we do need a mainstay to show us where our university came from and where humanity and civilization came from. I think that not a whole lot of people are able to experience a Grecian statue or anything like that in general, so when they come here to this academic beacon, the casts would be something to elevate us even more. In my opinion, we should put them on display. That would be a cool thing to have...I think it is nice having them interspersed in the halls so that you get to see them. Putting them as part of the commute helps us all learn along the way. We are busy students so we might not have time to stop, but we will have time to see them (Erin, December 1, 2013).

It would seem that the forgotten is again being sought. Professor Alexandridis and Professor Platt, who introduce their students to the history of the collection, have seen and are

acting on this student request. In 2015, Cornell is celebrating its sesquicentennial. Many departments are contributing to the celebration, and Professors Alexandridis and Platt are working with the Classics department to design and produce a new exhibit of the Cast Collection. This exhibit will not only show the casts that are in pristine condition, but will also look to the history and treatment of the entire collection. Instead of shunning the past, the exhibit intends to display the variability of curation and valuation. The opening of this exhibit seems to signal the coming of a new phase of use for the Cast Collection. I believe that much like this university, the Cast Collection will continue to live and grow and will be used as a tool to speak to the campus and the external world about the contemporary ideals of Cornell University.

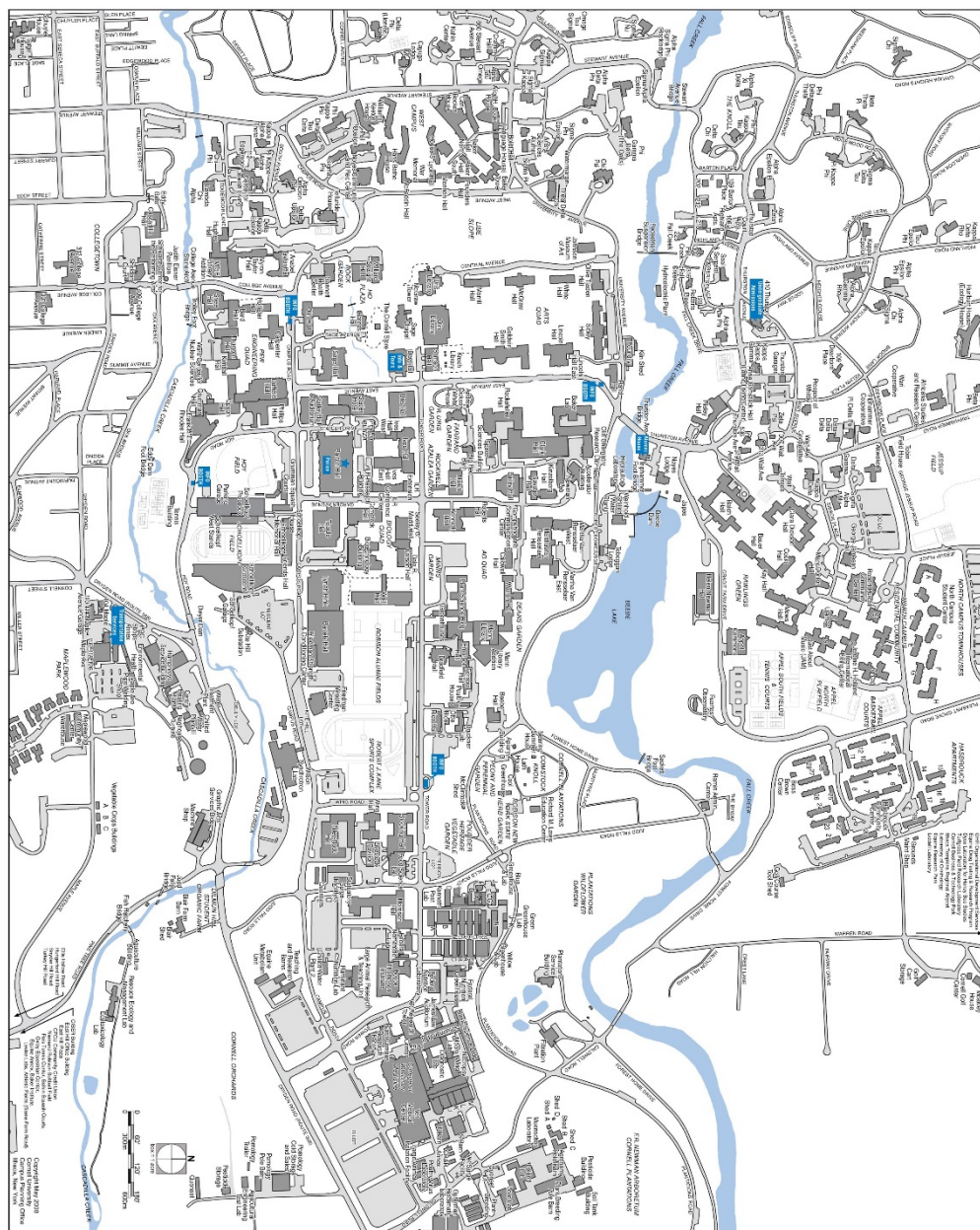


Figure 17

Fig. 17: Cornell Campus Map (2014)

Cornelliana: Glossary of Important Characters and Terms

The location of my study, Cornell University, is a 145 year old college in the finger-lake region of upstate New York. Ithaca, NY is at the Southern end of Cayuga Lake. The Cornell Campus sits perched atop the Eastern hill of the valley with views to the North, South, and West. Many people, affiliates and visitors alike, claim that the campus and its surroundings are “Gorges”. This joke plays on the word “gorgeous” and the presence of many gorges and waterfalls that are sprinkled across the landscape. Even the University song states “High above Cayuga’s waters with its waves of blue; proudly stands our Alma Mater, glorious to view”. The campus itself is divided into five areas. Central Campus is the academic heart of the university where libraries, academic buildings, and dining facilities are located. It is generally separated into quads: Ag (Agriculture) Quad, Arts Quad, Engineering Quad, and Sports fields. North Campus is the location of freshmen dorms and dining and is removed from the central academic center by Thurston Bridge over Fall Creek Gorge. College Town is directly South of North Campus. This area is populated by apartments, commercial retailers, and restaurants and is separated from Central Campus by Cascadilla Gorge. West Campus is where a collection of upperclassman dorms (mostly for Sophomores) sits at the base of Libe Slope. Finally, the Vet School sits to the East of campus and holds a veterinary hospital, Cornell Dairy, and animal science buildings. Today, Cornell University boasts a population of 32,045 students, faculty, and staff, but started with only a few hundred upon its opening in 1869 (CU Facts 2014). The University has a long and complex history, which represents multiple opinions and includes many personas. In order to facilitate the reading of this paper, I have put together a gloss of terms and characters to which I will refer. It is my hope that by both reading a history (provided in the first chapter) and referring to these terms, the reader will be able to easily follow my arguments and citations on the topic of the William H. Sage Collection of Casts. Additionally, above is a current map of Cornell University and its buildings that is widely distributed across campus, and reproduced here to provide a visual orientation to the site.

Alfred Emerson, Professor Dr.: Dr. Alfred Emerson was a professor of Classics at Cornell University in the late 1800s. He was the first curator of the William Henry Sage Collection of Casts while it was located in McGraw Hall. He is responsible for writing a Catalog of the collection in the late 1890s, which includes both a list of casts and physical and historical

description and fact. He also included a written description of the differing rooms and galleries within the Museum of Classical Archaeology (the museum's name while in McGraw) (Emerson 1890s).

Andrew Dickson White (A. D. White): White held many roles in the founding and creation of this institution. He and Ezra Cornell, after whom the university is named, met in the New York State Legislature and later devised the design of a university that would teach a new generation of Americans in the art of progress (White 1905). He is best known as one of two founders, and as the first president of the university. His presidential term began in 1865. He is also colloquially thought of as the artistic and classically minded of the two founders. It is not uncommon for Cornellians to state that he was responsible for all that is ornate in campus architecture. It was his vision for the campus and the education framework of Cornell's practical and pragmatic majors that encouraged the university to continue down the path of education for the future and allowed the community to grow and thrive. He was educated at Yale and later in Germany, and did have a love of the humanities and the ancient world (White 1905). He spent his life on the campus, and died in his house overlooking the Arts Quad on East Ave (which is noted on the above map). In many ways, his opinions and ideas are manifest in the university, which is a portrait of White and his desires.

Arts Quad: The Arts Quadrangle is a rectangular green space that is surrounded on four sides by academic buildings. It is home to the College of Arts and Sciences and the buildings that we see on its edges are dedicated to the humanities. It is also the location of the original buildings on campus, Morrill, McGraw, and White. In addition to these three structures are Olin and Uris Libraries, McGraw Tower, Stimson Hall, Goldwin Smith Hall, Lincoln Hall, Tjaden Hall, Sibley Hall, Milstein Hall, and Rand Hall. Additionally, the quad is abutted on the western edge by a large slope. At the bottom of the slope are upperclassman dorms, and further beneath it is the town of Ithaca. It is this cluster of buildings that is visible from the surrounding valley and hills, and is thus the image of campus projected into the world. This was the initial site of the university as imagined by Mr. White and Mr. Cornell, and it will be the focus of my paper (White 1905; Parsons 1968).

Cabinet of Curiosities: The idea of a Cabinet of Curiosities was a popular concept for museums in the last two centuries. It is typified by a collection of miscellaneous objects from foreign cultures and cities gathered together because of their exotic or interesting nature. Its name comes from the placement of such materials in physical cabinetry in homes of the elite or well-traveled. It is generally not placed into curated exhibits that tell the reader a story, but is instead geared towards the exposure of the visitor to other crafts, art, objects, or life ways. Many museums still exhibit galleries designed to appear as a cabinet of curiosities would and are still interesting to the public. The Natural History Museum located in McGraw Hall, held and displayed material in this style of exhibit.

Cast: A cast is defined as an object made by the use of a mold. Plaster casts, my focus, are created from an original piece by creating a mold from direct contact with the statue or item in question, then filling of the mold with plaster. When the plaster dries, a replica of the original is created. Casts made from this process are common throughout antiquity and are thought to have been made originally as death masks in ancient Egypt. Statues have been made by this process since the time of the ancient Romans and Greeks. In the 1500 -1800s there was a resurgence of interest in the classical form, and reproductions of statues were made with plaster and exhibited in museums and in private collections (xxx). These sculptures were considered of great value for study and aesthetics. It is out of this tradition that Cornell University procured its collection through the funds provided by William Henry Sage, and the expertise of A. D. White (New York Times 1894).

College of Arts & Sciences: The College of Arts & Sciences is one of seven undergraduate Colleges within Cornell University. It is the center of the Humanities, was the first formed, and occupies land in the middle of Campus. Its academic buildings are centered around the Arts Quad, and it is within the sphere of this academic conglomeration of Humanities departments that this thesis is focused. The other Colleges located in Cornell are The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, The College of Architecture, Art, and Planning, The College of Engineering,

The School of Hotel Administration, The College of Human Ecology, and The School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR).

Commencement Ceremony: Cornell University was opened in 1869 on Thursday July fifth. A ceremony was held at the Cornell Library Hall in downtown Ithaca, and was followed by speeches and the ringing of the McGraw bells in front of the partially completed Morrill Hall (Kammen 2006; CU Commencement Card). It was at this ceremony that the university was born and some of its traditions began, such as the chimes, which are now in McGraw Tower.

Cornell University: Cornell University is a college in Ithaca, New York on the shore of Cayuga Lake. It was founded by Andrew Dickson White and Ezra Cornell who met in the New York State Legislature. Mr. Cornell was responsible for the funds to construct the institution and for many of its creeds and its motto. A.D. White was responsible for the creation of an educational framework, and served as the first President of Cornell University. The university has been open since Thursday, July 5th, 1869, and now boasts upwards of 22,000 student, faculty, and staff. It is separated into five undergraduate colleges: The College of Arts and Sciences, The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, The College of Industrial Labor Relations, The College of Engineering, and The College of Arts, Architecture, and Planning (CU Facts).

Cornell's Museum of Casts: The Museum of Casts was opened in Goldwin Smith Hall (GWS Hall) in 1906. The GWS Hall was designed with its first floor and basement specifically as galleries for the casts (3, 8). The museum was filled with the Cast Collection alone, and had rooms for conservation, curation, and archaeological classrooms. It was a common place for the meeting of courses on Greece, Greek, the classical world, art history, and archaeology (CU Registers). A few casts remain in this Hall to this day, but most have been moved about for many years. In the mid-1900s The Temple of Zeus Café was placed into the North Gallery of the Museum. It remained in this location until refurbishment of the building in the 1980s for the creation of new classrooms.

Cornell's Museum of Classical Archaeology: The Museum of Classical Archaeology is the initial iteration of the Sage Cast Collection. It was located in McGraw Hall and opened in 1894

(New York Times 1894). The collection was purchased for the creation of this museum, which was made of eight rooms, with different classical themes (New York Times 1894; White 1905). This museum was quite grand, and represented the aesthetic of the cabinet of curiosities. The statues were curated in such a way as to impart awe on the visitor, and to show him or her the grandeur of the ancient world. The collection remained in the Museum of Classical Archaeology in McGraw Hall until 1906, when it was relocated to Goldwin Smith Hall, where it was renamed the “Museum of Casts” (White 1905, Parsons 1968; CU Registers).

Cornell’s Natural History Museum: The Natural History Museum was the name used to describe McGraw Hall upon its construction in 1872 (CU Registers; Gleach 2013). The Hall was created as a campus museum, and was filled with items collected in the travels of Mr. White and other faculty members (White 1905). The idea was that in order to allow students to learn in this location, it was necessary for them to have access to the objects and cultures about which they were learning. Thus, the museum held fossils, bones, chemicals, geological materials, archaeological materials especially those from the Americas, and anthropological materials from the world over (Gleach, October 8, 2013; Emerson 1890s). The collection was laid out and exhibited by theme, and the first and second floor of McGraw were for the collection, and the third acted as office space. Because of the range of the collection, and the time period in which it was displayed, the museum acted with the aura of a cabinet of curiosities that was accessible for all students to view.

Ezra Cornell: Ezra Cornell is one of two founders and the namesake of Cornell University. He spent most of his life in upstate New York and decided that he wanted to open a college that would provide access to education that was not afforded to him. He met A. D. White in the New York Legislature and together they founded Cornell University. He was the brain and bank behind the institution. He is widely known as a practical man who stressed the learning and teaching of vocational and practical professions, such as engineering. He is also the inventor and promoter of several devices such as the telegraph and telephone poles (CU Facts). His practical tilt can still be felt today in the architecture and subject matter taught at the university, although today this college is joined by many others in the provision of such an education.

Goldwin Smith, Professor Dr.: Goldwin Smith was a professor of English History and humanities. He was instrumental for the creation of the college of Arts and Sciences, and was a great friend to A.D. White. Goldwin Smith Hall was named in his honor.

Goldwin Smith Hall: Goldwin Smith Hall was planned in 1904 and opened in 1906. It was named after Professor Goldwin Smith and devoted to the humanities, especially those related to the classical world. It was designed with the Sage Cast Collection in mind, and its first floor and basement were planned and used as gallery space for many years. It is the site of many iterations of the Sage Cast Collection and still holds many casts to this day.

Ithaca, New York: Ithaca, NY is a small city located on the south end of Cayuga Lake. It is in the finger lake region of New York and is now home to three colleges. In the time of the founding of Cornell University, it was a busy town with various industries, sites frequented by tourists, and was a stop on the Erie Canal way (The History Center 2013). It is surrounded by farms and rolling hills, and its scenery gives a great ambiance to Cornell University as a whole.

Jennie McGraw-Fiske: Jennie McGraw-Fiske was the daughter of a wealthy Ithacan: Mr. McGraw. The members of her family were trustees and great supporters of Cornell University. Her family donated the bells, funds for McGraw Tower, McGraw Hall, and other projects. In her will, she left many of her possessions, including her home, to the university. Her home was a large mansion with large rooms that A.D. White intended to turn into a museum after her death. However, her home was sold by the university and purchased by a fraternity. It later burned in a fire (White 1905; Parsons 1968; Bishop 1962).

Morrill, McGraw, and White Halls: These three halls border the west side of the Arts Quad. They were the first to be constructed on the quad, and are home to the Humanities. They were built with stone quarried from campus, and designed to be practical and functional. Morrill was the first to be built and act as classroom space, followed by McGraw, which was opened in 1872

as a museum (Bishop 1962; Parsons 1968). Each of these halls had large entrance spaces and has now been converted into classrooms.

Motto: The motto of Cornell is “I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study”. It was uttered by Ezra Cornell, and its sentiments were echoed by A.D. White in his plans for the educational framework of Cornell University (Bishop 1962). This motto ideologically bound Cornell University to a policy of openness and range. It is for this reason that Cornell opened its doors to female students within the first few years of its founding, and continues to encourage diversity today. It is also the reason for the large collection of museum material that was purchased by White in 1860s to fill classrooms and gallery space. It is also the source for the large library collections, which now amount to 8 million volumes (as of Feb. 23, 2014).

Plaster: The plaster about which I am speaking is a mixture of baked gypsum, sand, and water that forms a past of varying thickness depending on water content. It can be applied to surfaces or poured in molds and allowed to harden. The mixture reacts in water in such a way that the past hardens to form an opaque, white, resistant material.

Registers: The Cornell Registers are course catalogs from the first sixty-plus years of Cornell’s history. They include major requirements, tracks, course lists and descriptions, information on collections, as well as descriptions of buildings and features of campus. They have been indispensable for the study of the movement and use of the Sage Cast Collection.

William Henry Sage Collection of Casts: This collection is referred to as the “Cast Collection” “Collection of Casts” “Cornell Cast Collection” etc. It was created through purchases and commissions made by A.D. White between the years 1890 and 1894. It was funded by William Henry Sage, and is thus named after its donor. It cost a total of \$20,000 in 1894, which is now equivalent to an excess of \$520,000 (United States Government 2014). The collection was made up of plaster cast statues of Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and other classical sculptures. It initially numbered 500+, but held 630+ figures at its peak. White commissioned these pieces from a

number of museums and companies all over the world in Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. They were originally on display in McGraw Hall's Museum of Classical Archaeology located within the overarching collection called the Museum of Natural History. They were a very important addition to the university, and are the focus of this paper.

Slope: What is referred to as "The Slope" is a large hill beginning at the bottom of what is now University Avenue, and culminating at the Arts Quad. From South to North, the slope is crested by Willard Straight Hall, Uris Library, Morrill Hall, McGraw Hall, White Hall, The Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, and Olive Tjaden Hall. Morrill, McGraw, White, and Uris Library are centered at the top of the hill. It is a large part of Cornell Culture, and something that makes Cornellians feel connected. Upperclassmen that live at the base of the slope on west campus (the site of upperclassman dorms) must journey up the slope every time they wish to enter any other part of campus. Campus wide events such as a spring festival called Slope Day take place at the base of the hill, where the land is relatively flat. It is also the second crest of the much larger hill that connects Cornell campus to the lakefront. It is from the base of this hill that the rest of Ithaca views Cornell University.

Temple of Zeus Café: Temple of Zeus Café is an eatery located in Goldwin Smith Hall. It was opened in 1964 in the North Gallery of the Museum of Casts. It was moved in 1997 to its current location to an added space that was initially the South Gallery's upper eight feet. The café gained its name from the Olympia Pediment and statues from the Temple of Zeus that were within the gallery space. It was one instance of a redefinition of the Sage Collection of Casts. When the café was placed in the gallery, students and faculty were able to interact with the collection on an informal and daily basis. It both represented and leads to a different relationship between people and the statues (Spektor 2012). The modern café was also the site of surveys I performed to learn the sentiment of Cornellians to the statues that surround them.

Uris Library: Uris Library is a large building that is now attached to McGraw Tower, which houses the Cornell chimes. This library was built in 1890 and the books and library accoutrements that were once held in McGraw were removed to his location after its

construction. This move is what allowed for the space for the Museum of Classical Archaeology, which was built inside of the old library's rooms.

William Henry Sage: William Henry Sage is one of the most important donors to this University and to this paper. He is responsible for providing the funds for the Sage Collection of Casts, and it is his name that marks the collection. He was supportive of White and Cornell's plans and endeavors, and donated almost 1.5 million dollars to the university in the later 1800s. This equates to roughly 35 million dollars today. This money was extremely important to the realization of Mr. Cornell and Mr. White's dreams and imaginings for the creation of this institution.

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