

I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help on this work.-Francesca Maisano

Maisano 1

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ARTH303: Methods of Art History

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Theory 2

Theory: Reception Theory

The roots of reception theory, or the aesthetics of reception in regard to art history, goes back to 1902, with the seminal study “The Group Portraiture of Holland” by Alois Riegl, where he focused on not only the subjects’ relationship between themselves but also between them and the beholder. However, the theory truly originated and first took off in the field of literary history in the late 20<sup>th</sup>-century in Germany, particularly around the University of Constance, and has since become popular in continental Europe, though less so in the United States and Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> In the 1960s, a crisis in regard to methodology occurred in the literary academic field, causing the reexamination of canon, universities to create more relevant curricula, and the reformation of academic programs. Students demanded restructuring and rethinking, expressing a desire, sometimes violently, to move away from what they viewed as a “rigid, restrictive system” that used “arcane techniques” and “obsolete assumptions concerning the proper way to study literature”—essentially “a narrow, elitist, and politically conservative approach to

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Kemp, “The Work of Art and Its Beholder: The Methodology of the Aesthetic of Reception.” *The subjects of art history: historical objects in contemporary perspectives*, Cambridge (1998), 184, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/32980058.pdf>; Matthew Newcomb, “Situating the author by way of the Reader in Literature and History: A study and Critique of the Reception Theories of Wolfgang Iser and Hans-Robert Jauss.” Master’s thesis, Gonzaga University, 2000, 8, <https://www-proquest-com.umw.idm.oclc.org/dissertations-theses/situating-author-way-reader-literature-history/docview/1021050765/se-2?accountid=12299>.

literature.”<sup>2</sup> In this academic climate, Hans-Robert Jauss issued a call-to-arms to his colleges in his essay “Paradigmenwechsel in der Literaturwissenschaft,” arguing for a renewal in literary history where historical objectivism is eliminated and the aesthetics of reception and influence are used.<sup>3</sup> In Jauss’ later work, he looked at the history of interpretations of a work and establishes the horizon of expectations-“what a certain society can know and easily take in from a text at a certain time,” “the understandings of what has been read before, genre expectations, familiar allusions, and other societal factors,” that “set the context for interpretation to occur.”<sup>4</sup> The initial interpretation, or reception, of the work forms a baseline for later interpretations from new readers, with the latter interpretations no less important than the initial.

Another important contributor to this movement comes in the name of Wolfgang Iser. Compared to Jauss’ emphasis on the historical interpretations of a work, Iser’s emphasis rested on the structure of a text, looking at the form of the text, what the text assumes about the reader, and how open it is to multiple interpretations, as well as how individuals interpret works to find meaning.<sup>5</sup> In his 1978 work *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, he talks about a hypothetical implied reader, a broad figure with no historical connection that is capable of receiving the meaning of the work, and that it is through the interplay of the reader and the work that meaning is produced.<sup>6</sup>

In conjunction with this shift in the literary world, and borrowing ideas from it, art historians also moved to the interest in the viewers and their responses. One important work was

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<sup>2</sup> Holub, Robert C. “Trends in Literary Theory: The American Reception of Reception Theory.” *The German Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (January 1982): 83, accessed March 26, 2021. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2307/405593>.

<sup>3</sup> Holub, “Trends in Literary Theory, 84; Newcomb, “Situating, 60-61.

<sup>4</sup> Newcomb, “Situating,” 61-63.

<sup>5</sup> Newcomb, “Situating,” 8, 10-11.

<sup>6</sup> Newcomb, “Situating,” 15-19.

*The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theories of Response*, written by David Freedberg in 1989, on “the relations between images and people in history,” which looked at the outward responses people had to images and the beliefs that causes these actions and behaviors, as well as what the effectiveness of the images-“what images appear to do”-and what beholders expect images to do and why.<sup>7</sup> Another work dated to a few years later in 1992, *Only Connect...Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance* by John Shearman analyzed how Renaissance works, such as Donatello’s *David*, demand and engage with the spectator through the intentionality of their design.<sup>8</sup> Finally, a third work, written in 1998 by Wolfgang Kemp and titled *The Work of Art and Its Beholder: The Methodology of the Aesthetic of Reception*, laid out history and methodology of the aesthetics of reception. Here, Kemp claims that works “solicit” ideal beholders, making the aesthetics of reception about looking for the “implicit beholder.” Therefore, when doing the aesthetics of reception, one must find and analyze how works of art communicate with the viewers, while also looking at their “sociohistorical and actual aesthetic” statements.”<sup>9</sup>

This methodology that Kemp outlines is not unusual to apply to medieval art as well, the type of work analyzed in this paper. According to David S. Areford in his 2012 work “Reception,” “medievalists have long been at the forefront of reception studies” since that artistic anonymity is common regarding medieval images and when reconstructing meaning a devotional function is often looked at, not just an aesthetic one.<sup>10</sup> His work discussed fourteenth-

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<sup>7</sup> David Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), xix, xxii.

<sup>8</sup> John Shearman, *Only Connect...Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 17

<sup>9</sup> Wolfgang Kemp, “The Work of Art and Its Beholder,” 183.

<sup>10</sup> David S. Areford, "Reception," *Studies in Iconography* 33 (2012): 74, accessed March 26, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23924274>.

century and fifteenth-century images of Jesus Christ's side wound and the process of seeing the image and decoding it as well as the devotional experiences that comes from wearing the measure of the wound.<sup>11</sup> This essay will analyze another form of medieval art: architecture. The Portal of the Last Judgement, the central portal in the main, western façade of Notre-Dame de Paris, certainly fits Areford's description, as its original architect remains unknown and it fulfils a devotional function, as a door covered in imagery that visitors must behold and interact with to enter the cathedral. The focus of this essay will be on this portal, built in the 1220s, though restored in the mid-nineteenth century, and the reception of visitors, the beholders, to its iconography.<sup>12</sup>

For the portal to be effective and communicate with the beholders, its iconography must be understood, therefore going forward this essay assumes that the medieval visitors to this Parisian cathedral understood such iconography. This essay also assumes that no misconceptions were had. For example, in the Gallery above the portal the misconception that the twenty-eight statues were of the kings of France, not the kings of Judah, stretched as far back as the thirteenth century, so right around the time these statues were built, and was still believed into the nineteenth century, even by Victor Hugo, whose 1831 work *Hunchback of Notre-Dame* caused the restoration of the cathedral in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> It was not until the mid-nineteenth century when this misconception started to change, as Viollet-le-Duc believed that the

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<sup>11</sup> Areford, "Reception," 74, 80.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel D. Reiff, "Viollet le Duc and Historic Restoration: The West Portals of Notre-Dame," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 30, no. 1 (1971), 20-21, 29, accessed March 26, 2021, <https://dx.doi.org/10.2307/988670>

<sup>13</sup> Charles T. Little, Willibald Sauerländer, and Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Set in Stone: The Face in Medieval Sculpture*, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006) 31, [https://www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications/Set in Stone The Face in Medieval Sculpture](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications/Set_in_Stone_The_Face_in_Medieval_Sculpture); Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, trans. by Isabel F. Hapgood, (Project Gutenberg, 2009), accessed March 26, 2021, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2610/2610-h/2610-h.htm>

statues were patriarchs or kings of Judah due to the similarities between one of the Notre-Dame de Paris statues that was commonly believed to be Pepin and the statue of David at Chartres Cathedral.<sup>14</sup>

With all that being said, it would not have necessarily been ahistorical for those visiting the cathedral to at least possess rudimentary understanding of its iconography. During the reign of Philip Augustus from 1180-1223, when the cathedral and the portal were under construction, educated people formed a sizable portion of Paris's population-ten percent-and the city became a major theological center.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the cathedral's location in the capital city of the kingdom near the king's palace meant educated royal and diplomatic patrons to the cathedral, particularly as the cathedral was at the center of many royal processions and ceremonies. For example, in 1431, king of England Henry VI was coronated king of France as well at Notre-Dame, the first time a king was coronated at the cathedral.<sup>16</sup> Another example was 1461, where, after his coronation, King Louis IX was welcomed in Paris from Rheims with a procession, with heralds, archers, and trumpeters marching and church bells ringing. He was received into Notre-Dame by the Archbishop of Bourges and the Bishop of Paris, entering in with the organ playing.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, with educated theologians, royalty, and diplomats in Paris, many of those visiting the

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<sup>14</sup> Ferdinand de Guilhermy and Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Description de Notre-Dame, cathédrale de Paris*, (Paris: Bance, 1856), 74-75, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6568964k/f11.item>

<sup>15</sup> Cynthia L. Haas, "The Architectural Response to Changing Spiritual Needs at Notre-Dame of Paris in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries." Master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1998, 4. <https://umw.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.umw.idm.oclc.org/dissertations-theses/architectural-response-changing-spiritual-needs/docview/304442196/se-2?accountid=12299.4>

<sup>16</sup> Craig Wright, *Music and Ceremony at Notre Dame of Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 208-209.

<sup>17</sup> Edmund A. Bowles, "Musical Instruments in Civic Processions during the Middle Ages," *Acta Musicologica* 33 (1961), 154, accessed April 22, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2307/931868>.

cathedral would have been knowledgeable and been able to recognize and understand its iconography.

Even visitors of neither the scholarly nor upper-class variety may have understood the biblical significance of the iconography, as in the late Middle Ages translators translated the Latin Bible into the French vernacular for the laity and the laity were increasingly encouraged to read the Bible.<sup>18</sup> Finally, those less educated could have also understood the iconography through being taught by tour guides, a feature of both monastic and secular (non-monastic) structures, as well as texts at and provided by the institutions. At places of pilgrimage, these guides, known by many names including guards, would describe the history and architecture of the place, give descriptions of miracles that had occurred there, and give tours, as well as mediate on art with the pilgrims.<sup>19</sup> These places would also possess publicly displayed texts, known as tabulae, which would give the history of the place, as well as its context in larger historical events, the relics and burials the structure holds, and describe the art and building history, as well as individual reading texts holding similar information. Places of pilgrimage also had visual aids such as written signs, announcements, and inscriptions.<sup>20</sup> Notre-Dame was, and still is, such a place for pilgrimage, being located on the still-in-use medieval Way of St. James that leads to the cathedral in Santiago, Spain. In fact, the church was so often a starting point for pilgrims going to Spain that its western door gained the nickname “la porte St. Jacques.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Margriet Hoogvliet, “Encouraging Lay People to Read the Bible in the French Vernaculars: New Groups of Readers and Textual Communities.” *Church History and Religious Culture* 93, no. 2 (2013): 254-255, accessed March 26, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23923208>.

<sup>19</sup> Conrad Rudolph, “The Tour Guide in the Middle Ages: Guide Culture and the Mediation of Public Art.” *Art Bulletin* 100 (March 2008): 41-44, accessed March 26, 2021, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00043079.2017.1367910>.

<sup>20</sup> Rudolph, “The Tour Guide in the Middle Ages,” 45-47.

<sup>21</sup> Craig Wright, *Music and Ceremony at Notre Dame of Paris*, 278

Ultimately, through the well-educated population of Paris and the existence of vernacular bibles, tour guides, and texts, it would not be illogical to suppose that those visiting the cathedral would have understood the iconological content and significance of the portal.

With this background context out of the way, the analysis of how the work connects with the viewer, one of Kemp's tasks when conducting analysis through reception theory, can begin. Eschatological in content, Notre-Dame de Paris' Portal of The Last Judgement's iconography was designed to be seen by visitors as a lesson, reminding them about the Last Judgement and the ultimate goal for a Christian: to attain salvation and be accepted into Heaven.<sup>22</sup> The portal also acted as a guide for behavior to receive salvation. Even before reaching the cathedral, the visitor becomes reminded of God's power and importance due to the cathedral's position related to the buildings around it. Up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Notre-Dame, the cathedral had symbolic significance as "a major monument among a group of lesser buildings," making it a symbol of power, particularly if put in contrast with the surrounding working-class and impoverished neighborhoods. Then, due to the modernization and urban renewal efforts of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century under Georges-Eugène Haussmann, the parvis in front of the cathedral was cleared and extended, gardens were created on its south side, and slums of the neighborhoods were destroyed. This has caused the cathedral to now stand isolated, "a central attraction" that continues to assert itself as a dominating force on the landscape and those on it.<sup>23</sup> Then, upon reaching the central portal, Jesus Christ sits in power in the tympanum surrounded by the heavenly court in the archivolt, towering above the visitor and looking out in judgement. Medieval Christians, and Christians

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Williamson, *Gothic Sculpture 1140-1300* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 48

<sup>23</sup> Kevin D. Murphy, "The Historic Building in the Modernized City: The Cathedrals of Paris and Rouen in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Urban History* 37, no. 2 (2011): 291-293, accessed April 22, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0096144210391593>.

today believed that at the Last Judgement, Jesus would judge the living and the dead and send some to Heaven, a paradise with God's light and love, and others, who commit mortal sins that separate themselves from God, to Hell, a disordered place of damnation and suffering.<sup>24</sup> To Jesus' right — the visitors' left—Mary kneels in prayer, someone visitors and pilgrims can pray to for her intercession for one's salvation. Medieval Christians, and many modern Christians today, believe that the elect—those in Heaven—can intercede for others before God, with Mary, the mother of God, having direct access.<sup>25</sup> This intercession, particularly for intercession for protection after death, was one of the reasons for pilgrimage to saintly relics, along with miraculous healing.<sup>26</sup> Beneath them, in the upper lintel Michael the Archangel weighs a soul while the devil and small demons try and tip the scales and thwart salvation. To Michael's right, the visitors' left, those who have received salvation look up at Jesus while on the other side people of different social standings are led in chains to hell, where in eternal domination, shown in the archivolt, someone is being put in a boiling pot while demons attack others.

In the lower lintel, people from all social classes rise from the dead. Besides the doors, the wise and foolish virgins are carved into the stone, reminding the visitor of the parable where the wise may enter the doorway to heaven while the foolish cannot and bringing to mind the theme of the parable in that one must always be ready for the Day of Judgement. Next to the virgins and above the tympanum, the apostles and heavenly congregation are high above and out of reach for the visitors, the former of which even stare down at the visitors from high above.

However, the niches below the apostles show the Virtues and Vices at eye-level.<sup>27</sup> Six virtues on

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<sup>24</sup> Paul Binski, *Medieval Death*, 166-175.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Binski, *Medieval Death*, 209-210.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Binski, *Medieval Death*, 214.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Williamson, *Gothic Sculpture 1140-1300*, 50.

top with six vices below on either side, showing both men and women, with the virtues robes in classical attire while the vices are “images of contemporary, everyday sinners,” their readily-visible location remind the everyday man and woman of the ever-present nature of vices and the virtues that are triumph over them, the virtue’s greatness over the vices further emphasized by the virtue’s larger size. The presence and layout of these virtues and vices give guidance for overcoming human faults to those seeking salvation on the Judgement Day and the entrance into the heavenly realm.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to acting as a reminder and guide, with numerous biblical passages referencing entering Heaven through doorways, where one must physically interact with doorway by crossing its threshold to receive salvation, “by entering through the open doorway of the church, the pilgrim’s movement becomes synonymous with acceptance into the heavenly realm.”<sup>29</sup> In the trumeau, Jesus Christ, who stands and looks out at the visitors with his right hand raised in a gesture of benediction, blesses those who go cross into the church, and metaphorically and symbolically, cross into Heaven as the Jesus in the tympanum judges them to do so, the tympanum figure and his blessing promising salvation in the Day of Judgement and admission to the Heavenly city, whose three gates on each side are referenced by the three portals on this façade.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Sara Briers Morris, "Virtue and Vice: A Nuanced Reading of Notre Dame De Paris' South Transept Reliefs." Master's thesis, University of Alabama, 2015, 31, 33. <https://umw.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/virtue-vice-nuanced-reading-notre-dame-de-paris/docview/1733241261/se-2?accountid=12299>; Paul Williamson, *Gothic Sculpture 1140-1300*, 50

<sup>29</sup> Vibeke Olsen, “Movement, Metaphor and Memory: The Interactions Between Pilgrims and Portal Programs.” In *Push Me, Pull You*, ed. by Sarah Blick and Laura D. Gelfand, Vol 2, *Imaginative and Emotional Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 511-512.

<sup>30</sup> Olsen, “Movement, Metaphor and Memory,” 513-517.

While this may be the modern academic study and interpretation behind this iconography and how visitors would have viewed it, how did medieval visitors to the cathedral, reception theory's beholders, respond to the cathedral and its iconography? Did they understand it the way that modern scholars do? Unfortunately, pilgrims rarely wrote about the buildings they encountered.<sup>31</sup> However, using Jauss' concept of the history of interpretations and through writings of the educated, and the physical alterations of the cathedral, one can, at least, see the thoughts and attitude of people towards the cathedral and its central portal over time. These thoughts and feelings changed throughout the cathedral's existence, going from awe and amazement to uncaring and even hatred before going back again.

In the first few centuries of the cathedral's existence, the attitudes towards it leaned positive, though the cathedral did need to compete with Sainte-Chapelle for fame and status. For example, in Matthew Paris' *English History* (*Historia Anglorum*), written in the late-13<sup>th</sup> century, Paris only mentions Sainte-Chapelle specifically, calling it "handsome," when referring to the holy places of Paris that Henry III visits in 1254.<sup>32</sup> Notre-Dame's lack of mention perhaps shows that it did not have high status when initially constructed, or was perhaps considered as having been surpassed by Sainte-Chapelle, as in Paris' writing on the bringing of the crown of thorns and fragment of the True Cross to France, as well as the construction of Sainte-Chapelle, in 1241, he does mention Notre-Dame and its role in the procession.<sup>33</sup> Whatever the opinion Matthew Paris had on Notre-Dame, by 1323, around one hundred years after the portals were

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<sup>31</sup> Olsen, "Movement, Metaphor and Memory," 499.

<sup>32</sup> Matthew Paris, *English History: From the Year 1235 to 1273*, trans. by J. A. Giles (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), 2: 107.

<sup>33</sup> Matthew Paris, *English History: From the Year 1235 to 1273*, trans. by J. A. Giles (London: George Bell and Sons, 1889), 1: 324-325,  
<https://archive.org/details/matthewparissen01rishgoog/mode/2up>

constructed, French writer and philosopher Jean de Jandun had very strong, and very positive, views. In his book *A Treatise of the Praises of Paris*, Jandun describes the cathedral as an “imposing church” that “shines in the very first rank, and deservedly so, like the sun in the midst if the other stars.” To him, this church’s beauty prevails over all others’, and says that those who disagree need to look more closely.<sup>34</sup> Expressing religious sentiment, he wrote, “In truth, I think that this church offers to those that carefully look at it such an admirable object that the soul has difficulty satisfying itself while contemplating it.”<sup>35</sup> Therefore, Jandun at least felt some of the religious sentiment the cathedral was meant to impose. A less religious description than Jandun’s, Flemish scribe Guillebert de Mets’ 1407-1434 *The Description of the city of Paris and the Excellence of the Kingdom of France* also praises the cathedral, calling it “an excellent work inside and out” with “beautiful images” on its exterior.<sup>36</sup> Venetian Ambassador to France Girolamo Lippomano had a similar view in his 1577-1579 work *A Description of Paris in 1577-1579*, praising the structure and even bringing mention of the church’s fame and Paris’ size. Lippomano describes Notre-Dame as a “famous and superb temple” that is “miraculous by its size and by the richness of the ornaments and the statues, with the most wondrous work on every side, inside and out...” and which “well suits the cathedral of a city as large as Paris.”<sup>37</sup> Both Mets and Lippomano’s responses stem not from religious sentiment towards the church’s iconography but secular appreciation to its design and craftsmanship, a different interpretation

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<sup>34</sup> Jean de Jandun, “A Treatise of the Praises of Paris,” in *In Old Paris: An Anthology of Source Descriptions, 1323-1790*, ed. by Robert W. Berger (New York: Italica Press, Inc., 2002), 7

<sup>35</sup> Jean de Jandun, “A Treatise of the Praises of Paris,” 8

<sup>36</sup> Guillebert de Mets, “*The Description of the city of Paris and the Excellence of the Kingdom of France*,” in *In Old Paris: An Anthology of Source Descriptions, 1323-1790*, ed. by Robert W. Berger (New York: Italica Press, Inc., 2002), 26.

<sup>37</sup> Girolamo Lippomano, “*A Description of Paris in 1577-1579*,” in *In Old Paris: An Anthology of Source Descriptions, 1323-1790*, ed. by Robert W. Berger (New York: Italica Press, Inc., 2002), 49.

and response than Jandun's, which expressed both appreciation for the cathedral's appearance but also its religious significance and evocation of pious feeling. These three men, as well as the rest of the visitors of the cathedral in its first few centuries, act as the initial reception and interpretation of the cathedral, who established a baseline for later interpretation.

Though the initial reception of the church was very positive, by the eighteenth-century these lofty opinions of the church had changed, leading to physical change and even destruction. In 1771, Jacques-Germain Soufflot removed the trumeau between the doors, as well as the Wise and Foolish Virgin reliefs on either side of the doors, replaced the original 13<sup>th</sup>-century doors, and carved an arch in the center of the two lintels beneath the tympanum to either create room for the canopy over the Eucharist as it was carried through the doorway during processions or for more space for the baldacchino covering the king so that it would not need to be lowered during processions.<sup>38</sup> Evidently, those who ordered and conducted this change cared little for the historical and architectural significance of the structure and seemed less in awe and fear regarding the iconographic meaning behind the work. Then, just a few decades later in 1793, revolutionaries and the populace attacked the cathedral, a place of royal patronage and procession, due to anti-feudal, anti-Church governmental policies and sentiments and destroyed almost all the sculpture on the façade, leaving only the archivolts, canopies over the jamb statues, the tympanum and dado reliefs, and the Virgin Mary and child statue in the northern portal.<sup>39</sup> While the portal, and the cathedral overall, may have been constructed to be seen as a powerful religious symbol, commanding the visitors to virtuous lives and reminding them of God's power and judgment, the people's reception of the cathedral had flipped, as during this period many

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<sup>38</sup> Reiff, "Viollet le Duc and Historic Restoration," 17.

<sup>39</sup> Charles T. Little, Willibald Sauerländer, and Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Set in Stone*, 31-32; Reiff, "Viollet le Duc and Historic Restoration," 18.

dismissed or rejected long-held religious attitudes that influenced positive feelings towards the cathedral, like Jandun had, and turned to anger, hatred, and disbelief that instead caused negative interpretations and harm.

Yet, this particularly violent interpretation in the history of interpretations directly led to a very opposite interpretation, one more similar to the original baseline interpretations. The opinions towards the cathedral changed once again through Victor Hugo's writing. Though praising the cathedral in the aforementioned early nineteenth-century *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, calling it "still no doubt, a majestic and sublime edifice" and an "aged queen of our cathedrals" and remarking that there "certainly are few finer architectural pages than this façade," he decried the destruction and abandonment of the cathedral, including the destruction of the statues in the niches of the portals, the cutting of "that new and bastard arch" in the central portal, and the replacement of the medieval arabesque doors to "commonplace and heavy" doors.<sup>40</sup> Like Mets and Lippomano of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he focused more on the quality of the architecture than its religious meaning. The passion and care Hugo expresses in his book towards the cathedral has been echoed in popular sentiment ever since. During the mid-nineteenth century, a few decades after the book's release and at the same time as Haussmann's renovation of Paris when the cathedral gained its status as an emphasized monument, restoration also occurred at the cathedral, spurred on by Hugo's writing and conducted by Viollet-le-Duc. During this restoration, care was taken to be as accurate as possible when restoring the portals, where existing fragments were carefully copied, models of the appropriate age were chosen for parts without existing fragments, and reliable documents were

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<sup>40</sup> Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, book third, ch. 1

used.<sup>41</sup> Though, some aspects of representation on other parts of the cathedral, such as the gargoyles and chimeras in the towers, received criticism for being excessive, and Viollet-le-Duc also received criticism for his version of restoration, where he restored all elements that have ever graced the cathedral, even if some of those elements never existed together, to bring the building to a state of completeness that the church had never existed in before.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, in this current period of the cathedral's history of interpretations, it has remained a popular tourist destination ever since Viollet-le-Duc's restoration, beloved by Catholics and non-Catholics alike, from all around the world, for its religious, cultural, and historical, and architectural significance, seen through the tearful, heartbroken, and generous reactions to the fire that happened at the cathedral in April of 2019 and the determined efforts of the firefighters to save it.<sup>43</sup> Instead of committing acts of hatred and willful destruction, onlookers to the fire gasped and cried, with some even singing hymns and praying.<sup>44</sup> One onlooker, Pierre-Eric Trimovillas, said that "Paris is beheaded," while another, Eleanor Batreau, a Catholic, described the event as "apocalyptic," particularly as she views Notre-Dame as a symbol of Mary, and a third, Pierre Guillaume Bonnet, described it as "losing a member of one's own family."<sup>45</sup> A far cry from the revolutionary government ordering the cathedral's desecration in the 1790s, French

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<sup>41</sup> Reiff, "Viollet le Duc and Historic Restoration," 24.

<sup>42</sup> Reiff, "Viollet le Duc and Historic Restoration," 27, 29.

<sup>43</sup> Anne Gombault, "Notre-Dame is Burning: Learning from the Crisis of a Superstar Religious Monument." *International Journal of Arts Management* 22, no 2 (2020): 84-85, accessed March 26, 2021. <https://umw.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/notre-dame-is-burning-learning-crisis-superstar/docview/2434442504/se-2?accountid=12299.84-85>

<sup>44</sup> "Notre-Dame fire: Hymns sung in the street as cathedral burns," BBC, accessed March 26, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-47941114>

<sup>45</sup> Adam Nossiter and Aurelien Breeden, "Fire Mauls Beloved Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris," *The New York Times*, April 15, 2019, accessed March 26, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/15/world/europe/notre-dame-fire.html>

president Macron now describes the cathedral as “the cathedral of all the French” and wants it speedily rebuilt.”<sup>46</sup> Retaining, or perhaps regaining the religious significance that was lost during the French Revolution, which can also be seen its position as the starting point in the annual, modern-day pilgrimage from Paris to Chartres Cathedral on Pentecost, as well as the architectural significance from Jandun and the other medieval writers, the cathedral has now also gained historical and cultural significance and the status as a beloved worldwide icon of France and Catholicism.<sup>47</sup>

In conclusion, reception theory, with its formation in the 1960s as art history moved away from its historical focuses and methods, focuses on how art interacts with the beholder and the beholder’s response to it, including over time. When looking at the Portal of the Last Judgement through this lens, the portal functions as a reminder to the beholder of the Last Judgement, a guide to behavior to receive salvation, and a metaphorical way for visitors to gain blessings to achieve salvation as they interact with it. While sources may be scarce for how medieval visitors saw this portal, when looking at both written sources by educated visitors as well as the actions conducted by educated and non-educated alike, one can see the evolution in how visitors respond to the cathedral and the iconography that it presents. Sociohistorical factors such as changes in religious attitudes and political beliefs brought about this evolution, effecting how visitors understood what the cathedral stands for-feudal France and royalty or republic France and all Frenchmen. In addition, the awe and reverence the cathedral’s architecture receives ebbs and flows through different generation’s recognition and assessment of its aesthetic qualities and

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<sup>46</sup> Nossiter and Breeden, “Mauls Beloved Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris,” paragraphs 5-6.

<sup>47</sup> Rousseau, T.K., “Pilgrimage, Spatial Interaction, and Memory at Three Marian Sites” (PhD diss., University of Denver, 2016), 104.

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historical significance, which mark whether or not the cathedral is worthy of praise, care, preservation, and restoration or if change and even destruction of the cathedral may be allowed to happen.

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