

# Jože Plečnik and the Ethics of Forgetting:

## An Essay in Two Parts

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*Benjamin Morris*

*and if you commit then, as we did, the error  
of thinking,  
one day all this will only be memory...*  
- Galway Kinnell

### I.

Begun in 1938 and completed three years later, the cemetery was originally built to relieve the strain, as well as the sanitation concerns, of funeral processions traditionally conducted through the main streets of Ljubljana (Slovenia). Jože Plečnik, its architect, had submitted a far more grandiose design — difficult to believe when one sees the place today — but after multiple conflicts with the municipal authorities, scaled back and settled on a number of compromises. One thing that did not survive these changes was the name: Plečnik had wanted to call the new cemetery the Garden of All Saints, but it was renamed *Žale*, the Place of Mourning, instead. He had also intended that the funeral processions leave the cemetery via an exit gate known as the Eternal Path, but as Damjan Prelovšek notes, “in practice this was never accepted.”<sup>1</sup> Plečnik’s main designs held, however: an intricately organized series of avenues and neighborhoods, funeral chapels sprinkled all over the complex for individual mourning, and most strikingly of all, a massive central entrance gate separating the city of the living from the city of the dead. Two years ago I visited this city, and this act of reminiscence has in part informed the writing of this essay, as I think will become clear. I want to offer here a theoretical scaffold from which to begin painting a picture of what it means to travel to cemeteries, and to *Žale* in particular, but heeding Wittgenstein, I do not want this picture to hold us captive — I want what follows to be as careful and respectful as the steps we take on the soil above the dead.

The literature linking cemeteries to memory (and its public performance, commemoration) is vast, and there is little need to rehearse much of it here. Joseph

Roach isolates the primary constellations of belief surrounding this linkage when he writes,

cities of the dead are primarily for the living. They exist not only as artifacts, such as cemeteries and commemorative landmarks, but also as behaviors. They endure, in other words, as occasions for memory and invention.<sup>2</sup>

Cemeteries are thus at once *artifacts*, constructions of some aesthetic interest or value; *landmarks*, discrete individual topoi into which one enters and from which one leaves; *behaviors*, practices of a given culture (which Roach defines as “the social processes of memory and forgetting”<sup>3</sup>); and *occasions*, opportunities and invitations for an individual to exercise thought, reminiscence, and imagination all in that cordoned-off space.

Certainly the list could go on and on, but it is important to note that these aspects of cemeteries commingle almost effortlessly; they are curiously lacking in paradox. Moreover, thinking of their temporal dimension, the way in which cemeteries ease and encourage consideration of past and future, David Robinson has written that cemeteries

celebrate not only lives past but lives yet to be lived — in eternity — and that the primary focus of the cemetery is not mortality (history) but immortality (hope). The temporal achievements cited merely point the way to everlasting life.<sup>4</sup>

Granted, Robinson’s point is couched in a discussion of European cemeteries, with primarily Judeo-Christian belief systems in place, and so must not be taken as necessarily true for all religious traditions. However, the thoughtfulness of its Janus-headed approach must not be underestimated: it invokes what Laura Wexler has called “the proleptic gaze”: the expression of future anteriority, awareness, or knowledge of what will be remembered (or, in some cases, forgotten).<sup>5</sup> Wexler’s use of the term stems from its application to documentary photography, but its terminological value is clear, as it allows us to posit a phenomenological and conceptual state by which two temporal consciousnesses are present — a higher-order cognitive capacity which some philosophers would argue is endemic to the human species.

In all of these considerations, it appears that visiting a cemetery both suggests and solicits the beginnings of an epistemology of death — especially, I would argue, when the visitor does not speak the language; or when the only information

on the gravestone is a name or range of dates; or in an extreme form (as in older cemeteries), when the marker has been worn clean away by the dual forces of time and weather (forces that, in Italian, share the same word: *tempo*). On first glance such stark conditions would paradoxically constitute a failure to establish this working epistemology, but on closer thought it becomes the moment when — because we have met the thing itself, “the distinguished thing,” as Henry James called it upon his own deathbed after suffering a stroke<sup>6</sup> — the visitor has come as close as possible to death, the encounter being unmediated by any of the baggage that knowledge of a life can produce. In such conditions, the only glimmer of paradox is that, as Robinson puts it, “death [is] much talked about but seldom seen.”<sup>7</sup>

The corollary to (if not the opposite of) prolepsis is nostalgia, the elision, however voluntary, of the present with the past. It is a beautiful word, derived from the ancient Greek words for ‘return’ (*nostos*) and ‘suffering’ (*algos*), which Milan Kundera interprets several different ways: one, as “the suffering caused by an unappeased yearning to return,” and in another, “something like the pain of ignorance, of not knowing.”<sup>8</sup> For the time being, then, we can count visiting a cemetery as one form of willed nostalgia, a communion with those individuals from our memories and histories (scarcely the same thing) that is specifically sourced in desire: the project of nostalgia is to attempt a reclamation of something or someone that has been lost. Nostalgia need not be so narrow, of course — it can be a collective or political activity, yearning for whatever once constituted “the good old days,” as Dennis Walder has suggested in the case of some individuals in South Africa ten years after the end of apartheid<sup>9</sup> — which suggests that acts of remembering may have something very real to do with ethics: once memory steps out of private consciousness and into public consciousness, it becomes a question of what should or should not be remembered, why, by whom, and for what reasons.

Regardless of the sphere in which the remembrance takes place, the act of visiting a cemetery to do so is, I take it, a form of acknowledgement. And here several more questions arise: what does it mean to acknowledge, and why should we do it? In his essay “Knowing and Acknowledging” Stanley Cavell poses the question:<sup>10</sup> when you say “I am in pain,” how can I know whether you are, in fact, in pain? Are your words evidence enough to convince me, or do I necessarily encounter an epistemic chasm when I search for proof of your statement? After all,

physical behavior can be faked just as easily as linguistic behavior can—just ask any actor or actress. (Whether they give you a straight answer, of course, and how you can know that it is a straight answer, I leave aside: too many rabbit holes, not enough bottles labeled *Drink Me*.) Does this mean our idea of knowing is somehow under attack? Not necessarily: the question of skepticism, Cavell suggests, cannot be met head-on. Instead, you must either sidestep the question and reveal the conditions which make the skeptic's position possible, or — and here is the insight I want to lift out of his essay — you can *acknowledge* the other person's pain, into which is built the word *knowledge* itself.

What constitutes an acknowledgement? In some contexts, writes Cavell, it is a confession or an admission, such as when we are late to an event and say, "I know I'm late." But in all cases it is a way we participate in a language-using community. In his own words:

It isn't as if being in a position to acknowledge something is *weaker* than being in a position to know it. On the contrary: from my acknowledging that I am late it follows that I know I'm late (which is what my words say); but from my knowing I am late it does not follow that I acknowledge I'm late—otherwise, human relationships would be altogether other than they are. One could say: Acknowledgement goes beyond knowledge. (Goes beyond not, so to speak, in the order of knowledge, but in its requirement that I *do* something or reveal something on the basis of that knowledge.)<sup>11</sup>

If I am reading Cavell correctly then, to acknowledge something presupposes at least a kind of knowledge of what one is acknowledging, though what kind of knowledge that is exactly may or may not be specified. Cavell seems to think that acknowledgements are primarily verbal in nature, given his suggestion that the construction "I know I ..." is its form.<sup>12</sup> Of course, acknowledgements can easily be nonverbal as well: imagine a friend showing up on your doorstep with the news that their spouse has left them. You do not have to *say* anything in order to give them a hug in consolation: to acknowledge what they have just told you, to demonstrate that you know it the way they do, even if you may not know its full intensity.

It is important to note that "the concept of acknowledgement," Cavell writes,

is evidenced equally by its failure as by its success.... A failure to know might just mean a piece of ignorance, an absence of something, a blank. A 'failure to acknowledge' is the presence of something, a confusion, an indifference, a callousness, an exhaustion, a coldness. Spiritual emptiness is not a blank<sup>13</sup>

The former is morally neutral; the latter is morally charged. So if we return this 'failure to know' to the domain of memory, to Kundera's reading of nostalgia as "the pain of not-knowing," what kind of failure does nostalgia constitute: a failure to know or a failure to acknowledge? Equally cogently, how can we relieve this deep epistemic pain Kundera refers to? The pill I want us to take is this: having loosened the linguistic requirement on acknowledgment, I contend visiting cemeteries is a form of acknowledgement in which this "pain of not-knowing" is ameliorated, is replaced by the certainty of knowing. And in this case the object of knowledge, insofar as our departed loved ones are still able to coax us towards its reality, is death. Now, returning to my first set of questions: having considered what acknowledgement is, why should we perform such an act? In this case, not just because in coming to know death we will have in one sense completed the project of nostalgia, having found those who have been lost to us.<sup>14</sup> The answer deserves more complexity than that. For in acknowledging the dead, moreover, we see the coin from both sides at once: we come to terms with what it means to forget and be forgotten.

There are a number of grounds for this brand of realism, a realism I am suggesting is sourced in an embrace of oblivion. The first comes from J.M. Coetzee's recent novel *Elizabeth Costello*, in which Costello, an aging Australian novelist, delivers a lecture entitled "What is Realism?" at a fictional university.<sup>15</sup> For Costello, 'realism' is essentially the certainty that one day she, and we, will be forgotten, counterbalanced by all the efforts she, and we, take to stop this coming flood. She speaks of her desire upon the publication of her first book to hear that the deposit copies had gone out, to know for sure that she was "rubbing shoulders [in the British Museum] with the other Cs, the great ones: Carlyle and Chaucer and Coleridge and Conrad." A hope that even if her "mortal shell" was going to die, then she would at least "live on through [her] creations."<sup>16</sup> Costello speaks of a lust for what we are all, after all, after: a legacy. Vicarious immortality. The slippage of time, however, has convinced her that this proposition is, of course, untenable: the British Museum, like her living body, "will crumble and decay, and the books on its shelves turn to powder."<sup>17</sup> She knows this much is true, and in this knowledge she has found solace and even the beginnings of a moral imperative: it is only a matter of time, Costello tells her audience, before the books for which she is honored

will cease to be read and eventually cease to be remembered. And properly so. There must be some limit to the burden of remembering that we impose on our children and grandchildren. They will have a world of their own, of which we should be less and less part.<sup>18</sup>

Such a statement at the same time prefigures and frames one of her last resolutions in the book, made when standing before a gate which Coetzee describes as made out of “the tissue of allegory”: “For that, finally, is all it means to be alive: to be able to die.”<sup>19</sup> Such a desperate statement need not be understood as borne of a marriage to despair, however. Death can be redemptive, Costello is suggesting, in the sense that we do a service to those who follow us by clearing ourselves from their lives. As Borges suggested in an early essay entitled, fittingly, “The Postulation of Reality,” “For us, living is a series of adaptations, which is to say, an education in oblivion.”<sup>20</sup> The Spanish word Borges uses here for *oblivion* is also translated as *forgetting*: life is an education in forgetting.<sup>21</sup>

The grounds for such an imperative are at the same time ethical and psychological. One theory of dreams holds that they are assemblages of the day’s refuse which the brain throws out at night, a neurological cry of ‘gardy loo’ which ends up landing on us every single time.<sup>22</sup> Phenomenologically, however, William James writes that if we remembered everything, “we should on most occasions be as ill off as if we remembered nothing. It would take as long for us to recall a space of time as it took the original time to elapse, and we should never get ahead with our thinking.”<sup>23</sup> And referring to Ribot, a fellow researcher, he suggests, “We thus reach the paradoxical result that one condition of remembering is that we should forget.”<sup>24</sup> Just as we would be witness to all of Costello’s life if Coetzee did not cut the whole of her thread into parts, our descendants would be the unasked-for witnesses to the whole of ours and so on *ad infinitum*. Consequently for the sake of moral, and mental survival — “to remember everything is a form of madness,” wrote Brian Friel in his play *Translations*, not long after Borges had created the character of Funes<sup>25</sup> — we must reconcile ourselves to oblivion. An oblivion which is thus “no malady of memory, but a condition of its health and its life.”<sup>26</sup>

## II.

Plečnik designed the cemetery at Ljubljana about two-thirds of the way through his career, in the middle of a host of other projects such as the National and University Library and the restoration of the banks of the Ljubljanica River.

Since his death in 1957 there has arisen a sizable critical industry in understanding Plečnik's corpus as postmodern; in 1983 Peter Krečič suggested:

All this interest [from other recent critics] is, of course, not accidental. It appears on the wave of Post-Modernism, which sees Plečnik as its fore-runner because of the synthesis of historical and rational/modern elements realized with exceptional quality in the formal vocabulary of his buildings, details, and decoration. In taking this approach, certain authors remain unaware of the risks involved in interpreting Plečnik's forms 'un-historically,' through the lens of Post-Modernism; whereby examples are frequently taken out of their proper historical context.<sup>27</sup>

To ward off Krečič's wrath I will say just a little more about this historical context before moving on to Žale in particular. For the first half or so of his career, mostly in the 1920's and 30's, Plečnik encountered fierce aesthetic and political opposition from a group of architects loosely known as the functionalists: a group committed to bare architectural forms serving the bare need of what the architecture housed. In short, they argued that a building should be designed solely to accommodate the use to which it was put, and that any further experimentation or decoration was superfluous (and dangerously so). Plečnik deviated from this ideology into a much more playful vision of what architecture could be, which incensed the functionalists and incited them to criticize him publicly (even while his works, such as Žale, were under construction). An example of Plečnik's playfulness is his use of highly common materials toward more artistic ends, such as the gas piping that he used for the handrail in the National and University Library in Ljubljana, or the drainpipes used as columns in a church at Barje. Francois Burkhardt gives an admirable account:

Plečnik turns structural elements into decorative elements — a column becomes a twisted column, for example — but leaves the construction system visible. It is often the opulence of elements that distinguishes a modern minimalist structuralism from Plečnik's rational constructions. His opulence adds a decorative dimension that is not a supplementary application, but an expressive combination born of a different constructive logic. This effect is shown to advantage when, for example, an architrave beam above an entryway becomes a combined element between the façade and principal door, strongly marking the 'entry' function of the building by the introduction of a variety of secondary elements. These elements form a multifunctional coherent whole, and constitute Plečnik's vocabulary.<sup>28</sup>

Over time, though, influenced heavily by his religious commitments, Plečnik continued to shift further and further backwards in his aesthetic sensibilities and

interests. Perhaps not surprisingly, the endpoint of this shift is an insistence on overt classical forms in his architecture, a telos at which, as Nace Šumi points out,

Plečnik's historical sources derive almost exclusively from classicism: there is not a single example of Gothic in his vocabulary. The northern element in his architecture is represented by the Vienna Secession which gave Plečnik his characteristic elegance, though with every passing year this gradually lost ground to the stricter classical vocabulary.<sup>29</sup>

How is this not a paradox? How can reuniting with a tradition, classicism, constitute a disruption of that tradition, a kind of disruption we would today be tempted call postmodern? Surely some interpretive mischief is afoot. If we take a closer look at Žale, however, the matter might become clearer — especially if we begin at the central entrance gate, the first thing every visitor to the cemetery sees. Though its main composition consists primarily of two semicircles whose inner curves almost touch one another, its resemblance to a triumphal arch, such as those still dotting the Roman Forum, is scarcely accidental: "The portal is a mighty memento," Prelovšek writes, "reminding the visitor that this is the gateway to a different world, where the laws of human materialism no longer apply."<sup>30</sup> The arch, a doorway with no door, would therefore necessarily be triumphal, given Plečnik's strict Catholicism and its doctrine of the eternal, immaterial form of the soul as more perfect than the temporal, mortal form of the body: in the Christian narrative of time and history, death never conquers life except when seen from an earthly, corporeal perspective. In the eyes of the divine it is the other way around.

This 'different world' spoken of by Prelovšek is one that Plečnik had insisted be *further* divided into discrete, separate spaces, contra to what the earliest proposals for the cemetery had envisioned. Plečnik was "dismayed," writes Krečič, "by the idea of combining the administrative and the more personal religious aspects, and horrified by the prospect of a common mortuary where the corpses would be on public display and, as he put it, funeral parties would mix."<sup>31</sup> Fulfilling the idea of the original name, the Garden of All Saints, Plečnik designed fourteen different funerary chapels — each dedicated to a patron saint of Ljubljana or Slovenia — so that in accompaniment to the public displays of grief (what Krečič identifies as "the display of the corpse on the catafalque, the aspersion and the procession"<sup>32</sup>), visitors would have an isolated, sacrosanct place in which to mourn in private. (The last chapel was thoughtfully dedicated to Adam and Eve, "in order to accommodate unbelievers or members of other religions."<sup>33</sup>)

Moreover, in comparison to other funerary architecture of the same period, many of these chapels are utterly unique in their design. Prelovšek notes that the main chapel “cannot be related to any known historical model.”<sup>34</sup>

From its stark remove from the outside world all the way down to the layout of the footpaths, then, separation and discretion seem to be the abiding philosophic motivations at Žale: as Krečič describes it,

the whole complex is also littered with lamps, benches, abstract monuments and a fountain, articulating the network of paths flanked by carefully planted hedges and trees which prevent the groups of mourners from meeting each other.<sup>35</sup>

Note the emphasis on individuation, of rendering the mourning experience into a private communion with one’s memories of the departed. Such a direct enactment of nostalgia is only possible, of course, when there is a physical location upon which one can inscribe the trace of the dead: Robinson remarks that, since his parents chose to be cremated after their deaths, he was denied a place before which to stand and properly mourn. “Visitation to the grave of a loved one is both an occasion for and an inducement to memory,” he writes. “[It] renews personal bonds in a way that a photograph on a table evidently cannot.”<sup>36</sup>

Žale thus sits ill at ease alongside the rest of Plečnik’s corpus for multiple reasons. Unlike his other work, his monumental cemetery subscribes to an uncommon number of rigidly prescribed forms, of rigorously proscribed dichotomies: as Boris Podrecca has argued, here more than anywhere else Plečnik “acts out the eternal conflict between column and wall, between floor and ceiling, between space and its envelope.”<sup>37</sup> With Žale he seems to have abandoned the spirit of irony and liminal play which informs so many of his other commissions; his “Place of Mourning” stands out because its vocabulary of forms, unlike his earlier work, no longer asks the question: “what could this become?” Such a question, I think, can always be asked of the architecture itself, the materials and edifices, not of what the architecture surrounds or sculpts — but only if one would enforce a split between these two entities in the way one would enforce a split between an object and its cast shadow. One could reasonably argue that a place and the architecture of that place are not distinct, or that talking about one without invoking the other commits some willful ignorance. But if, as Alain de Botton has suggested, architects are primarily “in the business of glorification” of their subjects,<sup>38</sup> then we do find the fulfillment of that aim at Žale, a fulfillment that

Burkhardt reads as, surprisingly, ethical in nature. When Plečnik speaks of his “desire to construct ‘a better world’ through architecture,” writes Burkhardt,

He combines the moral with the material: inherent in the word ‘better’ is a high quality architecture. If architecture can bear a visible harmony, that harmony is an ‘inner’ harmony, a spiritual force extracted from the Catholic faith.<sup>39</sup>

This is also why we should not take Žale as having veered back towards any functionalist sensibility; on the contrary, instead of sacrificing beauty and elegance to suit the needs of the site, at every turn “Plečnik tried to adapt the functional buildings—for autopsies, for a caretaker, and for workshops to build coffins — to the symbolic intention of the site.”<sup>40</sup> Consequently traveling to Žale — for a native Slovenian and a foreigner alike — can be taken as a tripartite pilgrimage: not only to behold the harmony Burkhardt speaks of (and which Krečič takes somewhat too literally in his reading of Žale’s axial layout<sup>41</sup>), not only to complete the project of nostalgia, but to acknowledge for the sake, even the need, of the knowing self the necessary forgetting which is to come. “Cemeteries are really for the living and not for the dead; it is we who need them,” writes Robinson.<sup>42</sup> And according to Plečnik we need them to be a locus utterly apart from our living world — a locus absolutely delineated, inaugurated by an entrance gate and concluded by an exit path (which remains, unfortunately, unexecuted). The classicism found at Žale becomes then not only an argument about or against postmodernism, but becomes itself an acknowledgement of the past, performed in a language of the visual, of the material and the structural: a language that is, as well, willfully and gracefully open to decay.

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<sup>1</sup> Damjan Prelovšek, *Jose Plečnik 1872-1957, Architectura Perennis*, Patricia Crampton and Eileen Martin, tr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 305.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xi.

<sup>3</sup> Roach, xi.

<sup>4</sup> David Robinson, *Beautiful Death: Art of the Cemetery* (New York: Penguin Studio, 1996), 2-3. Robinson’s book of photographs, from which this essay comes, has no page numbers—thus my citations are all in relation to the first page of the essay.

<sup>5</sup> Laura Wexler, “The Proleptic Gaze,” Visiting lecture given at Duke University Department of English (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University, 24 February 2004).

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- <sup>6</sup> Leon Edel, *Henry James: A Life* (London: William Collins & Sons, 1985), 706. The irony of James' case is that after having said this, he did not, in fact, die—he was to live for another three months before 'the distinguished thing' would finally arrive.
- <sup>7</sup> Robinson, 3.
- <sup>8</sup> Milan Kundera, *Ignorance* (London: Faber, 2002), 5-6.
- <sup>9</sup> Dennis Walder, "Writing, Representation, and Postcolonial Nostalgia," Blackwell Lecture (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 11 Oct 2004).
- <sup>10</sup> Stanley Cavell, "Knowing and Acknowledging," *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1976).
- <sup>11</sup> Cavell, 256-7.
- <sup>12</sup> Cavell, 256.
- <sup>13</sup> Cavell, 263-4.
- <sup>14</sup> I think of the Italian word for "to miss," *mancare*, which comes over in English as transitive—which it isn't, really: instead of saying *mi manchi*, "I miss you," a direct translation would render it "You are missing to me."
- <sup>15</sup> J.M. Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello* (London: Viking, 2003). The lecture was originally delivered by Coetzee himself years earlier, and published under the same name. Like many other pieces he has already written, Coetzee has woven parts of this lecture into the fabric of his novel.
- <sup>16</sup> Coetzee, 17.
- <sup>17</sup> Coetzee, 17.
- <sup>18</sup> Coetzee, 20.
- <sup>19</sup> Coetzee, 210.
- <sup>20</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, "The Postulation of Reality," in *The Total Library: Nonfiction 1922-1986*, Eliot Weinberger, ed. (London: Penguin, 1999), 61.
- <sup>21</sup> I am grateful to Fiona Mackintosh for this observation.
- <sup>22</sup> See Owen Flanagan, *Dreaming Souls: Sleep, Dreams, and the Evolution of the Conscious Mind* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 36-40. Though he does not agree with this theory, he does present it as credible.
- <sup>23</sup> William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (Harvard University Press, 1981 [1890]), 640.
- <sup>24</sup> James, 641.
- <sup>25</sup> Brian Friel, *Translations* (London: Samuel French, Inc., 1981), 81.
- <sup>26</sup> James, 641.
- <sup>27</sup> Peter Krečič, "Plečnik and His Critics," in *Jože Plečnik 1872-1957, Architecture and the City*, Oxford Urban Design Exhibition Catalogue (Oxford Polytechnic: 1983), 27.
- <sup>28</sup> Francois Burkhardt, "Modern or Postmodern: A Question of Ethics?" in *Jože Plečnik, Architect: 1872-1957*, Francois Burkhardt, ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989), 113.
- <sup>29</sup> Nace Šumi, "Plečnik and Absolute Architecture," in *Jože Plečnik 1872-1957, Architecture and the City*, Oxford Urban Design Exhibition Catalogue (Oxford Polytechnic: 1983), 56.
- <sup>30</sup> Prelovšek, *Architectura Perennis*, 304.
- <sup>31</sup> Peter Krečič, *Plečnik: The Complete Works* (London: Academy Editions, 1993), 140.
- <sup>32</sup> Krečič, *Plečnik: The Complete Works*, 140.
- <sup>33</sup> Prelovšek, *Architectura Perennis*, 305.
- <sup>34</sup> Prelovšek, *Architectura Perennis*, 305. There seems to be some disagreement about this point, as Krečič—who is, it must be said, writing later than Prelovšek—suggests possible derivations for some of the chapels, calling Plečnik's array "a small museum of architectural models culled from all over Europe and beyond" (in Krečič, *Plečnik: The Complete Works*, 142). In defense of Prelovšek's claim, however, Krečič does acknowledge the inimitable novelty of Plečnik's appropriation.
- <sup>35</sup> Krečič, *Plečnik: The Complete Works*, 142.
- <sup>36</sup> Robinson, 16. For a book-length meditation on this idea, see Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Richard Howard, tr. (London: Vintage, 2000 [1980]).
- <sup>37</sup> Boris Podrecca, "Columns, Walls, Space," in *Jože Plečnik, Architect: 1872-1957*, Francois Burkhardt, ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989), 173. I am not sure that such a conflict is necessarily eternal, or necessarily a conflict at all: the claim sounds rather like the claim that word and image are always (or necessarily) opposed to one another. See, for example, James A. W. Heffernan, *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (Chicago University Press, 1993), and one of many responses, Andrew S. Becker, "Contest or Concert? A Speculative Essay on Ekphrasis and Rivalry between the Arts," *Classical and Modern Literature* 23.1 (2003).

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<sup>38</sup> Alain de Botton, "Form Follows Inspiration," *New York Times*, 11 July 2004 (Late Edition, Section 4, Page 13, Column 1).

<sup>39</sup> Burkhardt, 115. His reading is consonant with Šumi's argument that "each example of Plečnik's architecture can be justified by its high goals: it always enriches its users spiritually" (in Šumi, "Plečnik and Absolute Architecture," 56).

<sup>40</sup> Damjan Prelovšek, "The Life and Work of Jože Plečnik," in *Jože Plečnik, Architect: 1872-1957*, Francois Burkhardt, ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989), 76.

<sup>41</sup> Krečič, *Plečnik: The Complete Works*, 143.

<sup>42</sup> Robinson, 2.