

Brief History on Thresholds

During the Venetian Renaissance, construction created a whole new status for people in society. Like before, items such as art, jewelry, clothes, and many other items were symbolic of hierarchy, or a person or family's status. Prior to the Venetian Renaissance, a home still showed status, but it wasn't until this time period where small details and gothic architecture really came to the forefront of status and design (Rutherglen, 2012). The history of the door can be viewed as a metaphor for religious or spiritual thresholds that existed prominently during the 15th and 16th centuries. During this time period, everything was religious based or inspired somehow by religious factors. The term "crossing the threshold" is very prominent in how stories are constructed as well. It is a focus on the character leaving their safe environment and crossing over into a dangerous environment (Safford, 2019). We can perceive the same situation when it comes to doors in the built environment. Doorways are thresholds in and out of "safe" and "dangerous" places, it is the gateway to two completely different places. A door leads one into a safe, welcoming home and away from the dangerous outside world. During the Venetian Renaissance, doors were frequently constructed to be grander based on status. This represented how important the building was to everyone. If the entrance had more details and the doors were larger, it was an important place in society or for affluent people. Thresholds were a symbol of power and money; they divided the outside world to the inside world (Rutherglen, 2012), and we have loosely continued that tradition in architecture today.

Construction

The construction of doorways was based on the spiritual idea of "crossing the threshold" where many theories and ideas have been created. It was stated by Teyssot that the interior of a space is made up of exterior items. The doorway between the interior and exterior is the threshold between reality and one's dreams (2008). Gothic architecture is known for intense arches and is extremely detailed work usually constructed with masonry. The construction of the entrance at UC at Western University has heavily replicated gothic architecture because of its mason materials, repeated style of arches, detailed windows, and its overall scale.



Figure 1 – Southwell Minister arches



Figure 2 – Entrance at UC at Western

Detail

The detail that is included in gothic design is extremely intricate and usually is meant to tell a story. Gargoyles are located near thresholds to keep away the demonic spirits. The interior of the threshold is a place to be safe and every detail included in the design is purposely done to portray that (Cardenas, 2019).



Figure 3 – Entrance at UC at Western



Figure 4 – Gothic Architecture Entrance

Space and Place

Tuan stated that a vast and open space creates a sense of freedom (1977). A grand entrance gives an individual crossing the threshold a sense of empowerment and a feeling that they are entering an important place. The high doors and arches gives the feeling of freedom and connects the student to their university in this case. The entrance on the building is designed to give students or anyone entering, a sense of empowerment in such an important place.



Figure 5 – Entrance at UC at Western

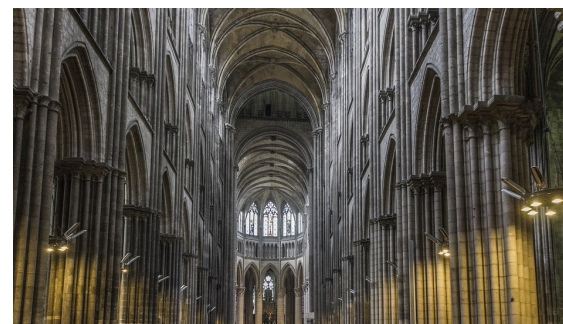


Figure 6 – Vast high ceilings and arches in gothic design

Representation and Ornamentation

Every detail included in gothic architecture is done for a specific purpose. As stated previously, details are included in the ornamentation to tell stories. The ornamentation on the buildings mimic the overall design of the building. The details follow the same suit and continue to use the same line styles that are appealing to the human eye. Sharp points, curved arches, and very intricate features are prominent in the ornamentation as well as the building.



Figure 7 – Entrance at UC at Western



Figure 8 – Gothic Architecture details

- Figure 1 – Southwell Minister window arches, retrieved from Khan Academy.
 Figure 2 – Entrance at UC at Western University, retrieved from Case Studies class webpage.
 Figure 3 – Entrance at UC at Western University, retrieved from Case Studies class webpage.
 Figure 4 – A gothic church entrance, retrieved from iStock
 Figure 5 - Figure 3 - Entrance at UC at Western University, retrieved from Case Studies class webpage.
 Figure 6 – High ceilings and large gothic arches that create a sense of freedom, retrieved from Design Ideas for the Built World.
 Figure 7 - Figure 3 - Entrance at UC at Western University, retrieved from Case Studies class webpage.
 Figure 8 - An image describing common Gothic Architecture details and ornamentation, retrieved from Wikimedia commons

References

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