Battersea Power Station – a disturbing post-industrial landscape

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Abstract: This study offers an account of the aesthetic and cultural fascination with and significance of Battersea Power Station through subjective sensuous engagement and deliberate application of theoretical categories. The concept of the sublime is established as a fruitful mode of interpretation of the aesthetic effects of the structure. The current condition of the Battersea Power Station, however, reveals the dependency of the concept on its modern conception and the limitations of it as a mode of interpretation. Industrial ruins testify to the failed dreams of the Enlightenment project and are a source of nostalgia. I explore the ambiguous reactions to the contemporary post-industrial landscape and their links to early modernity. The study does not adopt a pessimistic approach but points to the potential of industrial ruins to provoke critical thought. This potential, it argues, is threatened by current practical strategies of handling industrial ruins. The last part of the study offers an evaluation of the preservation and re-use strategies, which are forming the future of Battersea Power Station and other post-industrial landscapes.

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Contents

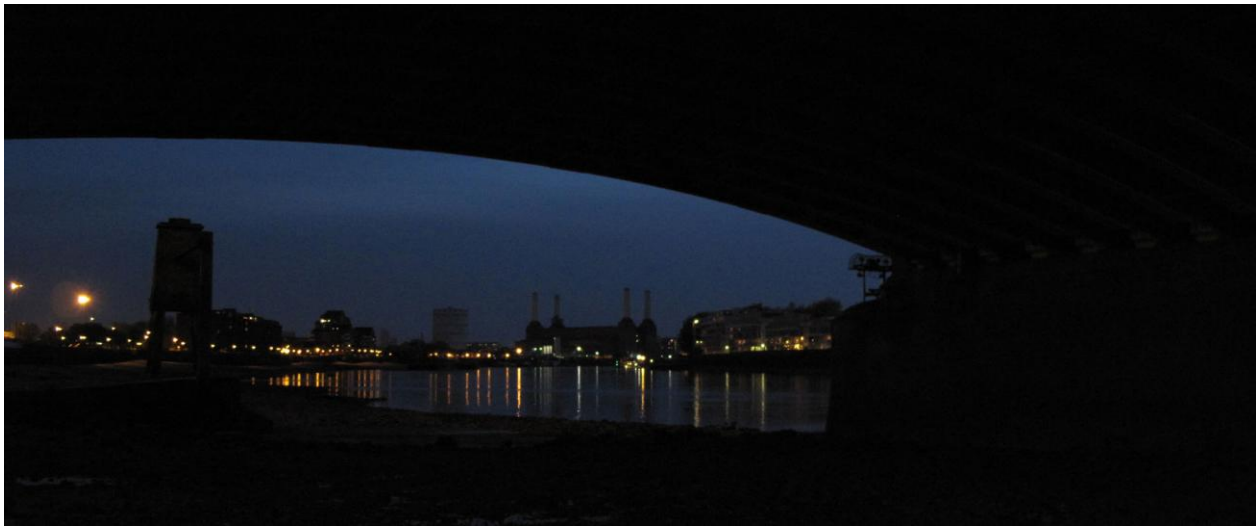
Introduction

While to most Londoners, Battersea Power Station is an essential component of the riverfront landscape, it was entirely new to me as a newcomer to the city. Having lived in London for a couple of months, I was deeply intrigued at the first sight I caught of the building, going south from Victoria on the top floor of the bus 44. Not knowing anything about Battersea Power Station at the time, it surprised and puzzled me to see a building of such magnitude apparently out of use and left to ruin for decades. What I saw was a massive brick building, broken up by a repetition of vertical lines, parallelled in 4 buff column-like chimneys. This overall shape, also known as 'the upturned table', was the impression left from my first encounter, as I glimpsed it through gaps in the surrounding landscape of buildings. I was particularly taken by how oddly incongruous it looked against these surroundings and the evocative mystery of its apparent abandonment. It looked at the same time obstinate and sad, magnificent and pitiful. One of the first photos that I snapped in a hurry as I went by on the bus was unsuccessful from any photographic criteria of composition but nonetheless managed to capture the impression of incongruity (figure 1). The contrast between Battersea Power Station and its surroundings is so great that the photo looks dreamlike and unreal as if the building has been digitally manipulated into the scene. The second time I saw Battersea Power Station, from the train, I had a much more unobstructed view of it, and I got so near that the scale both of the building and of the entire site overwhelmed me. I have since seen it from the train both mornings and nights on the stretch that so many commuters pass through every day, and each time I feel mesmerized by the sight. After the first encounters, I researched the building's history, and the initial visual impact was now complemented by mental images and visions conjured up of its past glory at the height of its production. The knowledge of its function and its history made it more meaningful to me and spurred my interest also in its cultural significance. On returning by train and on foot, the different modes of speed and the different times of day conveyed a new impression each time. At night time on foot, the mysterious quality of the building was enhanced, and I realised how iconic the form of the building is that its contour alone is so easily recognisable (figure 2). Despite my efforts I was frustrated each time in my attempts to get nearer to the building, and its inapproachability made it all the more fascinating.

Battersea Power Station had and continues to have a strong impression on me since I first saw it. It appeared unexpectedly and its contrast to the surrounding landscape provoked an ambiguous emotional and intellectual response in me. My study is motivated by and based on the experience of Battersea Power Station as a physical remnant of industrialism in London and I wish to link the physical remnants of Battersea Power Station to aesthetic, cultural and practical considerations. The analysis of Battersea Power Station will enter into a more general discussion of the effects of and attitudes to the contemporary industrial ruins which make up a significant part of the urban landscape of London. London is the capital of what was one of the world's leading industrial countries during the Industrial Revolution. Moreover, the city has undergone

Figure 1: From the top floor of bus 44: Glimpsing Battersea Power Station through a gap in the surrounding landscape.

Figure 2: At night under a bridge, approaching Battersea Power Station on foot from Vauxhall



rapid de-industrialisation with a general shift in employment to the service sector, which has greatly affected the physical landscape of the capital, yet leaving those curious material traces of a recent but past era. Despite the rampant wave of redevelopment that has swept through London in recent years, one can thus still come across urban landscapes that have resisted attempts at transformation. Industrial structures which once had a function but that have been rendered redundant by technological progress and economical change have a certain quality about them that stimulate the imagination. My interest in urban derelict industrial landscapes originates in part from my own experiences of encountering these evocative spaces and in part from my observations of the attention that they have been given both in the art world and in the realm of urban planning.

The nature of the study requires the application of a range of disciplines such as geography, urban studies, architecture, arts, history and archaeology. Historical considerations are of obvious importance, but my interest lies within the contemporary city, and I aim not to record events of the past but their significance in the present-day context. I employ a mix of disciplines, of analytical approaches and of data sources. My fieldwork study provides the point of departure but the discussion will be mostly conceptually focused. I rely on my own subjective perceptions and experiences to engage theoretically with the aesthetic effect of the ruin of Battersea Power Station. The focus on bodily experiences derives from the acknowledgement of the importance of the spatial aspect to architecture – ”an art that while perceived visually, [is] experienced in space” and that relies on “a shifting ”point of view” determined by a moving body” (Vidler 2000:3). Accordingly, I consider the different impressions I received on approaching the building in multiple modes of mobility and at multiple speeds. I shall supplement my direct experience of Battersea Power Station with readings of mediated representations and discourses surrounding the site in the conviction that individual reactions and representations reflect cultural attitudes.

The analysis is divided into three parts: The aesthetic significance, the cultural significance and the practical challenge of Battersea Power Station. In the **first part**, drawing on theory about the sublime and more specifically on the technological sublime, I will delve into the emotional and sensual response to the evocative landscape of Battersea Power Station. I thus want to explore the direct *aesthetic effect* of this industrial landscape on the contemporary, urban onlooker. Furthermore, the fact that Battersea Power Station has become a ruin has implications for the theoretical interpretation of it, and in the **second part** I therefore explore its links to the past and the collective experience and *cultural significance* of Battersea Power Station. The Industrial Revolution was a time of rapid change in all aspects of life, and its ruins can be said to be the physical manifestation of modernity. Its material remnants therefore conjure up visions of hope, promises and progress, but the state that many industrial structures have been left in by de-industrialisation seems to reflect the shattered hopes from this past era. In the **third part** I examine the *practical problem* of Battersea Power Station and link it to the general challenge posed by industrial buildings

that have become redundant. The chosen strategies are often adaptive reuse or preservation. These kinds of appropriation raise complex issues of dealing with historic remnants, which I shall discuss in the last paragraphs. The three aspects, the aesthetic, the cultural and the practical are interconnected and therefore incorporated throughout the analysis and brought together in the conclusion.

Directly below, I shall firstly provide a brief introduction to the historical background of Battersea Power Station.

The historical background of Battersea Power Station

In the 1920s, electricity was provided to various parts of the capital by no less than ten municipal electricity power companies. The lack of regulation and the confusing variety of incompatible standards created a need to rationalise the industry, and in response to an Act of Parliament in 1925, the companies were amalgamated into the London joint electricity committee (Brown & Reed, 2003). Battersea Power Station was built as a superstation and at the height of its capacity it constituted the 3rd largest power station in the UK and provided 20 % of London's total electricity supplies (Battersea Power Station Community Group, n/d). Its scale was unprecedented with each chimney of 546 tons measuring 181 feet and rising 337 feet above ground level (The architects' Journal, 1933:566-567). The power station introduced many advanced technical features that addressed environmental concerns such as the reduction of sulphur emissions. It was declared that:

> ”The company shall in the construction and use of the said generating station take the best known precautions for the consumption of smoke and for preventing as far as reasonably practicable the evolution of oxides of sulphur, and generally for preventing any nuisance arising from the generating station or from any operations thereat” (Berry & Dean, 1935)

Battersea Power Station is situated on a 15 acre site at the South Bank of the river Thames. The erection of the building was commenced in 1929 with S.L. Pearce as engineer and completed in two sections: Battersea 'A', the Western half, from 1929 to 1935 with J Theo Halliday as chief architect and Battersea 'B', the Eastern half, from 1944 to 1955 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (Brown & Reed, 2003). Curiously then, the architect that is chiefly associated with the design of Battersea Power Station, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, was hired at a relatively late stage in the process and was not the inventor of the iconic form known as ”the upturned table”. In fact he disliked this configuration but was unable at the late stage to change it. Instead, he remodeled the chimneys into classical columns with vertical fluting and tiered bases (Stamp, 2000:180). He was also responsible for the exterior brickwork to the steel girder frame. The interior art deco design was executed by Halliday. The design, which was unusually lavish for a functional building, was controversial at the time but later came to inspire other power station designs (Whittick, 1974:255).

Battersea Power Station was fully decommissioned in 1983 (the western half already in 1974). As one of the very few inter-war electricity-generating buildings it was declared a heritage site in 1980 and awarded Grade II listed status representing "the apogee of the genre" (English Heritage, 2007:10). There has been a series of proposals for transformation during the last two and a half decades which have all failed. The building's condition is currently described as "very bad" on English Heritage's Buildings at Risk register (English Heritage, n/d) and in 2004 it was added to the World Monuments Fund watch list of 100 most endangered sites (World Monuments Fund, 2004). Battersea Power Station has remained an important landmark both visually and in the minds of Londoners. It has had numerous cultural appearances – most famously in 1977 on the album cover of Pink Floyd's *Animals*. An article from 1984 titled "Temple of Power" conveys the positive cultural perception of the power station:

> There is simply nothing else like it. During its 50 years of working life Battersea Power Station has been recognized as a supreme example of that particular, *sublime* beauty that is created when an unlikely industrial function is mysteriously elevated into a work of art (added emphasis) (Blueprint, 1984:165)

On the basis of my field work and the archival material, I have chosen 'the sublime' to provide my conceptual groundwork and point of departure for the theorisation of the aesthetic significance of Battersea Power Station. Before applying it to my analysis, I shall explore the lineage of the concept of the sublime, tracing it from its classical roots to the more contemporary and less developed variation of the 'technological sublime' which links with the industrial aesthetics.

The aesthetic significance of industrial landscapes

The conceptual development of 'the sublime'

The early conception

The concept of the sublime has a long tradition reaching back to classical antiquity and the discipline of rhetorics. As a category of modern aesthetics, however, the decisive shift was formulated by British thinkers in the 18th century such as Shaftesbury, Addison, Burke and Hume. The political philosopher Edmund Burke, who famously defined the sublime in his work: *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756), introduced the influential distinction between the sublime and the beautiful (Burke, 1958). According to Burke, the sublime is radically opposed to the beautiful and inspires more intense feelings to move and even unsettle the observer. The beautiful merely pleases while the sublime is "productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" he writes (Burke, 1958:39). A sense of terror was therefore central to his thesis on the sublime "Indeed terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently the ruling principle of the sublime" (Burke, 1958:58). According to Burke,

terrible objects can produce 'delightful horror' (Burke, 1958:73) – an unequalled overwhelming of the senses that is at the same time pleasurable so long as there is no actual threat to the onlooker. By contrast, the beautiful relies on properties such as smallness, delicacy and smoothness (Burke, 1958:117). His distinction implies a prioritisation, which was widely adopted, and the sublime came to be favoured as a more refined mode of experience than that of beauty at the onset of the Romantic era. British landscape painting, with a notable contribution by the English romantic painter J.M.W. Turner, conveyed the shift in aesthetic sensibility (Twitchell, 1983:35). The romantics strived to retrieve great emotional agitation from sublime landscapes, and the sublime experience was chiefly associated with the obscure powers of nature and its overwhelming natural scenes. In Burke's theory, however, and in the paintings of Turner, sublime qualities were also increasingly attributed to works of architecture and industrial structures whereby the concept was directed towards the powers of human artifacts.

In his writings on aesthetics in the late eighteenth century, Kant drew on the Burkean sublime but shifted the focus from physiological effects produced by a sublime object to the mechanisms, rather, in the mind of the observer. More precisely, sublimity in his theory became linked to the mental capacity of the subject rather than to any formal qualities of the object (Nye, 1994:8). Kant was central to the modern philosophical conception of aesthetics and the centrality of the viewer's perception. The direct experience of the sublime has the effect of humbling the onlooker in the presence of immense power and is essentially a religious experience, argues the historical scholar David Nye (1994:xiii). In an increasingly desacralized world, however, the eighteenth-century sublime was detached from religion and reinvented as a sensibility connected to the Enlightenment project (Nye, 1994:5). Kant's secular formulation of the sublime was based on human Reason: When confronted with an object of such immense scale that it overpowers the senses, the anxiety experienced by the viewer is caused by the initial inability to process the sensory impressions in their totality:

> Das Gefühl des Erhabenen ist also ein Gefühl der Unlust aus der Unangemessenheit der Einbildungskraft in der ästhetischen Größenschätzung zu der Schätzung durch die Vernunft und eine dabei zugleigh erweckte Lust aus der Ubereinstimmung eben dieses Urtheils der Ünangemessenheit des grössten sinnlichen Vermögens mit Vernunftideen sofern die Bestrebung zu denselben doch für uns Gesetz ist[1] (Kant in Twitchell, 1983:4).

The pleasure that is nonetheless derived from the sublime experience thus indicates the ultimate triumph of the faculty of the mind, which demonstrates the superiority of Man's supersensible powers over his sensory faculties (Twitchell, 1983:4). This is what Kant calls the mathematical sublime. The dynamical sublime is

[1] Translation by James Creed Meredith: "The feeling of the sublime is, therefore, at once a feeling of displeasure, arising from the inadequacy of the imagination in the aesthetic estimation of magnitude to attain to its estimation by reason, and a simultaneously awakened pleasure, arising from this very judgment of the inadequacy of the greatest faculty of sense being in accord with ideas of reason, in so far as the effort to attain to these is for us a law" (Twitchell, 1983:4).

linked to the terror of powerful natural objects capable of destruction, and the pleasure derives yet again from Reason's capability to control our sensible faculties (Crawford, 2001:59).

The technological sublime

Burke set out to delimit the universal and objective architectural features that instill feelings of awe and sublimity in the onlooker such as obscurity, vastness, repetition and uniformity (Burke, 1958:57-90). His writing had both theoretical and practical impact. Application of the Burkean sublime to institutions involved the intentional use of sublime qualities to awe the public and demonstrate power relations, an approach that the French architect Étienne-Louis Boullé was one of the first to explore (Vidler, 1992:169). The new architecture associated with industry was also subject to the modern aesthetic of sublimity. In England, the landscape of Victorian cities was increasingly marked by industrial structures that were not built to please the eye but to serve powerful interests, appearing as "a permanent harangue to the public" (Taylor in Nye 1994:xix). In the course of industrialization, however, and as hopes and visions were attached to industry, increasing attention was paid to the visual quality of large-scale industrial structures. Power stations were a major technological breakthrough and although they were initially modest in scale and unimpressive in style, the growing demand and the ability to create larger turbo alternators along with the creation of joint electricity authorities resulted in so-called 'super stations' (Stratton & Trinder, 1997:63). These structures were so obtrusive to the urban landscape that public demands were put forward in the twenties to improve their visual aspect (Whittick, 1974:254). In the case of Battersea Power Station, which is a prominent example of a super station, its proposed central placing released a public outcry. The Times and The Architects' Journal lamented "a civilisation condemned to live under a pall of smoke and in the shadow of ugly buildings of its own devising" (Croad, 2003:73) and The Architect & Building News held that "To set the station down beside Battersea Park, one of the few beautiful and leafy spots in a poor and unfavoured neighbourhood, seems to us a piece of appalling, if unintentional wickedness" (The Architect & Building News, 1929:570). The Electricity Authority, who would not budge on the issue of location, decided to engage Sir Giles Gilbert Scott as a renowned architect to satisfy the public demand for visual appeal (Whittick, 1974:254). At the time, Scott was already famous for designing the red telephone box and Liverpool cathedral. The structures of the industrial revolution were thus products both of utilitarian and architectural concerns and expressed new possibilities both technologically and aesthetically. Although for the most part not built according to traditional aesthetic principles, these structures tended to possess sublime qualities that came to be appreciated aesthetically as society became increasingly dependent on technological inventions.

Technological advances were thus accompanied by changes in aesthetic sensibilities, and new aesthetic categories emerged from the late nineteenth century associated with technology and engineering. The technological sublime constitutes its own category, distinct in several ways from earlier conceptualisations of

the sublime and with its own lineage in antiquity in the writings of Statius and Pliny (Nye, 1994:xviii). The expression *the technological sublime,* however, was coined by an American scholar, Leo Marx, in *The Machine in the Garden* where he notes the dramatic changes to the American landscape and cultural perception of self by the introduction of the machine (Marx, 1964). The new technology, whether it was heralded or decried, came to be a subject for the arts, notably in the industrial landscape paintings of Karl Grossberg, Georg Scholz and Oskar Nerlinger (Huyssen, 1988:68). The French impressionists were also inspired by industrial scenes and the particular colours produced by industrial pollution. Monet, who lived in London for a number of years, famously depicted the Waterloo Bridge in hazy sunsets. In the early part of the twentieth century, works of engineering were increasingly regarded also as works of art in themselves and purpose was given aesthetic significance. This was an important shift from earlier conceptions of aesthetics: ”Kant had specifically excluded purpose from the category of the aesthetic” (…) ”What Kant had claimed lay outside art, its purpose, was now indeed its very subject´” (Forty, 2000:181;183). The Modern Movement was founded on this new conception of a synthesis between purposeful structures and aesthetic appeal. Battersea Power Station was celebrated as ”an important English contribution to a harmonizing of engineering structure and architectural expression” and is thus an example of the new close collaboration between architects and engineers (The Architect & Building News, 1933:32-37). The field of engineering rapidly gained ground during the nineteenth and twentieth century, exploiting the discoveries of science and providing solutions to various social problems. The advent of electricity was a source of great optimism and was ”invoked as the panacea for every social ill and the key to a whole range of social and personal transformations that promised to lighten the toil of workers and housewives…” (Nye, 1994:143). Technical innovations were given social significance and imbued with moral values. Optimism reached its apotheosis in the World Exhibitions, the first of which was held in London in 1851 and under the lofty title: *The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations* (Nye, 1994:205). The physical framework for the exhibition was the Crystal Palace, which combined engineering innovation with architectural sophistication. Modern architecture was marked by this synthesis and by the overall idea of continuous progress.

Taking it one step further: The supremacy of human artifice over nature

Since the early conceptions of the sublime, Burke extended the concept of the sublime to include non-natural wonders, and Kant attributed the emotional effect to the triumph of Reason over sentiency in our recognition of the world. In the course of industrialisation, and as technological innovation progressed, the sublime was invoked in an ideological context and largely came to signify the triumph over nature. The later world’s fairs succeeding the Great Depression focused purely on the control over and taming of nature (Nye, 1994:199). As Nye suggests, the technological sublime entails a different kind of Reason than that of Kant’s theory. With the man-made sublime, ”the sublime object itself is a manifestation of reason” and specifically the superior mental capacity of engineers and technicians (Nye:60). It is therefore not the triumph of any

human being's innate Reason but rather certain people's power over nature and over others to instill in them sublime feelings and thereby generate respect for the builders. The superhuman dimension is apparent in much architecture of industry. In the vast scale of these structures, the human figure as a referent is lost. In the earlier, humanist style, even cathedrals had:

> doorways and other features which, being designed in relation to the human figure, served as a reminder of their connection with human activities. One of the most important effects aesthetically of the industrial revolution was the introduction into the landscape of structures that had nothing to do with the human scale, but reflected rather the superhuman nature of the new industrial activities (Richards, 1968:20).

This superhuman nature of industry was particularly apparent in the power station whose massive scale has no visible human referent and whose technologically advanced machinery required almost no manpower to function, which generated public awe and incomprehension (Nye 1994:134). Thus, the power stations of the twentieth century became icons of the technological sublime and symbols of modernity and the future (Ibid). Below I shall discuss the accuracy of such perceptions in relation to Battersea Power Station, more specifically the degree to which Battersea Power Station is representative of modernist architecture and how well the concept of the sublime captures the aesthetic effect of the building.

Evaluation of the aesthetic perception of Battersea Power Station

The perception of Battersea Power Station as a modern structure

Battersea Power station was famous even before its completion, and thus already by the time of completion of Battersea A, "it had become a conspicuous landmark of modern architecture" (Stamp, 2000:181). A survey carried out by the London Evening Standard shortly after the completion of the station reported that the readers had voted it "the most beautiful modern building in London" (Whittick, 1974:255). The team constituted by engineers and architects exemplified the new synthesis between the two disciplines, and the building was celebrated for its "unique combination of the functional with the beautiful" (the Observer, 1950) – a formulation that clearly reflects ideals of twentieth-century aesthetics. Sir Giles Gilbert Scott shared with many of his contemporaries "an interest in the sublime grandeur of the monuments of the ancient world, whose geometrical purity made them somehow resonant with the modern industrial age" (Stamp, 2000:185). This interest is reflected in the configuration of the chimneys that echo the majestic columns of classical antiquity. In his design of Battersea Power Station, contrary to earlier works, he was also inspired by the modernists and particularly by modern American architecture (Observer, 1950:17). He was not, however, an adherent of the Modern Movement, whom he criticized for its inordinate austerity. Instead he stroke a balance between the competing idioms of his time by applying traditional styles and modern materials and

forms. In his inaugural address at Bankside, he stated that ”I hold no brief either for the extreme diehard Traditionalist or the extreme Modernist and it seems to me idle to compare styles and say that one is better than another” (Scott in Stamp, 2000:179). At closer inspection, many features of Battersea Power Station are distinctly not modern. For instance, Scott did not employ steel or glass; in fact the entire exterior of the building is made out of brick, covering up the steel materials so beloved by the modernists. Furthermore, he made quite extensive use of ornaments in the brickwork. He was critical of the Modern Movement's rejection of all ornaments which he approved of if ”sparse and well placed” (Scott in Stamp, 2000:183). Also, Scott's earlier work in ecclesiastical architecture is reflected in the brick-cathedral style of the building, which has often been referred to as ”the temple of power” (Blueprint, 1984).There exists therefore a dissonance between the architect's own vision, which was far from driven exclusively by the modernist idioms of his time, and the general public perception of Battersea Power Station as the epitome of modernity and industrial architecture. The actual initial vision of the architects and the reality of their design, however, are less relevant to the subjective experiences of the building which has from its onset been the object of imaginative ideas:

> I have always assumed that the far side of this Power Station, which one cannot see from the railway, is one great wall of glass, flooding with light the vast solemn masses of turbines within. Someone tells me it is not so; but I shall make no further enquiries. I like in my old age to keep my ideals (Charles Herbert Reilly in The Architects Journal, 1934:65).

People tend to project ideas onto the structure, and these ideas are often framed in the language of modernity and the sublime. These concepts are therefore relevant to the theorisation of Battersea Power Station despite their limitations.

Limitations to the technological sublime as a mode of interpretation

The power station provided new aesthetic possibilities in its imposing scale and serene automated functioning (Nye 1994:133). Archival material indicates that the concept of the sublime was attributed to Battersea Power Station from an early stage. Although modern aesthetics is based on subjective perception, and no building therefore can guarantee a sublime experience, as Vidler notes (1992:11), there are nonetheless certain features that are more often found to provoke feelings suggestive of the sublime. The vastness of Battersea Power Station and the repetition of vertical lines and windows and the imposingly massive and symmetrical base all follow the school book example of sublime architecture. The entrance is not prominently visible, which leaves no referent of human scale. The station was considered an expression of modern technology and the hopes and ideals connected to it. As such it was built to impress, and sublime qualities inspired by classical as well as ecclesiastical architecture were consciously integrated in the design from the outset.

The category of the sublime is not universal and unchanging, however, but is rather a product of social dynamics and therefore susceptible to social change. As Nye notes: ”For Burke and Kant the sublime was a constant, but history has shown that it seeks new objects. Yesterday’s technological wonder is today’s banality” (Nye, 1994:237). Battersea Power Station was an impressive feat of technology and engineering in its time but today it no longer has the technological novelty to impress the public. One may ask if Battersea Power Station can still be considered sublime, having lost its power and technological significance. The issue of whether the sublime is a fruitful mode of interpretation therefore rests on the question of whether the sublime is a purely aesthetical concept or if it is dependent on the functional value of its object or on ideals projected onto it. Either way, one must consider the historicity of the concept in order to employ it critically.

One must also bear in mind that the concept of the technological sublime is coined in an American context and that it is not an acultural concept but that interpretations differ in different cultural settings. In America in the beginning of the twentieth century, the technological sublime was enthusiastically embraced by the public who developed a penchant for spectacular technology as part of a nascent nationalism (Nye, 1994:xiii). New technology was celebrated as a step of progress of humankind and particularly of Americans. It was a collective experience that united people and came to make up a significant part of the American national identity. The technological sublime in America was thus linked to collective ideals and a democratic attitude. Contrarily, in Europe, the new sublime was a less unequivocally positive experience and carried more philosophical weight (Nye, 1994:43). The technological sublime in England was a solitary experience reminiscent of hierarchical relations and an effect used intentionally by the powerful to cement the social division between the powerful and the powerless (Nye, 1994:285). Technology therefore had a more pronounced and problematic social dimension than in America where architectural change was largely a response to economic change (Guillén, 2006:9). Sentiments towards factories in industrial England were less favourable and there was a more critical attitude towards the social consequences of industry. Even today, industrial buildings in the USA are well-preserved compared to in Britain (Palmer & Neaverson, 1998:11). Because of different technical systems, factories in England as opposed to in America were concentrated in cities, which created distinctly urban industrial landscapes that were more difficult to reconcile with for urban residents (Nye, 1994:110). The technological sublime thus carries more ambiguous connotations in Britain, retaining the roots from German Romantics and its criticism of the excesses of modernity.

The concept of the sublime and its particular relation to modernist architecture suffers from its close affinity to modern ideas. For the same reason, it suffers from the modernist focus on the visual. Theorists of aesthetics have tried to include sensual stimuli besides the visual – for instance exploring the possibility of an aural sublime – but have had difficulties theorising it (Twitchell, 1983:16). Burke sought to include movement, noise, smell and touch to the sensuous aspects of his theory but stressed that these were weaker in their effect (Burke, 1958:85). Despite theoretical attempts, then, the sublime is still overwhelmingly

theorised from a visual standpoint. The ruinous state of Battersea Power Station and other industrial structures further problematises this point as in the ruin the senses are often more intensely engaged than in ordered space: The aural experience is alien due to the absence of everyday sounds and the pronounced heightening of the sounds that disturb the silence. Decay and abandonment intensify the smells that are suppressed or eliminated elsewhere and create either a damp or a dusty air that gives an unfamiliar sensation to an urban intruder.

To briefly summarize, the technological sublime in its modern conception was closely bound up with the innovative technological functions of industrial structures and the hope invested in them. It was particularly prevalent in the American context of technological optimism. Sublimity was considered a universal category in modernist aesthetic, which was chiefly focused on the visual. These limitations to the concept of the sublime must be taken into consideration, and I argue that the concept needs to be developed and complemented in order to engage in a productive way with the aesthetics of the more complex contemporary urban landscapes. The technological sublime is too closely linked to its modern conception and the claim to universal validity to fully capture the particular aesthetics of late or post-industrial society. It is not, however, necessary to turn to postmodernist theories as modernism itself contains the germ of a reflective, critical attitude. It is my contention that the particular British technological sublime reflects the full range of the modern aesthetics of space and that it links to a British collective memory in a complex way. In the following paragraphs about the cultural significance of Battersea Power Station, I therefore continue working with the aesthetic category of the sublime, aware of its limitations and aiming to include variations on it.

Battersea Power Station was a popular visual success from early on, as the surveys from around the time of its completion demonstrate, and public attention did not decrease when the power station was decommissioned in 1983. Despite the initial public resistance against its prominent placing and despite the vast space it still takes up and its current uselessness and neglect, its popularity continues, and it has attained the status of an icon and a national symbol. I shall evaluate Battersea Power Station's cultural impact from the present-day perspective, drawing on my own visit to the station and on cultural representation of it.

The cultural significance of industrial ruins

The haunting landscape of Battersea Power Station

I was given an appointment to the site and the building itself on the 19th of August, incidentally the second sunniest day of the summer. As by then I had seen so many pictures of the building, I was not in fact expecting much from the sight of the exterior of the building. However, on approaching it from Battersea

Park Road, I found myself seized by strong emotional excitement and stopped to admire the building. I felt oddly touched and privileged by the majestic sight and surprised at how my fascination with this particular industrial landscape remains undiminished.

Sarah Banham from Treasury Holdings – the property company that manages the development project – greeted me and took me around the site. That day, preparations were in progress for the *red bull x fighter* – an international freestyle motocross competition and one of the largest events ever in the building, which was to take place a couple of weeks later. Sarah Banham expressed a concern to involve the local community in the project of rebuilding Battersea Power Station, and large events such as the upcoming one raise public awareness about the building, she explained, and confirm its cultural significance. Also, by promoting it to foreign investors jobs are created, which then spill back into the local community.

After having put on safety helmets and boots, we were taken by car to the building. It appeared more colossal the closer we approached the structure, until it was towering over us just yards away. I noticed a large hole in the base of the building, supposedly from the initial removal of the machinery.

We entered Battersea A through The directors' entrance, which was framed by scaffolding and whose famous bronze doors depicting Energy and Power as muscular males in dynamic poses had been removed (I later saw them placed in the head office of Treasury Holdings). Inside in the hallway, I first noticed the directors' plaque and the emblem embedded in the floor tiles (Figure 3). Although I was aware from archival material of the derelict condition of the building, I was nevertheless shocked to see how dilapidated it really was. The symbols of authority seemed almost comical in this present, neglected state and unceremonious surroundings, unheeded by the workers and the other visitors passing in and out of the building.

It was cool inside despite the warm temperatures outside. We walked up the stairs, passing the beautiful but derelict art deco lift. A fluorescent tube lamp was flickering eerily. I noticed that the walls were crumbling and there was rubble on the steps. An empty window frame was filled in with a piece of cloth held in place by a long stick kept in press between the window frame and the wall. It struck me as such a primitive, makeshift solution and so inadequate in this setting of acute overall disrepair.

As I walked onto some of the scaffolding, a view of numerous vertical and horizontal steel girders stretching the length of the building gave me a sense of the Burkean sublime with their repetition and expanse and the strength of the material, which made me feel small and vulnerable (figure 4).

In the control room, a team were making preparations and filming for the event. The darkness and the smoke from smoke machines created a murky and rather evocative atmosphere (figure 5). At first only the hazy contours of the machinery were discernible. It took a couple of moments before my eyes had adjusted and I could make out the elaborate art deco embellishment and marble lined walls. Sarah Banham worried about

Figure 3: Director's entrance: Director's plaque – symbols of authority

Figure 5: Machinery and marble walls in Control Room A

Figure 4 (below): A view of steel girders in Battersea A

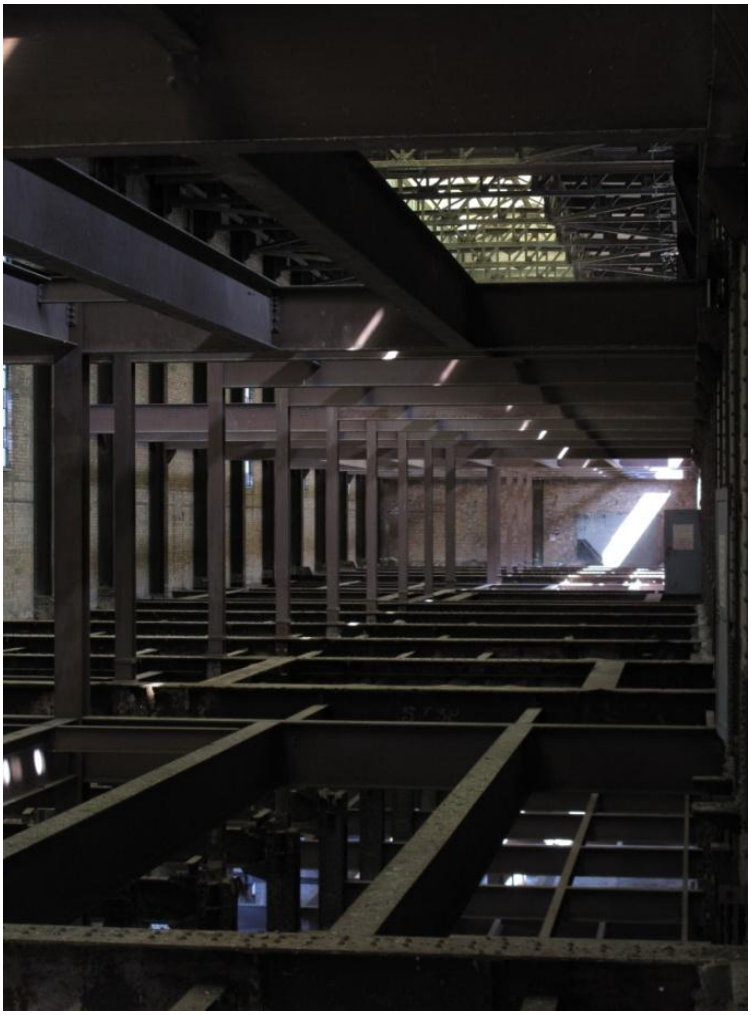


Figure 6 (below): A view from the southwest chimney.

potential damage to the walls and machinery and made a call to ascertain the harmlessness of the artificial smoke. English Heritage supervises everything very closely, she explained to me.

From the dark control room we walked out into the roofless middle of the structure, the old boiler house, where the sunlight was glaring. The transition made me squint and I felt overwhelmed at the dizzying scale of the site. I recalled Burke's thesis on light and darkness and the sublime effect of a quick and striking transition between the two (Burke, 1958:81). I moved about through the rubble until Sarah Banham called me back and informed me about the no access zone beginning 30 meters from the chimneys where falling debris pose a risk. It reminded me how the structure is curiously well regulated for a ruin and yet its physical framework so uncared-for. It seemed vulnerable in its openness to the elements and the walls seemed fragile, almost porous with holes and fissures, the naked window frames permitting a view of the blue sky behind. A confusing mix of crude, largely improvised wall support disrupted the total impression, and rusting steel girders protruded from the mouldering brickwork. A large patch of the ground was invaded by weeds. Dust swirled in the visible rays of the sun and a large flock of pigeons danced around the chimneys and whizzed back and forth between the walls. Besides the occasional noise from the people setting up the event, there was only a crushing silence. Despite the bright summer daylight, or maybe even because of it, there was something haunting about the atmosphere, and I felt far removed from the outside world. I was therefore startled when, through a gap in the structure, I caught a glimpse out of the corner of my eye of a train speeding past on the railway close by.

We left through the turbine hall where posters from a previous event hung on one wall as curious leftovers and another temporal layer of cultural imprints. As part of the preparations for the current event, a large screen had been put up in the far back of the hall and motorbikes were lined up for display. The commercial representation looked out of place in the old ruin but anticipated, I felt, the spectacular use intended for the building in the future according to the current proposal.

Sarah Banham took me up to the southwest chimney, allowing me yet another viewpoint and yet another rush of sensation. From up here I had a thrilling view of the Battersea gasometers and the railway tracks winding in between. To the opposite side, the London skyline with other landmarks such as the London Eye and The BT Tower provided an impressive backdrop to the three other chimneys and the inside of the structure. The chimneys looked even more like classical columns now that I could admire the fluting and the tiered base in detail (Figure 6). Gazing down into the middle of the structure, I now contemplated the flock of pigeons from above and their movements seemed slower. Sarah Banham explained the major regeneration scheme for the Nine Elms area to me, in which the transformation of Battersea Power Station is only a small piece.

At the end of my visit, Sarah Banham showed me the model of the proposed scheme. The outlandish dome from the first of their proposals had been removed from the model, which showed a neat-looking Battersea Power Station with green roof top gardens and skylights and flanked by tall, winding residential buildings. In the room where the model stood, a meeting was taking place, presumably a presentation for potential investors. On the slide was a picture of Pink Floyd's cover album and a still from the latest Batman film.

Several impressions from my closer encounter with Battersea Power Station were suggestive of the sublime. During my visit, however, I was mostly struck by how the structure seemed at the same time monumental and fragile and by the contrast between the symbols of culture and the ravages of nature. The advanced construction, the cultural symbols of authority and the features of art deco style seemed incongruous and poignant in the setting of ruination and spontaneous invasion by weeds and animals. In the cultural geographer Tim Edensor's writings on ruins, he sees such non-human intrusion in the ruin as a violation of the rural-urban dichotomy, and he contemplates how the conception of urban space relies on continuous fending off of the penetration of nature into urban existence (Edensor, 2005:47). The state of disrepair of Battersea Power Station made moving around the building difficult in some places where debris were an obstacle and more spontaneous in others where the openness of the structure allowed for unhindered passage. Drawing on Sennett, Edensor emphasizes the potential of ruins and the 'disruption of movement' to raise 'awareness of corporeality' (Edensor, 2005:95). Exploring the inside of Battersea Power Station had this effect on me and awakened other senses than my vision. These experiences contributed to a feeling that the category of the technological sublime is certainly relevant but insufficient in itself to engage with the aesthetic of Battersea Power Station. The present ruinous condition of the structure requires other theoretical categories.

Ambivalence of the post-industrial landscape and 'the uncanny'

Britain experienced a rapid transformation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was the leading country of the Industrial Revolution and the world's largest manufacturer by the late nineteenth century, referred to as 'the workshop of the world' (Binney et al.1990:16). The landscape of Victorian Britain was radically altered by the introduction of new technology. The spirit of enterprising was directed towards the future, and the traces of the past were erased or consigned to insignificance in the name of progress. De-industrialisation therefore had an equally drastic impact on landscape. Cities in late capitalism are in a state of constant change following the logic of capitalist cycles. Ernst Bloch describes the temporarily vacant sites produced by this dynamic as the "hollow spaces of capitalism" (Trigg, 2006:120). However, the effects of these dynamics are not complete, and ruins of modern icons as well as less conspicuous structures of modernity continue to make an imprint on the landscape. Their permanence is partly due to the denial of time by modernist architecture, which favours durable building materials such as steel and glass. The

contemporary city is thus "a palimpsest composed of different temporal elements", in Edensor's words, and is haunted by the ghostly artefacts of the past (Edensor, 2008:313). The necessity of living with ruins in contemporary cities presents a particular condition for the urban dweller. Contemporary ruins testify to the vain attempt by modern man to take control of time and stand as a form of memento mori of modern Western culture, a testimony of the failed dreams of the Enlightenment project and a warning of civilisational hybris:

> The wrecks of smashed machines and engines, the closed down factories and abandoned laboratories and research stations – all bear the mark of Icarus, who had to crash to his death because his father, in a spirit of creative daring, had thought himself and his son capable of too much, too early (Jungk in Trigg, 2006:148)

It would be wrong, however, to portray a linear development from naïve universal optimism to the rejection altogether of modern imperatives. Ambivalent reactions to the Enlightenment dream and its manifestations existed from the outset and have been given expression in aesthetic and social criticism of utopian ideologies and their spatial configurations. Particularly in later phases of modernity, it became clear that the modern idea of endless progress was utopian at best. Sociologists theorised the dark side of modernity, decrying the alienating aspects of modern technology and its rational application, while artists explored these themes aesthetically. The metropolis came to embody modern diseases, a theme that was already touched on by romantic novelists (Vidler, 1992:24). The German thinkers Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin expounded on the social and spatial pathologies of the city in their writings (Simmel, 1971; Benjamin, 2002). Other more bodily diseases were also associated with the dirty, overpopulated nineteenth-century city. In the course of early industrialisation, London's populace increased dramatically and suffered a major outbreak of cholera in 1849. The medical elite at the time subscribed to the miasma theory of disease, according to which diseases where carried by polluted air. Nevertheless, the spread of cholera became associated with the industrial pollution of the River Thames[2], which helped to put focus on improving the city's water supply and insanitary conditions (Peters, 2004). The "White Plague" also raged in the early nineteenth century and became the principal cause of death in the metropolises of Europe (Gandy, 2003a:15). The lack of understanding of the disease led to an general anti-urban sensibility, and the preferred treatment became a change of climate away from the city to more salubrious surroundings (Gandy, 2003a:19). Within architecture, however, modernist themes of progress through scientific advancement were dominant still in the beginning of the twentieth century, and it was thought that the diseases and spatial malfunctions of the city could be remedied through architecture and engineering. Optimism in modern architecture only slowly faded and finally came into disrepute, with the "Modern Movement" ending in 1970 according to the influential

[2] In London, it was the superintendent of the General Registers Office, William Farr (1807-1883), who made this connection between the spread of cholera and the pollution of the River Thames based on his statistical research. As a supporter of the miasma theory, however, he speculated that the Thames had produced a cholera-laden cloud above it that carried the disease (Peters, 2004:44).

architectural critic Reyner Banham (Scott, 2007:1). Today, contemporary cities still struggle with the particular urban challenges posed by population density and pollution and with the alienating effects of technology.

A concept that captures some of the disturbing ambiguity of post-industrial landscapes is Anthony Vidler's concept of 'the uncanny'. Vidler explores 'the uncanny' as a spatial metaphor for and a mode of interpretation of the particular modern condition characterised by estrangement (Vidler, 1992). He presents the uncanny as an aesthetic subcategory of the Burkean sublime, fundamentally linked to architecture and the home. Like the sublime, the uncanny is both related to a certain kind of fear and to aesthetic gratification. Contrary to the sublime, however, the uncanny does not inspire notions of greatness and power but is associated with the haunting, the unhomely and the fundamentally unlivable spaces of modernity, "the landscapes of fear and the topographies of despair created as a result of modern technological and capitalist development" (Vidler in Gandy, 2003b:225). As the uncanny describes a feeling of "homelessness", it constitutes an essential element of the nostalgia of post-industrial society and the yearning by anti-modern writers for the lost natal home (Vidler, 1992:xi). The condition of living amongst the ruins of modernity has provoked a nostalgic reaction in Western cities in the second half of the twentieth century:

> Nostalgia is at stake in the northern transatlantic when one looks at the decaying residues of the industrial age and its shrinking cities in the industrial heartlands in Europe (…) Such ruins and their representation in picture books, films, and exhibits are a sign of the nostalgia for the monuments of an industrial architecture of a past age that was tied to a public culture of industrial labor and its political organization (Huyssen, 2006).

The contempt for ruins in certain elements of the 1930s avant garde was replaced by an obsession with particularly industrial contemporary ruins. From the mid-twentieth century, the discipline of industrial archaeology was established, and the phenomenon of urban exploration is no longer an underground activity but a fairly organised hobby with a multitude of practitioners and online forums. The nostalgic occupation with ruins has also influenced the spatial arts and played an essential role in urban regeneration schemes.

Contemporary ruins have thus become sources of aesthetic contemplation and symbolic interpretation of the past. In order to suggest how we can understand this current ruin craze, I shall evaluate its affinity to the obsession with classical ruins in the early phase of modernity.

Contemporary and past ruinophilia and nostalgia

The imagery of ruins has long been evocative of the destructive force of time upon materiality and upon human life and human creation. It thus occupies a realm between art and nature:

> What has led the building upward is human will; what gives it its present appearance is the brute, downward-dragging, corroding, crumbling power of nature. Still, so long as we can speak of a ruin at all and not a mere heap of stones, this power does not sink the work of man into ´the formlessness of mere matter. There rises a new form (…) (Simmel in Roth et al., 1997).

Ruins symbolise death and decay and inspire notions of decadence. They stand as physical traces of the past and of history but at the same time they point to the future by confirming the inevitably cyclical nature of life.

Nostalgia was a central theme of eighteenth-century art and literature and linked to the idea of authenticity, meaningfulness, and individual originality (Huyssen 2006:11). It was an emotional and artistic reaction to the erasure of the past by the processes of modernisation and to the social and spatial alienation that accompanied it. Against the dominant political notion of progress, the Romantics thus developed an aesthetic taste for decay to which the romantic imagery of ruins was central. As an extreme expression of this, in eighteenth-century Britain, it became fashionable amongst the aristocracy to place folly-ruins as a decorative feature in English style gardens (Roth et al., 1997:3). Thereby the romantic ruin was domesticated and limited to the picturesque, and sublimity was replaced with detached contemplation (Huyssen, 2006). The Romantics' love affair with rural ruins has affinities with the nineteenth-century nostalgic search for stable national origins and its political manifestation in nation states (Huyssen, 2006:12). The strand of nostalgia originating from the romantic ruin also links to the tourist industry and the postmodern consumer society, in which aesthetic categories such as the sublime are explored for their commercial value. Ruin features have become part of a setting for simulated experiences of authenticity, and the eighteenth-century tradition of mock-ruins thus continues today in "the freshly fragmented classical motifs decorating the pedestrian malls and campuses of culture that dot our postmodern landscape" (Roth et al., 1997:5). This romantic and postmodern celebration of ruins and decadence is a reactionary form of nostalgia. However, Huyssen warns against condemning all nostalgia for ruins by consigning it to regressive nationalism and cultural decadence. Contemporary, industrial ruins are qualitatively different from pre-industrial, classical ruins and their imagery is not as easily reduced to the picturesque or to the ideological legitimizing of power (Edensor, 2005:10-11). The association between ruins and nostalgia is much more ambiguous, Huyssen asserts, than what reductive critiques acknowledge. The lesson that the imagery of the ruin conveys is that all cultures and all power are historically and geographically specific and transitory (Huyssen, 2006:13). The particular nostalgia for the ruins of modernity is also a longing for a time when the future was open to hopeful imagination: "We are nostalgic for the ruins of modernity because they still seem to hold a promise that has vanished from our own age: the promise of an alternative future" (Huyssen, 2006:8). At the same time, this nostalgia of the late modern age is aware of the dangers of the realisation of utopian dreams and

therefore it is a reflective kind of nostalgia[3]. This nostalgia therefore fastens on to the imagery of ruins that have provided the critical counterpoise to the naïve faith in progress since the onset of modernity. By identifying the critical potential as inherent in modernity, Huyssen rejects postmodern frameworks. He points to the ruins of Giovanni Battista Piranesi for "a dialectic of modernity that should be remembered as we try to imagine a future beyond the false promises of corporate neoliberalism and the globalized shopping mall" (Huyssen, 2006:20). Huyssen's more complex thesis allows for open readings of ruins rather than the unreflective romantic celebration or the pessimistic rejection, and I am informed by his work in my analysis of Battersea Power Station. Battersea Power Station has a valuable potential as a contemporary ruin embodying the memory of a recent past and its hopes and visions. Reflective engagement with it can inspire critical revision of the present, and this potential should be defended from the neoliberalist strategies to reduce industrial ruins to the static, picturesque imagery similar to that of classical ruins. A journalist comes close to describing the potential of Battersea Power Station when writing that:

> Architectural icons are culturally significant, particularly if they're as "other" as Battersea Power Station. They remind us of *difference*, and of aspirations that don't toe the line. They are antidotes to the mundane. They are, whether beautiful or crude, items of hope (Merrick, 2003).

The public interest in Battersea Power Station thus exceeds picturesque contemplation. The building is entrenched in the collective consciousness of Londoners and formative of a regional identity. It exercises a powerful grip on the imagination, which is reflected in the many representations of it.

Collective memory and cultural representation

Ruins remind us that the past is part of us, but also that our present is formative, in a sense, of the past. "Constituted by memory and distance, ruins are proxies for a past that is continually reinvented by the present" (Lyons in Roth et al., 1997:79). This formulation reflects the presentist approach adopted by Maurice Halbwachs in his influential writing on collective memory. In his theory, he adopts the view that the past is a social construct continuously shaped and reshaped by the concerns of the present (Halbwachs, 1992:25). Memory is therefore social, according to Halbwachs' thesis, as individual memories are always tied to a group context (Halbwachs, 1992:22). This collective memory makes up a group's identity and public imagery plays a vital part in the commemoration of a shared past. Battersea Power Station is a powerful embodiment of the collective memory of Londoners, and the way that it is depicted and its history is interpreted reflects contemporary cultural values.

Cultural representations of Battersea Power Station are plentiful in both cinema, photography, music videos and other media of the visual arts. It was ingrained in cultural consciousness in 1977 when a picture of it

[3] Huyssen credits Svetlana Boym for the notion of a reflective nostalgia. In her book *The Future of Nostalgia,* Boym makes a distinction between restorative and reflective nostalgia (Boym, 2001)

Figure 7 (above) the cover of Pink Floyd's 1977 album Animal

Figure 8 (right) booklet art for The Who's 1973 album Quadrophenia

Figure 9: Still from the Batman film *The Dark Knight (2008)*

Figure 10: Still from the film *Children of Men* (2006)

appeared on the album cover for Pink Floyd's *Animals* (Figure 7) and before that it featured in the booklet for *The Who'*s album Quadrophenia from 1972 (Figure 8). Below, I shall analyse one cultural representation of Battersea Power Station in cinema. The focus rests on the complex interplay between film, historical consciousness, architecture and utopian or dystopian ideas. Vidler points out that particularly sci-fi, film noir and fantasy genres provide a "role model for spatial experimentation" (Vidler, 1992:100). Furthermore, film is a media that is closely bound up with the experience of modernity and its aesthetic categories. The representation of Battersea Power Station in films has largely been dystopian and with strong visual elements of the sublime. Most recently in cinema, the interior of the building was used as a setting for the American Batman film *The Dark Knight* (2008). It served as an old warehouse in the fictional city of Gotham and provided the backdrop for a scene between Batman and the corrupted hero gone villain (Figure 9). Its appearance in the film *Children of Men* (2006) is equally disturbing but in a very different way that reflects differences between American and European technological aesthetics.

The European cinematic sublime: An analysis of *Children of Men*

Children of Men is a dystopian science fiction film directed by Alfonso Cuarón in 2006 based on the book by British novelist P.D. James. The film is set in England in 2027 after two decades of sudden and inexplicable global infertility. In this bleak future, Battersea Power Station features as a government building transformed to a secured fort whose modern interior lay-out provides a stark contrast to the neglect and squalor outside.

The first shot of Battersea Power Station is filmed at an unusual angle directly front-faced from the river and presents Battersea Power Station as an imposing, symmetrical building of authority (Figure 10). The building fills the entire frame and the shot lasts several seconds. The visual mood is grey and bleak as in the rest of the film. Above the building floats a giant pig – an obvious reference to the well-known Pink Floyd album cover. In the first shot inside the building and inconspicuously placed in the background – a subtle style sustained throughout the film – we see the fragment of a wall with the British street artist Banksy's work *British Cops Kissing*. This piece, which has been regarded as the epitome of an anti-authoritarian and ironic if not critical stance towards institutions, looks entirely out of place in these highly formal and regulated institutional surroundings. When the main character steps into the room to meet the government official, he (and the viewer) is met by the sight of Michelangelo's *David* with a piece of his leg missing, and in the dining room, Pablo Picasso's brutal *Guernica* is decoratively placed above the dining table.

Imagery and popular references provide the narrative means by which Cuarón manages to convey the themes of the film. In an interview on the bonus material DVD, he declares: "I want references (…) I would like as much as possible references of iconography, contemporary iconography, that is already ingrained in human consciousness." (Cuarón, 2006). It is therefore not surprising that Battersea Power Station was chosen to feature in the film. The red telephone box, another piece of iconography designed by Sir Giles

Gilbert Scott, also features later in the film in the ever-significant but subtle background. The conversion of Battersea Power Station into a collection of great works of art is a reference to the similar conversion of the Bankside Power Station into Tate Modern. The way that the works seem stripped of their meaning and their context in this neutral space could be interpreted as a comment on the contemporary preservation and heritage trend and the artificial way of conserving past works of art and architecture in museums and galleries. The man behind the acquisition of the works is surely not engaged in real life or imagining alternative futures. He simply takes pleasure in surrounding himself with the symbols of civilisation ignoring its demise in the world outside. The fact that the works of international art are kept in a fortress in Britain could also be a commentary on Britain's imperial past and extensive cultural looting.

In artistic representation, time is arrested and the natural process of decay is contained (Roth et al., 1997:3). In *Children of Men*, the director plays with the theme of time and decay in a complex way by setting the film in the future but choosing to arrest time from a couple of years after the film's release date in 2006 so that the London of 2027 is immediately recognisable for the contemporary viewer but also alien in certain respects because some technology has developed while everything else has been left neglected. His depiction of Battersea Power Station is not a simple still of the contemporary building. Ironically, Battersea Power Station in his scenario is the well maintained, modern building, while the urban landscape around it has fallen into complete dereliction. What is remarkable about Cuarón's future scenario is that it is entirely bereft of history. With the infertility of the human race, human history has stopped; there is no future and therefore no reason to build on civilisation or to preserve the physical traces of history for posterity. The scene that mostly captures this hopeless situation is the discovery by the main characters of a school building that has been abandoned since it no longer has a function and which is now a ruin occupied by animals and overgrown with weeds. The philosopher Slavoj Žižek argues in an interview that this aspect about the film "gives the best diagnosis of ideological despair of late capitalism. Of a society without history (…) the true infertility is the very lack of meaningful historical experience" (Žižek, 2006). Cuarón's depiction of a future society frozen in time is thus a critical comment on the present. The fact England is the setting of this dystopian vision is significant according to Žižek. England, he says, has no constitution but relies on its rich tradition, which makes the lack of it in the film so much worse (Žižek, 2006). The 'Human Project' – a group of scientists trying to cure mankind of its infertility – is an interesting point in the film. It represents a faith in science, and some hope is thus maintained in the reason and the goodness of mankind despite the grueling neo-Hobbesian worldview that is represented in the rest of the film. The film ends on a somewhat hopeful note but the definitive salvation is left out.

The cinematic sublime of *Children of Men* is distinctly melancholic, which links it to a European tradition of the sublime. The film has been compared to *Red Desert,* directed by Michelangelo Antonioni, which also presents an aesthetic more rooted in German Romanticism and the formulations of Kant (Gandy,

2003b:224). The sublime elements of the film are tinged with the aesthetic effects of the uncanny, which reflects the themes of homelessness, spatial confusion and post-industrial ambiguity. The people in the film have no home, no history and no future. This bleak portrayal of the contemporary world questions the status and the management of modern iconicity and monumentality. The past lingers in physical structures, and the way that we interpret, relate to and deal with this cultural heritage is closely bound up with how we relate to the spiritual heritage of modernity.

Practical strategies of handling the heritage of modernity

Battersea Power Station as a practical challenge

In the 26 years since its decommissioning, Battersea Power Station has been left to ruin in silent obstinacy. It was recently referred to by the former Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, as "the biggest disgrace in planning in the capital over the last 20 years" (Cahalan, 2009). The condition of the building requires urgent action but the gigantic site and the dilapidated structure pose a significant challenge for developers. At the same time, the central location of Battersea Power Station and its proximity to the Thames make the site a real estate treasure trove. In the current housing crisis in London, land in central London is in short supply, and its appropriation for housing plays an important role in the economic recovery plans. Developers and landowners are called on to provide sites for housing in a press release where Mayor of London Boris Johnson declared:

> Our ambitious plans for house building are dependent on bringing forward suitable sites for development and this new housing capacity study will be completed at a crucial time in the capital's long history. Not only is London's population expanding at an unprecedented rate but we are facing a major housing crisis and heading towards a serious economic downturn. It is vital now that we identify the land to help provide the desperately needed new homes for Londoners as well as supporting our construction sector through the difficult times ahead (Johnson in Greater London Authority, 2008).

The residential space that will be created in Battersea Power Station according to the current scheme, however, is directed at few and very wealthy Londoners. The waterfront has become a prestigious area for entrepreneurs and well funded cultural initiatives. Further down the Thames, Bankside Power Station – also designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott – was converted into the Tate Modern in 2000 with great success. Its development reflects a general trend to focus on urban waterfronts and their industrial remnants as part of a programme of regeneration.

Early proposals for office and shop developments for Battersea Power Station were opposed by local community groups (Building Design, 1984). Over the last two decades, three major developers have

attempted to redevelop Battersea Power Station but with no success. The first of these, launched in 1987, proposed to transform the building into a theme park but only came so far as to remove the roof and the west wall of the boiler house before the project stalled in 1989, leaving the structure in the vulnerable openness that has been a major factor in its rapid dilapidation. Parkview International bought the site in 1993 and proposed to build a shopping mall on the site but was met with furious criticism and finally sold the site to the current owners, REO, in 2006. The challenge that Battersea Power Station represent to developers rests in part in the scale of the site (which is much larger than that of Bankside) and in its popularity and iconic status. Battersea Power Station was famous before its completion and is closely linked to the regional identity of the host community. The Battersea Power Station Community Group was formed in 1983 and has put up resistance for each project directed towards commercial and private interests. Public interest in the building has not faded, and Treasury Holdings could report in their news letter of May 2009 that over 14,000 people attended their first public exhibition of the redevelopment scheme (Treasury Holdings, 2009). Beside the close attention from the public and from English Heritage, another challenge to developers is the lack of transport links. The current proposal therefore depends on a privately funded extension of the tube network. This money has to be put into the project in addition to the enormous cost of maintaining the decaying remnants of the building.

It remains to be seen if the current proposal put forward by REO and Treasury Holdings can meet these challenges. Their proposal consists of a mixed-use scheme that integrates residential, commercial, business and leisure uses. The New York-based architect Rafael Vinoly acknowledges Battersea Power Station's cultural value in declaring that the building needs to be saved because: "Buildings like this have a virtue of becoming part of the collective consciousness and this is very beloved in Britain. Our approach has to be to produce a development plan that can fund that" (Booth, 2008). Environmental concerns are in focus in the online presentation of the scheme, which pictures Battersea Power Station in a utopian Britain where the sky is always blue. The promise is that the station will be carbon neutral and will provide "the first zero carbon office space in Central London" (Treasury Holdings, n/d). Business interests are also lengthily addressed, and Battersea Power Station is presented as "one of London's great addresses for cutting-edge modern businesses, which will be attracted here by the opportunity to be associated with a world famous building and to benefit from the dynamic mix of uses." (Treasury Holdings, n/d). Their first proposal presented in June last year – including a large eco-dome with a 984 feet ventilation glass chimney – was not well received by architectural critics who were unconvinced by its spectacular science-fiction-like appearance (Bose, 2008). Critics also speculate that the developers do not have the cultural value of Battersea Power Station in mind but only the property value of the site. Spokesman for the Battersea Power Station Community Group Keith Garner is one of the people to express this concern:

> This is a riverside site in the centre of London and the power station is blocking the river views for flats they want to build. The site is worth more without the listed building and the obligations and responsibilities of looking after it (Booth, 2008).

The most recent development jeopardizing the future of Battersea Power Station is the lack of finance in the current situation of economic crisis. It has recently become known that REO is in critical debt crisis, struggling to find investors (Teather, 2009). REO is hoping to have its loans taken over by the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) and are now in search of an equity or debt-financed partner (Molloy, 2009). Meanwhile, Battersea Power Station is falling further into disrepair every day.

Framing of ruins and representations of the past

Like other urban space, spaces of ruins are constructed by different actors. Voices in the discourse on contemporary ruins include policy makers, urban planners, developers, preservation campaigners and the local community. The first impulse when Battersea Power Station was no longer functional was to declare it a useless space. In 1980, *The Times* quoted the Chairman of the English Tourist Board that "once the station's generating days were over in a year or two it would become a building of outstanding uselessness" (The Times, 1980). This is what Edensor terms a negative view of ruins defined as blank areas, or 'Terra nullius' (Edensor, 2005:10). A report by CABE *Land in limbo - making the best use of vacant urban spaces* echoes this view and construes urban wasteland as an aesthetic and social problem (Taylor, 2007). A different definition of postindustrial landscapes links to a different agenda. Preservation campaigners speak of derelict land in terms of cultural and historical value and construct industrial relics as ruins fit for archaeological interest on a par with the ruins of antiquity. This indicates an acknowledgement that ruins do not belong to the far past but are produced by the present and its immediate past. This redefinition of industrial ruins as cultural heritage is relatively new and not unproblematic. Due to their quantity, careful criteria are required in the selection of industrial structures for preservation. English Heritage has set an instructive limit at structures that are three decades old after which they must be of exceptional historical or architectural value to be listed (English Heritage, n/d). Conservation decisions by powerful organisations such as English Heritage thus have direct practical consequences as in the case of Battersea Power Station which was already planned for demolition when it was listed.

Memory as a theme and perspective in the humanities has gained ground in the last decades, and the fascination with ruins plays a part in it. It is suggested by some scholars that a 'memory turn' is now replacing the cultural turn (Kitzman et. al, 2005: 9-10). Outside of the academy, the 'memory turn' with its urge to represent the past affects practical strategies of handling the physical remnants of industrial structures and is linked to the newly spurred interest in preservation and adaptive reuse of contemporary ruins. Memory is related to an architectural postmodernism with proponents such as Charles Jencks. While modern architecture was ahistorical, based on the impulse to escape history and the ideal of tabula rasa,

postmodernism has heralded ”The return of historicism” (Vidler, 2008:2)[4]. The Italian architect and designer Aldo Rossi was a prominent figure in the reintroduction of memory into urban theory in the 1970-80s with his theory on the city as “the *locus* of the collective memory” (Rossi in Forty, 2000:217). This theory provided the conceptual basis for a new postmodern orthodoxy, in which urbanism in Vidler’s words can be considered ”the instrumental theory and practice of constructing the city as memorial of itself” (Vidler, 2008:179). In practice, the focus on memory in architecture entails a use of iconicity, local vernaculars and a focus on local landmarks and monuments. Monuments, which are the most direct expression of the commemoration of the past, are structures invested with the capacity to contain and prolong collective social memory beyond frail individual memories (Forty, 2000:206). Some scholars, however, have argued that monuments are no longer possible. The American historian and architectural critic Lewis Mumford described ”an age that has deflated its values and lost sight of its purposes” and which could no longer ”produce convincing monuments” (Mumford in Vidler, 1992:135). Existing monuments also lose significance in the age of late capitalism according to Vidler:

> Amidst the ruins of monuments no longer significant because deprived of their systematic status, and often of their corporeality, walking on the dust of inscriptions no longer decipherable because lacking so many words, whether carved in stone or shaped in neon, we cross nothing to go nowhere. (Vidler, 1992:185)

The status of monuments in contemporary cities is problematic, but I choose to adopt a less pessimistic perspective. I argue that a certain type of spontaneous monument, linked to the reflective nostalgia as defined by Boym and Huyssen, can provide a positive, critical counterpoise to the fixing of history and the rationalisation of space.

The critical potential of industrial ruins

Michel de Certeau has claimed that: ”Memory is a a sort of anti-museum: it is not localizable” (Certeau in Forty, 2000:215). Nevertheless, memory traces linger in industrial landscapes, whose structures can be considered more spontaneous kinds of monuments than the officially sanctioned memorials. Their meaning is not fixed through institutional procedures but remains contested and open to continuous reinterpretation. Contemporary ruins thus provide a presentation of the past that links to the reflective kind of nostalgia which Huyssen speaks of. They remind us not of a past age of glory nor of the futility of human endeavours but of the impermanence of and the alternatives to the status quo. Battersea Power Station exerts a powerful grip on the imagination and provokes critical reflection. It is a thorn in the side of many planners and entrepreneurs as it takes up the valuable waterfront space and does not fit into the overall design. According to Edensor, cities are increasingly ordered and regulated, characterised by unifunctional spaces and smooth

[4] Vidler maintains this distinction although elsewhere in the book he disputes the notion that modernism was entirely ahistorical (Vidler, 2008).

trajectories: "the disciplinary, performative, aestheticised urban praxis demanded by commercial and bureaucratic regimes (…) are refashioning cities into realms of surveillance, consumption, and dwelling characterised by an increase in single-purpose spaces" (Edensor, 2005:17). Despite the extensive efforts to clean cities of the debris of the past, however, and to include memory traces into a coherent narrative, urban space can never be entirely fixed (Edensor, 2005:60-61). Battersea Power Station presents a pocket of decay and disorder in the middle of highly regulated urban space. The stark contrast to the surrounding landscape was what first attracted my attention and made me aware of the characterless surroundings consisting of newly built housing. Its ruinous condition and purposelessness reveals and disrupts the rational urban space around it. Edensor calls contemporary industrial ruins a "counter-trend to rationalisation" and argues that they "confound the normative spacings of things, practices and people" (Edensor, 2005:18). The failure of capitalism to rationalise space should not lead to despair, he maintains, but to the recognition of the need for social and spatial re-organisation. (Edensor, 2005:104). "In ruins, the lack of order can produce insights into how such regimes operate and foreground alternative ways of placing, suggesting alternative aesthetics and interactions" (Edensor, 2005:169). Battersea Power Station and other industrial ruins thus have the potential both to counter the profit-driven rationalisation of urban space and to provide an ambiguous form of monument that resists unilinear narratives of the past. Below, I shall present the two current strategies in handling industrial ruins that are joined in the approach to Battersea Power Station and discuss how they threaten to undermine its critical potential.

Strategies that threaten the potential of ruins

Adaptive reuse

In late capitalism, market forces are decisive in the transformation of urban landscapes. In cases where demolition is not an option such as with Battersea Power Station, the rational solution from a utilitarian standpoint is to re-use. The re-use movement began in the middle of the twentieth century and gained influence in the 1970s (Boyer, 1994:54). It is linked to the commitment to urban regeneration or revitalisation of rundown areas and is often presented as mixed use schemes such as the current proposal for Battersea Power Station. The asset of industrial buildings for entrepreneurs consists in the memory traces that they embody and their distinctive architectural features, which allow developers to "bypass the need to create the memorable, signature form" as in the case of the transformation of Bankside Power Station into The Tate Modern (Moore & Raymund, 2000:9). These qualities about industrial ruins offer an air of authenticity to their new functions and their new occupiers. The current developers of Battersea Power Station emphasize this opportunity for businesses to associate with a historic building and tap into its cultural significance by referring to the building's cultural appearances. Thus, in the context of late capitalism and post-industrial culture, memory too becomes a commodity. It is a specific, processed memory, however, that

is the currency of the nostalgia industry. “these partially, conditionally remembered, recontextualised spaces are remembered *by* developers and experts *for* middle-class inhabitants, businesses associated with places, shoppers and tourists” (Edensor, 2005:131). Postmodern architecture is associated with this consumption of cultural heritage. Vidler criticizes the postmodern ’collage architecture’ that makes use of fragments of the past to create ‘history’ as an artificial totality offered to consumers (Vidler, 1992:97-98). He defines postmodernism as ”a movement itself now revealed to be no more than the cosmetic pastellization of the corporate image” (Vidler, 2008:208).

The postmodern aesthetisation of history makes use of the sublime as it has been appropriated by the tourism industry, and I therefore return to the concept of the technological sublime. According to Nye, the innate logic of the technological sublime requires its objects to take on a more extreme form than its precursor in order to upset the increasingly dulled spatial sense of the observers (Nye:284). What Nye terms ‘the consumer’s sublime’ is a distorted version of the sublime that carries no use-value and serves no vision of progress:

> their epiphanies have no referents; they reveal not the existence of God, not the power of nature, not the majesty of human reason, but the titillation of representation itself. The genuine ceases to have any special status; the faked, the artificial, and the copy are the stock-in-trade (Nye, 1994:291)

Nye refers to Las Vegas as the epitome of this postmodern landscape. Remarkably, the previous owners of Battersea Power Station, Parkview International, had appointed a designer for their proposal, recommended by their Las Vegas based partners for his work in Vegas (Merrick, 2003). The theme park version of the sublime, Nye points out, is devoid of the fear that is a central aspect to the definition of the sublime by both Burke and Kant. The precursor to the ‘consumer’s sublime’ was already apparent in the models of the New York fair, in which any sense of terror had been eliminated by the corporate exhibitors in their eagerness to emphasize the taming of nature and to present a “panoramic omni-science [that] was sanitized and safe” (Nye 1994:213). During my visit to Battersea Power Station I was reminded of Nye’s thesis when I saw the model of the current proposal, which shows pretty features of domesticated nature integrated into the building and which gives an impression of order, safety and neatness.

The hostile reception of the more spectacular proposals, such as the previous one with the outlandish chimney, reflects the British public’s continued skepticism towards the uncritical and overstated celebration of technology and confirms the more ambivalent European sublime. In an article titled “A Towering Affront to Common Sense” the ex-director of the Architecture Foundation, Rowan Moore, referred to the scheme as “spectacularly, riotously, extravagantly nuts.” (Bose, 2008). The risk of over-commercialisation in re-use schemes pushes some to call for preservation of contemporary ruins.

Preservation

Opposing a utilitarian agenda, claims have been made for the preservation of industrial sites at a time of urban redevelopment. The utilitarian attempt by developers to endow ruins with new functions threatens their status as ruin by making them belong fully to the present (Roth et al.:xi). This concern leads some to adopt a nostalgic position, aiming to separate ruins completely from daily use in order make the past more clearly marked in them (Roth et al.:8). Choosing to preserve a ruin as an anachronism raises other complex issues, however. Firstly, it requires intervention to stop the process of ruination but too comprehensive restoration and careful maintenance threatens the integrity of the building as a ruin. Furthermore, the choice of temporal cut-off point will always be arbitrary and express contemporary interpretations of the authentic ruin. Pessimists like John Ruskin claim that restoration is impossible:

> *restoration* (…) means the most total destruction which buildings can suffer: a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered; a destruction accompanied with fake description of the thing destroyed. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is *impossible,* as impossible to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture" (Ruskin in Roth et al.:18).

Arresting time's impact on a ruin from a particular, arbitrary point undermines the subversive potential of the ruin that Edensor identified. The ambiguity of the ruin is negated and it is transformed into a static monument, limiting the interpretative possibilities. "The very definition of monument or memorial implies a singularity, a particularity that encloses the meaning of a single event or individual…" Vidler notes (1992:122). This fixing of history requires powerful actors such as English Heritage. Heritage decisions contribute to an institutional construction of the past that presents heritage objects as 'history' itself, glossing over the interestedness of the procedures by which other versions of the past were excluded (Forty, 2000:205).

In the above, I have demonstrated the point that the practice of artificially isolating industrial structures from the dynamic and spontaneous urban development is problematic. During my research, I have become increasingly aware of the pitfalls of preservation strategies. I admit that I initially harboured a somewhat nostalgic desire to leave the structure of Battersea Power Station as it is. However, I realised the dilemma that in order to stay the same, it would need careful conservation, which would involve arbitrary decisions. Furthermore, my visit to the power station also changed my critical view on the re-use schemes to some degree. The excitement that I felt at sensing the sublimity of the structure and at its unequalled views made me wish for open public access to the building to allow any Londoner or visitor to safely enjoy this experience and to integrate it into the daily lives of the local residents. However, I worry that the present mixed use scheme risks following a postmodern tendency to favour the spectacular and the artificial in the attraction of well-financed commercial and private interests. Considering these potentials, risks and dilemmas, I argue not to leave Battersea Power Station to its inevitable collapse, nor to museumise it, nor to appropriate it entirely to new uses. Its condition requires urgent action but its aesthetic and cultural significance demands

respectful handling. The attempt to give it use for contemporary urbanites should be democratic in its goal and in its execution and should avoid integrating the structure too seamlessly into the landscape. The building of Battersea Power Station should continue to represent a contrast to ordered space around it and to spur imaginative and critical reflection.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the aesthetic and cultural fascination with and significance of Battersea Power Station. Through subjective sensuous engagement and deliberate application of theoretical categories, I have offered an account of the direct and mediated experiences of this evocative landscape that relates it to the modern condition and its aesthetics. The findings of the study are meant to inform practical strategies of handling the physical remnants of industrial London.

The impressions from my initial encounters with Battersea Power Station were confirmed by archival material, and I established the conceptual potential of "the sublime" in relation to the aesthetic effect of the structure. In this first part of the analysis, I traced the history of the sublime from its redefinition by European thinkers in the eighteenth century to the development of "the technological sublime" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This new aesthetic sensibility was closely linked to the technological and social changes that formed the basis for modernist architecture. Industrial structures expressed the synthesis of engineering and architecture and were characterised by the enterprising spirit and faith in human progress. Despite different intentions of its architects and despite elements of traditional style in its design, Battersea Power Station has been considered the prototype of modern architecture and of the technological sublime. However, the historical specificity of the concept of the sublime also spells out its limitations as a mode of interpretation of contemporary phenomena. The concept suffers from its dependency on its modern coinage as a universal and primarily visual category. In its present ruinous condition, Battersea Power Station therefore requires new theoretical tools.

During my field visit, I was struck by the contrast between the sophisticated features of manmade design and technology and the imprints of nature. The knowledge of the building's former greatness coupled with the impression of its current dilapidated condition is disturbing but also a source of aesthetic pleasure. I turned in my analysis to Vidler's writings on "the uncanny", which is a concept that captures the ambiguity of the modern condition of urban existence. Battersea Power Station in its current condition holds elements of the uncanny by virtue of its archaic obsolescence and its dreamlike out-of-place quality. The incongruence and the unhomely aspects of the uncanny are also associated with a feeling of nostalgia. As a ruin and a physical remnant of early modernity in a post-industrial landscape, Battersea Power Station seems to refute Enlightenment ideas of continuous progress and absolute control and thereby demonstrate the failed hopes

of modernity. This raises the important question whether modern impulses and the associated notion of the sublime are thereby disqualified. I interpreted the current resurge of interest for industrial ruins as an indication that modern ideas still find resonance and that the rejection of them altogether is too one-dimensional. Exploring past and present nostalgia for ruins, I identified two strands: One has affinities to the romantic celebration of classical ruins, which tends to reduce the powerful effect of sublimity to the sanitized, the domesticated and the picturesque. This strand is present today in the postmodern appropriation of ruins or its mimicry of their aesthetic effects in new buildings. However, another strand of nostalgia acknowledges the dangers implicit in the search for authenticity. This reflective nostalgia is inspired by the modern belief in alternative futures and informed by the lesson of the transiency of all things. It does not seek to eliminate the uncanny and disturbing features of industrial ruins. Rather, it celebrates their ambivalence and their negation of rational control over space. This second nostalgic strand is linked to the ambivalent reactions that have existed since early modernisation processes, and I therefore consider the reflective and critical potential of contemporary ruins to be inherent in modernity. The particular European sublime effectively reflects the dialectic of modern aesthetics that combines elements of technological optimism and critique. Its complex effects are demonstrated in the film *Children of Men,* which among other things explores themes of the relationship between the past, the present and the future as well as the status of monuments in contemporary society.

In the third part of the analysis, Battersea Power Station was thematised as a space of inertia in the sweeping creative destruction of urban renewal. I expanded on the potential of contemporary ruins to disrupt the ordered space of late capitalism and to suggest alternative readings of the past. This potential, I argued, is threatened by current strategies of handling industrial ruins. Practical approaches depend on the interpretation of industrial landscapes as cultural heritage or useless waste land, which is continuously reassessed and reproduced according to powerful interests. English Heritage identifies and interprets industrial ruins and places restrictions on the possible options for transformation, such as in the case of Battersea Power Station. The call for preservation of industrial ruins is relatively new and linked to the increasing interest in memory and monumentality. Drawing on several scholars, I made the case that preservation strategies tend to fix structures in history and define them as parts of a coherent narrative, thereby abolishing alternative interpretations. I also criticized adaptive re-use strategies applied to industrial structures, which is largely based on utilitarian interpretations of the sites as profitable but unexploited real estate. This approach tends to adopt signature buildings for commercial ends and to reduce the signs of time and the imprints of nature to spectacular or decorative display.

The current plans for Battersea Power Station are a combination of the preservation and the re-use strategies: Under the vigilant watch of English Heritage and restricted by regulations, Treasury Holdings has presented a mixed-use scheme for the transformation of the building. This study does not condemn either of

these actors. It merely wishes to warn against an approach that might abolish the ambiguity and critical potential in the ruin. Battersea Power Station is an important landmark and it is essential that its aesthetic and cultural significance is the primary concern in the planning of its future. The practical approach must therefore maintain the genuinely sublime quality and the disruptive effect of the structure to ordered, rational space and to the sanctioned interpretation of history. Battersea Power Station powerfully demonstrates the potentials and dilemmas of industrial ruins, and its transformation for contemporary use should set a good example for the handling of contemporary post-industrial landscapes.

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