Prosthetic Nostalgia: History and Memory in "Art Deco Napier"

PAUL MOON

Abstract
The New Zealand city of Napier is a major international destination for visitors interested in art deco architecture and the 1930s era. This work explores how nostalgia for this period in Napier's history has evolved, and subsequently been commodified as part of the city's heritage. The consequence of this commodification is the increasing standardisation of nostalgic evocations of 1930s Napier, which now serve as prescriptive guidelines for visitors to the city. As a corollary of this, the notion of prosthetic nostalgia is examined. This is a nostalgic longing for a period or place that the individual experiencing it has no personal memory of, yet which has the same effect as nostalgic memories derived from actual experience. Although dismissed as imaginative and inaccurate forms of history, nostalgia generally warrants attention for the extent to which it shapes popular perceptions of the past, and how it interacts both with commercial imperatives and sociological forces.

Introduction

> [G]et into the spirit of Art Deco [in Napier], and surround yourself with the playful glamour of the age . . . and travel back in time to the age of the flapper.[1]
>
> *Dominion Post*, 20 January 2019.

The role of nostalgia in influencing popular understandings of the past has traditionally garnered comparatively little attention from historians. This is understandable to some extent. While "proper" history involves assembling and evaluating evidence, and building on existing research on a topic, period, or theme, according to the fairly established conventions of the discipline, nostalgia—often justifiably—is consigned to a lesser category. Part of the reason for this is that the elements of the past that nostalgia draws on are selected not to understand history so much as to sentimentalise it. It is neither systematic in its treatment of evidence, nor even pretends to aspire to accuracy or comprehensiveness. Nostalgia is thus easily dismissed as "suspect," "exclusionary," cliched, and even "a betrayal of history."[2] However, examining the nature and effects of nostalgia can be useful, particularly when it comes to the ways it reveals how the past can be interpreted, and the motives for those interpretations.

This article surveys some of the facets of nostalgia, with a particular focus on how it can contort perceptions of history through the largely uncritical reconstruction of the past to serve emotional, psychological, and, increasingly, commercial imperatives. The case study used to illustrate these aspects of nostalgia at work is Napier, in New Zealand: a coastal city which was severely damaged in an earthquake in 1931, and rebuilt in the art deco style that was prevalent at the time. In recent decades, there has been a growing industry promoting Napier as New Zealand's "art deco capital"—a largely commodified construct which has been heavily endowed with nostalgic tropes. The case-study material is based on a review of posters, advertising websites, and interviews with visitors to Napier. In the case of the interviews, the eight respondents live in New Zealand, but all of them are from locations outside Napier, and visited the city as tourists.

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A corollary to the role of nostalgia in shaping views of the past is the role of heritage. This article draws on the model of heritage devised by Elizabeth Pishief, in which there are three "tangible elements" that comprise the concept: person, performance, and place.[3] The culmination of these three elements produces the concept of heritage as a form of connection, which is investigated here in the context of the functions of heritage sites.

In addition to examining the various roles nostalgia plays in the way Napier and its history are depicted, this article introduces the notion of "prosthetic nostalgia," which is defined as a nostalgic longing for a period or place that the person experiencing the nostalgia has had no involvement with or direct connection to. Napier's art deco weekends are when examples of prosthetic nostalgia are particularly pronounced, with attendees in various ways claiming a nostalgic attachment to the "spirit" of the city in the 1930s, despite in most cases having been born after that decade. The role of prosthetic nostalgia is explored particularly for its function in fabricating historical narratives to give visitors to the city a sense of affinity with a period and place that is outside their own direct experience.

The Napier Earthquake

Although the Napier earthquake was named after the location where the most damage was caused, its effects were felt throughout the Hawkes Bay region. It took place on 3 February 1931, and measured 7.8 on the Richter scale. In addition to the widespread destruction of buildings brought about by the earthquake and subsequent fires, 256 lives were lost (161 in Napier, 93 in Hastings, 2 in Wairoa), and thousands of people were injured. Some areas of land were lifted up to two metres from their pre-quake height.[4] A month after the earthquake struck the region, a commission was appointed to oversee the reconstruction of Napier. Legislation was passed the following year to improve building standards,[5] and the subsequent designs for the city were based on the latest architectural trends, including moderne, Spanish mission, and art deco (all of which had shared elements). These styles dominated the city's built environment, and remain a significant feature of the region.[6]

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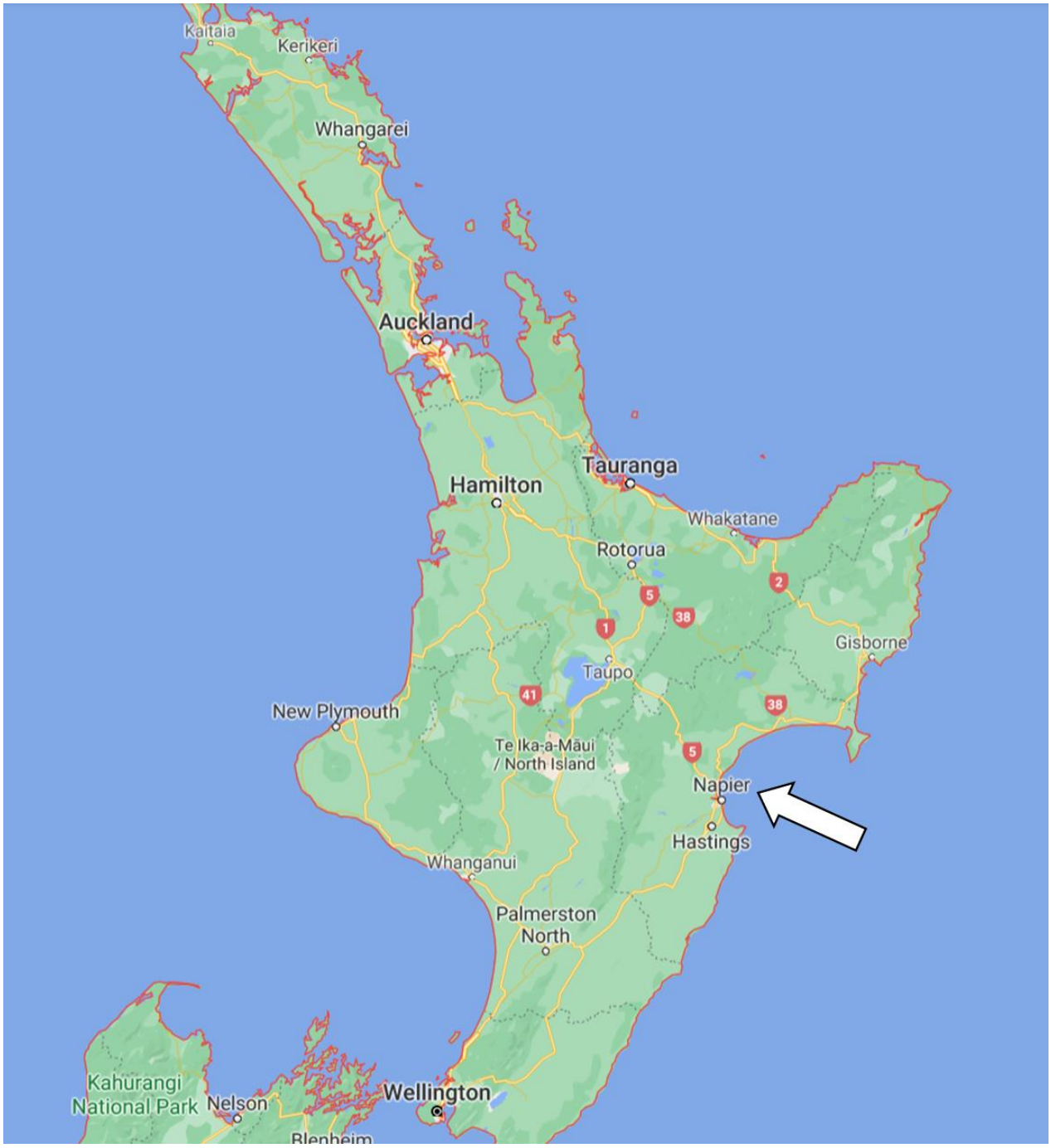

Figure 1. Napier, on the east coast of New Zealand's North Island.

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Figure 2. Postcard of Napier Before the 1931 Earthquake (Muir and Moodie studio, 1909. "Marine Parade, Napier, New Zealand." Photograph courtesy of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, PS.002154).

Figure 3. Napier Immediately Following the Earthquake, February 1931 (Les Wallace, photographer. (Photograph courtesy of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, O.005635).

Art Deco

Art deco is a design style that reached its height in the inter-war period. Its initial influence was seen in the decorative arts, but it soon spread to architecture, trains, ships, and everyday mass-produced objects.[7] It was overtly anti-traditional, with art deco designers consciously rejecting pre-existing styles for those that were new,[8] with an emphasis on "streamlined," simple shapes, with ornamental elements tending to be geometric and stylised, revealing a strong cubist

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influence.[9] Novel juxtapositions of colour, along with non-European influences, were also features of this style.[10]

Art Deco design became strongly associated in the 1920s and 1930s with what was known as the "jazz age," and encapsulated the attitudes and moods of the era, including "a craving for luxury and glamour . . . novelty, high style, and an escape from traditional religious, family, and social values." There was an unprecedented focus on youth culture, fun-seeking, liberation, and displays of affluence. The popular cultural priority was on "glorifying whatever expressed modernity and the new technologies."[11]

In Napier, the most prominent remainder (and reminder) of the art deco era is the city's architecture. In many ways, Napier's art deco buildings mimicked those in other countries in the 1930s, with a stress on geometric patterns, bold colours, and the use of innovative combinations of materials, including marble, glass, stainless steel, and reinforced concrete.[12] However, in addition to sunburst and ziggurat designs common in many countries at this time, some stylised Māori motifs appear in the designs of Napier's buildings.

Facets and Modalities of Nostalgia

The term "nostalgia" was devised in the seventeenth century by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer. It referred to what he identified as adverse psychological symptoms presented by Swiss mercenaries who had been absented from home for extended periods.[13] In Hofer's analysis, nostalgia was a type of mental disease which produced a longing for an absent homeland.[14] It was not until the nineteenth century, however, that the presumed neurological basis of nostalgia was displaced by a belief that it was primarily psychological, and manifested itself as a form of melancholy.[15]

In the twentieth century, nostalgia increasingly came to be seen as a widespread response to the social alienation brought about by industrialisation, urbanisation, mass culture, and modernism.[16] Peter Fritzsche has argued that nostalgia is essentially a trait of the modern world, because it depends "on the notion of historical process as the continual production of the new," which, in turn, generates a sense of loss in what the new is displacing.[17] Moreover, the functions that nostalgia served became much more diffuse in the twentieth century, ranging from being a symptom of societies in rapid transition, through to "a symbol of disaffection with current economic, social and political conditions, . . . a fashion trend, a subversive attitude toward a new order, a generalised mourning for an irrevocable past exploited through kitsch, [and] a coping mechanism."[18]

This proliferation of nostalgia's applications led to the phenomenon assuming various forms, partly in response to the type of circumstances in which it was deployed. First, there was the positive form of nostalgia, in which the history was "infused with imputations of past beauty, pleasure, joy, satisfaction, goodness, happiness, love."[19] The counterbalance to this was the negative form of nostalgia, involving mourning over the irredeemable loss of a partially imagined past. Finally, there was a mixed version of nostalgia, which was overtly positive, but inflected by the language of loss.[20]

In all these forms, nostalgia implicitly reflects a defective view of the present.[21] The past is often rendered in a utopian form (instead of the future being the object of utopian hope). And as for the present, that exists in contradiction to, rather than in continuity with, the past.[22] Part of the reason for the strength of this orientation to the past is that nostalgia locates or constructs

sources of "identity, agency, or community, that are felt to be lacking, blocked, subverted, or threatened in the present."[23] The uncertainty of the present thus compares unfavourably with the (imagined) certainty of the (fabricated) past.
Related to this is the idea that a nostalgic construction of the past serves as an antidote to the "eternal present" of an online, quasi-virtual world with instantaneous flows of information. In the modern era, the present is a notion that is being constantly updated and refreshed. Accompanying this is a correspondingly diminished sense of certainty about the nature and instability of the present. If change in so many areas of life is rapid or abrupt, then an era where the rates of change seem to have been slower has the potential to offer solace. Equally, though, a period of abrupt change in the past, when viewed through a nostalgic lens, can serve as a form of reassurance that change can be beneficial. Such is the malleability of nostalgia that it can comfortably serve two ostensibly contradictory purposes. This is a feature of the nostalgic recollections of Napier in the 1930s, which is variously depicted as a place of "old-fashioned" art deco aesthetics, and a location where dramatic change occurred (courtesy of a violent earthquake that led to the construction of a new architectural landscape), which is also now viewed nostalgically.

Either way, nostalgia can offer those who indulge in it a sense of stability in an unstable world. Sometimes this relationship between nostalgia and stability can be proportionate: the greater the instability in the present, the more dependence is placed on nostalgic representations of an idealised and partly invented period in the past as a form of psychological consolation, thus offering "continuity amid threats of discontinuity."[24] Tannock describes this function of nostalgia as a "structure of feeling," in which a positively evaluated past world is invoked in response to a deficient present world. The person indulging in nostalgia does so not just for some superficial entertainment purpose (although this is not precluded) but to "find/construct sources of identity, agency, or community, that are felt to be lacking, blocked, subverted, or threatened in the present."[25] This social function of nostalgia which exists to provide that structure of feeling does not necessarily rely on imagining the selected period or event in the past as universally happy, peaceful, stable, or free. Rather, it draws on nostalgic formations of the past to assist in "escaping or evading, in critiquing, or in mobilizing to overcome the present experience of loss of identity, lack of agency, or absence of community."[26] This can be summed up as a type of "refuge nostalgia," where the form and content of the nostalgic representations is determined by the sort of refuge being sought.

Pickering and Keightley suggest that an additional modality of nostalgia exists. Their starting point, which is common to other analyses, is that of nostalgia as a longing for whatever is lacking in modern society, and specifically for what is unattainable or irretrievable as a consequence of the progression of time. However, rather than dismiss the notion as some sort of general sensation of regret for something that never actually existed in the way that it is recalled, they suggest that nostalgia poses questions about how the past actively engages with the present and the future, and to that extent, it transcends rather than merely inflects views of modernity. Part of the reason for this is that the contemporary world leaves little if any room for dealing with loss, and so the sense of loss must be understood in the context of a view of the past that is constructed specifically to accommodate feelings of regret and loss at aspects of the pre-modernity era, thus leading to an "active dialogue between past and present."[27]

Nostalgic representations of art deco Napier fit ambiguously into this idea of nostalgia. While the 1930s architecture of the city can conjure up in some imaginations an entire way of living that has gone and cannot be retrieved (and thus is intrinsically nostalgic), by the same token,

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nostalgic interpretations of Napier epitomise in some ways modernity, particularly with the abrupt departure from previous aesthetic styles that the art deco movement represents, and its accompanying emphasis on newness.[28] This represents the essentially contradictory nature of nostalgia, which is "driven by utopian impulses—the desire for re-enchantment—as well as melancholic responses to disenchantment."[29]

Figure 4. Central Hotel, built 1931
(183–189 Emerson St, Napier. Ernest Williams, architect. Photograph by Paul Moon).

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Figure 5. Colenso Chambers, built 1932
(210–222 Emerson St, Napier. Ernest Williams, architect. Photograph by Paul Moon).

Figure 6. State Theatre, built 1933 (110 Dickens St, Napier. Walter Finch and Alexander Westerholm, architects. Photograph by Paul Moon).

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Figure 7. National Tobacco Company Building, built 1933
(1 Ossian St, Ahuriri, Napier. Louis Hay, architect. Photograph by Paul Moon).

Figure 8. Municipal Theatre, built 1937
(119 Tennyson St, Napier. John Watson, architect. Photograph by Paul Moon).

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Figure 9. Halsbury Chambers, built 1932
(74 Tennyson St, Napier. Louis Hay, architect. Photograph by Paul Moon).

Figure 10. Gaity Theatre, built 1931
(88 Dickens St, Napier. Walter Finch and Alexander Westerholm, architects. Photograph by Paul Moon).

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Figure 11. Ministry of Works Building, built 1938
(21–23 Browning St, Napier. John Mair, architect. Photograph by Paul Moon).

Allied to this aspect of nostalgia is Danziger's proposition that people in the modern world remember and value objects in their memories in different ways from previous generations.[30] Part of the reason for this is that the advent of mass media, and more recently the internet, which has enabled details of the past to be recalled without the need to commit those details to memory, and as well has provided unprecedented quantities of information about the past. In turn, this has altered the relationship between memory and self-identity.[31] The "stored memory"—which exists as an amorphous body of recollections—is subsumed by a "functional memory," which selects elements of these recollections and gives meaning to them.[32] With the internet in particular allowing for historical material to be instantly accessible, memories of the past are now more strongly oriented to creating connections with the present in terms of identity establishment, and less on knowledge of the past simply for its own sake.

What role, though, does historical evidence play in the construction of nostalgia? In general, nostalgia tends to be rooted more in sentimentalism than evidence, and what evidence is drawn on is usually done so selectively in order to support this sentimentalism. Thus, what would otherwise be regarded as eclectic historical items are given prominence. This stems from a desire to refashion history so as to enable it to serve extra-historical functions. The resulting narratives might lack most of the attributes associated with more "serious" histories, but their purpose in propping up nostalgic views of the past is vital.

However, while it can be easy to critique and even condemn nostalgic portrayals of the past, some caution is needed so that these analyses of the structure of nostalgia do not spill over into criticism of the creators or audiences of these nostalgic narratives.[33] Nostalgia often fulfils a narrative need for audiences that "conventional" histories do not to the same extent. And for all

their academic shortcomings, nostalgic histories are indisputably engaging for those who indulge in them.

Barney offers an additional view of the function of nostalgia, which departs from the idea that the imagined (and unattainable) past is primarily a refuge for the anxieties of the present.[34] Rather than considering the authenticity or accuracy of nostalgic depictions of the past, and the sense of sanctuary it offers, he stresses its role as "a complex discursive marker that contributes to a community's identity."[35] Nostalgia therefore necessarily conflates the past with the present in so far as a perception of the present requiring a corrective is the genesis of the forms of nostalgia that arise as a consequence. In addition, nostalgia can serve as a benchmark, measuring how far the present world has advanced from the memorialised nostalgic era. As much as visitors to Napier may revel in the "spirit" of the art deco age, they are visitors nonetheless, and eventually, they all return to the present. To paraphrase a cliché from the tourism industry, "nostalgia is a nice place to stay, but you wouldn't want to live there." Those experiencing a nostalgic longing for a historic period or place do so because at some level, they implicitly acknowledge that the era for which they are indulging in this sentiment is neither real nor inescapable. Therefore, part of the utility of nostalgia is precisely its temporary and unrealistic character, which makes elements of the nostalgic construct tolerable or even enjoyable where they would less likely be that way if they were a permanent fixture of the person's life. One obvious example of this in the case of Napier is the use of vintage cars from the 1930s as part of the nostalgic experience. While this may have some novelty as well as nostalgic value, the greater comfort, reliability and practicality to modern cars means that visitors to Napier seldom opt to use vintage cars as their main mode of transport once they have concluded their nostalgic experience in the city. Nostalgia thus becomes desirable precisely because it is fleeting.

The Role of Heritage in Napier's Built Environment

Heritage encompasses a broad range of concepts, practices and perspectives. In the context of this work, it is considered in relation to the way that Napier's built heritage has been preserved largely due to the commodification of nostalgia (which is the subject of the following section). Heritage practice has evolved from preserving whatever physical traces of the past happened to have survived into the present, to a more coordinated approach, in which (in this case) buildings become conserved as monuments to a past era. Exactly what is selected to be preserved and promoted is based on "sets of supposedly objective and obvious intrinsic criteria, such as age or beauty," which results in a purposeful preservation of physical traces of the past, according to the values and aesthetic judgments of "experts."[36]

However, heritage extends beyond the function of preserving artefacts of the past. Pishief identifies the intersection of person, performance, and place as being central to the concept of heritage, which in turn is contingent on particular historical concepts and perceptions of history based on the cultural values superimposed on those physical remnants of the past.[37] Heritage thus has a role in the politics of cultural identity.[38] It also draws on collective memory, social and cultural values, and forms part of a "need for people to physically connect with place as part of their production and negotiation of cultural identity."[39]

Heritage is far from a conceptual abstraction, though. As Gregory Ashworth observes, heritage cannot exist without a consumer, and therefore the authenticity, memory, and even history of the heritage are, to varying degrees, defined by the consumer.[40] Thus, built environments can be regarded as possessing some heritage value on the basis of consumer perceptions, and as the

heritage is shaped to meet the needs of the consumer, the perception of buildings having a heritage value is enhanced, almost in a cyclical relationship between artefact and consumer.

A distinction needs to be made at this juncture between history and heritage. Among much else, history is the documented record of the past, whereas heritage "is a contemporary commodity purposefully created to satisfy contemporary consumption." It is through the process of commodification that history becomes heritage. Heritage thus functions as "an industry in the sense of a modern activity, deliberately controlled and organized with the aim of producing a marketable product."[41]

Commodification of Nostalgia in Napier

Memory plays a central role in how cultures manufacture, negotiate, and challenge ideas about their origins and identity, and within this process, an aesthetic mode of nostalgia—in this case, involving art deco Napier—simultaneously establishes, legitimises, and promulgates specific constructions of the past, often to serve commercial imperatives. One of the side-effects of how such nostalgic memories are commodified is the emergence of "a consensual past, a core memory . . . for a stable and unified concept of" the particular place and time in history, which in turn leads to a sort of "nostalgia mood,"[42] which is cultivated for commercial purposes, but that relies on generalised and sometimes vague conceptions of history. Consequently, feelings about the past compete in the memory with facts for a sense of what the past was like.

An important aspect of contemporary expressions of nostalgia is the way in which these sentimental representations of the past intersect with commercial prospects. This sort of commodified nostalgia "divides the past into a finite series of static tableaux, arranged in accordance with accredited chronologies," and displaces deep, personal commitments to remembrance with a "shallow longing that increasingly . . . accepts its truth insofar as it links, or links up with, a valid chain of events and historical high points."[43] The irony in this process of converting nostalgia into a commodity is that through infusing monetary transactions into sentimental recollections of the past, there is a risk that these idealised constructions of history are erased in favour of the propagation of commercially influenced nostalgic images.[44] This is a crucial feature of contemporary nostalgia: the opportunity it presents for commodifying the past. As Behlmer and Leventhal observe, that "the nostalgic bent can lapse into cloying sentimentality is obvious. No less evident is the potential for commercializing the fond backward gaze."[45]

There is also a didactic element to this process. If nostalgia is choreographed for commercial purposes, as is the case in Napier to a considerable extent, then the constituent historical parts of that nostalgic representation tend to become both more uniform, and more widely shared. One effect of this is that the private forms of nostalgia experienced by individuals are largely replaced by a single, public form. And because of the role that advertising necessarily plays in this process, the nostalgia for Napier exists even before tourists arrive to experience it first-hand. Indeed, visiting locations such as Napier becomes a form of prophetic fulfilment of a nostalgia implanted by advertising and for which relatively uniform expectations are created.

To illustrate this tendency of collectivising nostalgic depictions of Napier for commercial purposes, twenty posters produced since 2001 advertising the city's art deco heritage were surveyed. Cumulatively, they are instructive in terms of how those marketing the city intend visitors to indulge in nostalgia for the place. Of the twenty posters, nineteen have people dressed in clothing dating from the 1930s, nineteen refer directly to Napier as an art deco location,

seventeen use art deco fonts, fifteen contain images of art deco architecture, eleven display modes of transport from the period, and eight depict scenes of people engaged in dances from the era. The motifs that appear consistently in these posters effectively instruct potential visitors to Napier in what elements make up the shared nostalgia for the city's art deco heritage, and what sort of activities can be undertaken to engage in this nostalgic sentiment. The primary motive for these posters being produced is commercial, and accordingly they rely on emphasising a shared perception of nostalgia to commodify the location.

Figure 12. A selection of posters advertising art deco Napier (from left to right, top row: The Art Deco Capital, Napier, Napier City Council, Illustrator: Stephen Fuller, www.stephenfuller.co.nz; Art Deco Weekend, Napier, 1997, Poster, Art Deco Trust, Napier, 1997, www.artdeconapier.com; Art Deco Festival 2019, Poster, Napier City Council, 2019. Bottom row: Art Deco Napier, Postcard, Rosie Louise and Terry Moyle, Contour Creative Studio; Art Deco Weekend, Napier, Napier City Council, Illustrator: Stephen Fuller, www.stephenfuller.co.nz; Art Deco Weekend, Napier, 2009, Poster, Art Deco Trust, Napier, 2009, www.artdeconapier.com).

Once visitors arrive in Napier, the commodification of nostalgia appears in other forms, including the sorts of souvenirs available. Through purchasing items that are replicas of products of the period, a two-layered nostalgic effect is produced. Firstly, the items represent

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the 1930s, and despite often being replicas, nonetheless serve as aids to prompt nostalgia for the period. Reproduction clothing, china, posters, jewellery, and figurines are among the items available to customers in Napier for this purpose. The second effect emerges over time, when the item in question has been possessed by the visitor, perhaps for several years, to the point where it serves as a nostalgic reminder of their visit to Napier, rather than just as evoking the art deco period.

Another aspect of the replica art deco items sold as part of Napier's nostalgia tourism is that they are inauthentic. It is a conceit that the seller and buyer engage in. Both are aware that the items are not from the 1930s, but only appear to be (and thus mimic to some extent the inauthenticity of the history they are recalling). The purpose of such items is varied. Purchasing a souvenir "concretizes or makes tangible what was otherwise only an intangible state. Its physical presence helps locate, define, and freeze in time a fleeting, transitory experience, and bring back into ordinary experience something of the quality of an extraordinary experience."[46] In this case, though, the experience of the visitor to Napier that is memorialised in the souvenir is compounded by the nostalgic sentiment the souvenir is intended to evoke.

One of the paradoxes that emerges in relation to the commodification of the nostalgic idea of art deco Napier is that the production of souvenirs which ostensibly commemorate or evoke the city in the 1930s inevitably also modify or even invent perceptions of the period. Thus, nostalgic recollections of art deco Napier are defined in the present, by explicitly drawing on reproduced imagery of the past.[47] Without the commercialisation of a nostalgic perception of Napier in the 1930s through the proliferation of souvenirs available to visitors to the city, the elements contributing to that perception among those visitors would necessarily be more diffuse. The commodification of nostalgia therefore serves to mark out the boundaries within which the "accepted" ideas of nostalgic representation reside. As a result, over time, these shared nostalgic representations become self-reinforcing. This can be seen in the trend of advertisements for each year's art deco weekends, with the new posters and website updates merely being variants of those used in the preceding years. Variation is consciously avoided in favour of the repetition of those themes that are central to the commodified nostalgia that is used to sell the place to visitors.

One of the effects of this commodified nostalgia surrounding Napier's art deco heritage is that the extent to which it has moved towards ubiquity in the popular imagination corresponds with the extent to which alternative nostalgic narratives have been excluded. For example, the nostalgic depictions of 1930s Napier promulgated by various commercial and local body organisations noticeably exclude references to the degree to which the Depression affected the region, and the ensuing unemployment, homelessness, and poverty in the era.[48] One of the reasons for this imbalance in nostalgic representations is that the business of promoting nostalgic tourism has to rely on a narrow and positive range of narratives in order to attract visitors to the city. Hence, the predominance of messages of aesthetic beauty, happiness, and joy[49]—all immersed in a narrative of art deco nostalgia that does not admit much in the way of counter-narratives. To some extent, this reflects Adam Muller's construct of nostalgia not so much as an antidote to everyday life, but more as "an erotic attachment to some aspect of our present selves."[50] Nostalgia is therefore inextricably bound, in one form or another, to the present, "as a heterogenous weave of past, future, and the durational now."[51]

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Notion of Prosthetic Nostalgia

One of the crucial issues in the nostalgic experience centred on art deco Napier is the fact that practically all the people who attend some of the main nostalgic events in the city—particularly the annual art deco weekend—have no direct memory of the location in the 1930s. This raises a central question about the nature of nostalgia in general, and how it applies in Napier in particular: is it possible to have nostalgic feelings for a past that one has not directly experienced? The traditional understandings of nostalgia would suggest not, because the longing for an idealised past that one recalls implicitly requires some lived experience of that past. However, more recent analyses of the nature of nostalgia tend to focus on its importance as a response to the rapid transitions and accompanying disaffection of modern life. The greater this disaffection, the greater the need to create an idealised alternative, in the form of a nostalgic destination that although irrevocable, nonetheless serves all the functions that nostalgia related to lived experiences do.[52]

Nostalgia for a place and time that an individual has no direct experience of is in some ways preferable, in that there is nothing from the individual's memory that can obstruct the idealisation of the nostalgic "memory." This is, in effect, a prosthetic nostalgia. It relies on the individual grafting onto their own nostalgic memories a similar nostalgic template, but one relying on information they might have heard, read, or seen, as opposed to experienced. In both real and prosthetic nostalgia, the process of historical manipulation and distortion are roughly the same, and the psychological purposes fulfilled are similar.

It is possible, however, that prosthetic nostalgia is slightly more open to the opportunity of conscious or unconscious manipulation. This is because the nostalgic memory is not "contaminated" by individual experience. The details of a nostalgic past are therefore able to be assembled based on whatever factors are deemed ideal by the person wanting to experience it. This is where the commodification of nostalgia intersects with the notion of prosthetic nostalgia. In Napier, if visual advertising is an indication of the market that is being targeted for this nostalgic experience, the age range is people in their 30s and 40s—those born at least four decades after the emergence of Napier as an art deco city. Napier's built landscape—in its art deco forms—literally forms a backdrop to this nostalgia experience, yet is simultaneously at the centre of focus by those agencies encouraging nostalgia tourism. The result, as Pavlakovič, Pozvek, and Trdina identify, is that the city "will no longer be perceived as space, but as place. Namely, place is to be understood as more than just a location or space; it is thought to be accomplished through 'affective attachments' in which people are emotionally bound to their material environment."[53] This combination of place and emotion is axiomatic to the functioning of prosthetic nostalgia.[54]

The process of visitors to Napier acquiring a sense of nostalgia for an era outside their direct personal experience is not just the product of those commodifying this nostalgia. The visitors themselves play a crucial role, as they are the ones who construct the nostalgic narrative, and link it to their own individual experiences as they interact with the city. This requires what Boym describes as a "reflective nostalgia," in which the visitor to the nostalgic location is confronted with ambiguities. In Napier's case, these ambiguities derive from an architecture fixed in one era being confronted, understood, and made nostalgic by people with no direct experience of that era. "Fragments of memory" are constructed by the visitor and space becomes temporalised.[55] Longing and affective remembering (of an event or era that has been learned about rather than experienced) works with, rather than in contrast to, critical reflection on that era, with the visitor to art deco Napier constantly negotiating not only between past and

present, but between direct and prosthetic memory. The nostalgic prosthetic memory may be what Bell labels as an invented version of the past,[56] but it is not necessarily any more or less invented than a nostalgic memory of an actual event or era that the person has experienced. This was a consistent theme among the visitors to Napier who were interviewed for this article.

In such cases, the nostalgic memory is phenomenological, rather than historical or social. All that is required is "an idea, image, affect, or sense of an imagined pastness to stand in for an original experience," with the consequence that "the object of this memory is more of an abstract idea rather than an experience."[57] Landsberg surveys such memories that do not relate to events through which a person has lived, and concludes that regardless of their evidentiary veracity, they nonetheless retain a personal, sensuous, and experiential dimension capable of shaping individual subjectivity "while existing as publicly accessible entities."[58]

Another way in which the commodification of nostalgia about art deco Napier and its contribution to prosthetic memories of the era can be understood is through what Landsberg has identified as the role of mass media and mass culture, which function as "technologies of memory." These technologies can override the distinction between individual and collective memory, and serve as a major factor in introducing modes of nostalgic knowledge that are not part of experiential memory.[59] Moreover, this process of mass media and mass culture adding unexperienced memories to people's sense of nostalgia is possible because the need for a sense of "pastness" overrides any requirement for adherence to an intricate set of interconnected historical facts.[60] Part of the reason for this is that while the sheer quantity of facts and the complexity of their arrangement can require a substantial effort to master, the demands to form a nostalgic memory are much less. This is especially so with prosthetic nostalgia, where even the supposedly corrective effects of a direct, experience memory are absent.

This discrepancy is evident, in a very general way, in the scale and format of printed materials about art deco Napier that are available to tourists. A survey of publications on this aspect of the city's history show that of the eight works reviewed, all were extensively illustrated, and comparatively short on historical detail. Being aimed at the tourist market, this is perhaps understandable, but such works also reflect that substantial historical information or analysis is less important in nostalgic prosthetic memory formation than the sort of information, and particularly imagery, that creates and reinforces a shared sense of "pastness" among visitors to Napier.

The role of technology in this process of creating a sense of nostalgic memory among those who have no direct experience of the era in question is even more pronounced, especially via the internet. In addition to websites for hotels, which share very similar references to art deco motifs and images of the city's architecture from the 1930s, there are specific websites that serve to direct nostalgic feelings into a form that can be grafted onto a collective memory of the era. The main one of these is the Art Deco Trust website. Its homepage links to a range of other pages, including one selling art-deco-styled merchandise, and others on tours, walks, and activities centred around the city's art deco heritage.[61] In practice, this website prescribes to a significant extent the type of imagery, activity, and response for those seeking a nostalgic connection with 1930s Napier. Although there will be a considerable variation in the degree to which this prosthetic nostalgic memory becomes a feature of visitors' perceptions of Napier, what is more relevant in the context of this work is the fact of it happening, and the means by which it is directed.

Evidence of the manifestation of a prosthetic nostalgic memory also appears in the language used by some visitors to Napier. Reference is frequently made, for example, to the "spirit" of art deco Napier which visitors claim to have indulged in while in the city, despite not having even been born in that era.[62] This is a temporary state of delusion, in which imagination and a constructed nostalgic narrative convince those who claim this affinity with what is, for them, an unknowable sense of what it was like living in Napier in the 1930s.[63] And even when the visitors' experience of being in "the spirit of the age" passes (once they have left the city), the *belief* that they had that experience remains. To that extent, the prosthetic nostalgic memory remains after its immediate function (of supporting an experience people have when visiting a location which requires some nostalgic imagination) has passed.

One of the most salient aspects of this prosthetic nostalgia is its selective and therefore exclusionary nature. Very little attention is paid in this case, for example, to pre-1931 Napier. That period serves almost as an indeterminate backdrop to the "art deco era." Similarly, the hapū and iwi history of the region is practically erased, with the exception of a few examples of stylised nominally Māori motifs that appear on the facades of some buildings.[64] Otherwise, the prosthetic memory of art deco Napier is confined to less than a decade in the city's history, and exists largely at the exclusion of the histories of the place both before and after that period.

Conclusion

Nostalgia is one of the multiplicity of perspectives that shape popular understandings and perceptions of the past. Its influence on interpretations of Napier's history in the 1930s reveals not only how widespread this view of the city's past is, but also the extent to which this nostalgic perspective has been commodified principally for encouraging visitors to the city. Part of this process of commodifying the way Napier's art deco era is popularly depicted is the encouragement given by local authorities and other promoters of the city to conjure an agreed-upon chronology and assemblage of those aspects of Napier's history in the 1930s that contribute to a longing by visitors for an irretrievable "golden age." Thus, instead of a broad range of individual impressions of this era, these commercialised constructs of the past constrict the diverse range of ideas about the city in the art deco period into a narrow band of sentimentalised vignettes of the era. The result is a largely uncritical reconstruction of the past that serves emotional, psychological, and commercial imperatives rather than conventional historical objectives.

The role of the internet and mass media more generally has substantially aided the formation of a collective nostalgic perception of 1930s Napier. These "technologies of memory," as Landsberg has referred to them, can contribute to the distinction between individual and collective memory being overridden, and are crucial in shaping the shared notion among visitors to the city of what art deco Napier "was like" in that era. This, in turn, leads to the perception among some visitors to Napier (a perception encouraged by the commodifying process applied to nostalgic representations of the city) that they are experiencing the "spirit" of the era, despite the fact that most of them have no direct personal memory of the 1930s. A collective nostalgic trope has been cultivated by promoters of the city's history, and has been grafted on to the memories of some of those visitors. And while those visitors acknowledge that this is not a personal, experienced memory, they still are prepared to accept that something of the "sentiment" of the era has been captured by their imagination, despite this impression being based on a largely invented version of the past.

Beyond the role that it plays as part of the commodification of history, and in the sense of experience through the manufacturing of prosthetic memories that it offers, nostalgia also has broader implications in popular perceptions of history. Its reliance on imagination, a sense of experience, and an interpretation of the past which does not depend on a detailed and systematic analysis of the evidence of the period in question, which makes the acquisition of nostalgic views of an era easy to acquire. This acquisition is made even simpler (and more standardised in terms of content) by the commodification process, which establishes parameters of what ought to be included in a collective nostalgic view of a place or period, and what can be omitted. This management of a shared nostalgia has implications for how society generally views particular historical periods, and how narratives can be constructed around those periods for commercial aim, but which subsequently have reach well beyond those purposes.

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