



# **Travel, Space, Architecture**

*Edited by*  
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*and*  
**Miodrag Mitrasinovic**

ASHGATE e-BOOK

**TRAVEL, SPACE, ARCHITECTURE** .....



.....**TRAVEL,**

.....**SPACE,**

.....**ARCHITECTURE**



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– *Jilly Traganou and Miodrag Mitrašinić*  
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*To Maya, our companion in this and all our travels. ....*

*Jilly Traganou*

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# I. PREFACE

*Jilly Traganou*

1 .....  
Arjun Appadurai (1996) discusses the work of imagination as a 'constitutive feature of modern subjectivity' that offers 'new resources and new disciplines for the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds' (1996: 3). In our contemporary times, 'electronic mediation and mass migration mark the world of the present ... as ... forces ... that seem to impel ... the work of the imagination ... Today ... persons and images often meet unpredictably, outside the certainties of home' (1996: 4).

This book aims to explore how conditions of physical and metaphorical dislocation affect spatio-architectural practices, and how these conditions redefine the parallel notions of place, culture and identity. It also claims the need to define a new theoretical territory in architectural scholarship that studies space and architecture through the notion of travel. We do so in order to reveal that spatio-architectural practices in their conceptual and material dimensions are and have been multisited and have to be examined through the prism of trajectories and networks rather than singular perceptions of place, or essentialist notions of identity and culture. Thus this book is set to examine the multiple relationships that emerge between the acts of traveling and the conceptualization, representation, and production of space in its various scales and modes – architectural, urban, geographic, social, cultural and political – and within various contexts of modernity in which the 'work of imagination',<sup>1</sup> which is vitally connected with possibilities of travel, plays a central role (APPADURAI 1996: 31). The following chapters examine a spectrum of encounters in various cultural and historical contexts, from the eighteenth century to the present, that led to the production of diverse media and forms of spatial representation and inhabitation, from cartographies and travel diaries to interiors, buildings, landscapes and urban environments. The relationships we explore here are the effects of cross-cultural encounters that occurred in the context of a variety of travel modes, including exploratory, professional, or educational travel; tourism, colonization, immigration and refuge-seeking.

In the discipline of architecture, traveling does not hold the same critical position that it does in the fields of urban and cultural geography, anthropology and cultural studies. Recognizing a lack of comprehensive scholarly literature on the subject, we first introduced the theme in 2001 in a conference session titled 'Travel, Space, Architecture' at the 54th Annual Meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians in Toronto. The response to the call for papers was encouraging: 23 abstracts were submitted and six were presented

in the Toronto session.<sup>2</sup> Seven years in the making, this book consists of papers by some of the participants in the Toronto session, as well as several newly commissioned chapters and four interviews with architects who practice internationally. It brings together scholars of architecture, design and urban studies who have embarked on various transdisciplinary explorations, along with practitioners of architecture who find the subject of travel central to their work and itinerant paths.

The authors of the chapters in this volume ask the following questions: What (pre)conceptions shape the identities of architects, urbanists, and non-professional space-constituents and their approaches to places as they travel from one cultural context to the other? What ideas travel with them and become transplanted at the new places of inhabitation? What spatial elements or vocabularies do they choose to bring back home, and how do they interact with their new environments? How do visions of space through new travel apparatuses reshape broader spatial imaginations and practices? What happens in cases of lost homes, multiple attachments, or when ‘networks’ shaped by processes of mobility and distant communication replace ‘communities’?

It is obvious that traveling operates not only as a real and important phenomenon in the world but also as a subject and even a theoretical tool of emerging scholarly discourses. With this volume we wish to demonstrate that the lens of travel can move architecture theory and practice beyond the centrality of static, place-bound principles into an understanding of more open-ended networks of relationships (of subjects and sites), as well as bring architecture scholarship to a more productive and engaging dialogue with other academic and professional fields, particularly those that began outlining a discursive, transdisciplinary space in relation to travel and beyond.

## 2

The original group of scholars who gathered in Toronto for the session included Annabel Wharton, Samer Akkach, Katherine Bartsch, Sarah Teasley, Christopher Taylor, Christopher Drew Armstrong, Herman Schlimme, Jilly Traganou and Miodrag Mitrašević (the last two as chairs).

# II. FOR A THEORY OF TRAVEL IN ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES<sup>3</sup>

*Jilly Traganou*

*All travel is a form of gradual self-extinction.*

–SHIVA NAIPAUL, *BEYOND THE DRAGON'S MOUTH* (1984)

*It was when I stood inside the Parthenon in Rome that I first became aware of the real meaning of architectural space. What I experienced was not space in the conceptual sense – it was real – before my very eyes ... The 'force' of excitement I felt at that time is what I would like to call architecture.*

–TADA0 ANDO, *PLACE – GEOMETRY – NATURE* (1989)

*We're in a good position where we don't have any ties at the moment. We don't have any children, we don't even own a house. And our ambitions are to go somewhere else and experience more.*

–MALE ARCHITECT IN HIS MID-TWENTIES; QUOTED IN LARSEN ET AL. (2006)

Since the advent of modernity, and especially throughout the twentieth century, travel has become an important landmark in the careers of architects both world-renowned and anonymous. Such travel often occurred voluntarily, as in the case of young Le Corbusier's journey to the 'East' in the 1910s, or Tadao Ando's journey to the 'West' in the 1960s; but sometimes it was initiated as a matter of survival, as in the displacement of numerous European architects between the wars and during the World War II era.<sup>4</sup>

Generations of architects – following in the footsteps of the 'masters', seeking what they sought, or inventing entirely new itineraries of their own – have traveled to various destinations for work, education, and networking, occasionally creating their own architectural 'grand tour' and bringing home the evidence of travel (sketches, drawings, slides, and anecdotes) to be integrated with their architectural vocabulary. Within these contexts, however, there is no shortage of cases of lost or multiple homes, as architects sometimes

3

I am indebted to Professors Kenneth Frampton and Annabel Wharton for their insightful comments during the preparation of this chapter.

fluctuate between localities that render definitive, spatially constructed declarations of belonging impossible.

Architects, of course, do not travel simply in a professional capacity, just as they are not the only individuals who travel or participate in spatial production. Traveling populations such as tourists, expatriates, immigrants, and refugees also have a significant impact on spatial production in its material as well as imaginary dimensions. Specific building types (such as tourist resorts, railway stations, airports, or refugee camps) as well as overall urban planning projects (from tactical appropriations to historic preservation, place marketing, and gentrification) are realized for the benefit of travelers, or sometimes as a result of the very actions of travelers themselves. Yet, as the various types of encounters generated during travel facilitate the softening of boundaries among cultures and allow processes of alterity to occur, they sometimes also produce closures and mechanisms of exclusion that harden and segregate cultural boundaries.

This book argues for the significance of travel in the conceptualization, representation, production, and consumption of architectural, urban, and geographical space under various conditions of modernity. These processes have occurred during the transition from an imperial world order to one that is based on the distinct divisions of the nation-state and the rules of internationalism, and, more recently, to a world order that heralds the dissolution of national borders, thus initiating new transnational types of allegiances and citizens' affiliations.

The fascination with travel that we encounter in architecture is deeply rooted in an intellectual tradition that links traveling epistemologically to the production of knowledge. The belief in the capacity of travel to provide insight, facilitating an epistemological journey from habit to knowledge, can be found in systems of thought that are fundamentally different from one another – from Islam to the scientific reasoning of the Enlightenment and beyond – and is not confined to any particular cultural constellation or epoch (EUBEN 2006: 15).<sup>5</sup> Traveling as a means of providing perspective – the critical distance paramount to reflection, cross-cultural understanding, and intellectual stance – is an activity shared by architects among other intellectuals and professionals.<sup>6</sup> But travel is also a means of conquering space and time, and often is inseparable from territorial claims such as colonization or warfare; it also drives economic development, within which architecture and spatial production play a fundamental role. Within the modern era, developments in methods of management, as well as political and economic separations of labor and knowledge-based industries, have dispersed the process of architectural production to various sites across the globe. When a new structure is built today, the conceptualization and design, the harvesting and processing of materials, the manufacture of parts of the building and the final assembly often take place in different locations. As a consequence, people who are involved

4 .....  
During this period, important European architects were displaced to non-European countries. Mies Van De Rohe (1886–1969), Walter Gropius (1883–1969) and Marcel Breuer (1920–81) moved to the US (Mies in 1938, Gropius and Breuer in 1937), Bruno Taut (1880–1938) to Japan in 1933–36 and Turkey in 1936–38. This was paralleled by the massive displacement of Jewish architects. Such were the cases of German-born Richard Kaufmann (1889–1954) or Ukraine-born Itzhak Rapoport (1901–89) who moved to Israel in 1920 and 1928 respectively, or German-born Erich Mendelsohn (1887–1953) who moved to the West Coast of the United States in 1941, after having lived in London since 1933.

5 .....  
As early as in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (transcribed 1900 BCE), and in Homer's *Odyssey* (800 BCE) the pursuit of knowledge and the attainment of wisdom has been linked to travel and the direct experience of the radically unfamiliar (EUBEN 2006: 20).

6 .....  
Travel has also been viewed with skepticism as a dangerous endeavor which may be potentially intellectually harmful for the individual. Several advocates of the benefits of travel from Plato to Rousseau also warned about the dangers associated with it (SEE EUBEN 2002: 22; VAN DEN ABEELE 1992: 91). Architects also expressed hesitations about travel. Le Corbusier in the 1920s stated that 'Rome is the damnation of the half-educated. To send architectural students to Rome is to cripple them for life' (LE CORBUSIER [1927] 1972: 161, CITED IN JONES 2001: 137).



in the building process originate from different parts of the world, and a significant amount of travel is required in order to merge these disparate processes. Finally, as immigration is increasing worldwide today, the cultural identity of the subjects who will inhabit, utilize, and be affected by architecture is unpredictable and constantly on the move.

This book claims the need to reconsider architecture and space through the notion of travel, in order to bring into light the ‘multisitedness’ of architecture as it occurs both as a conceptual and physical enterprise, and also the multiplicity of subjectivities that are involved in spatial operations exceeding fixed geocultural definitions.

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## MOBILITY AND ARCHITECTURE: A BRIEF OUTLINE

Even in eras when mobility was restricted for wider populations, architects – or more broadly speaking, architectural knowledge – always traveled. This occurred as dominant cultures sought to expand their architectural and social order from centers to peripheries; for instance, from the ancient Greek metropolises to their colonies, or from the centers of the Roman or Byzantine empires to their provinces. In addition, such cultures also promoted the exchange of architects, master builders and other constituents of spatial production, which produced a mutual historical indebtedness between cultures of different faiths, as in the Christian and Islamic worlds during the Renaissance,<sup>7</sup> (KOSTOF 1977: 61–62) or the Islamic, Hindi, and Buddhist populations in their transcontinental architectural practices in Eurasian and North African territories in premodern eras. Such exchanges are reminders of the fact that notions such as the ‘West’ or the ‘East’ are in fact amalgamations of multiple traditions and cultural lineages that are usually obscured by these labels.

### *Mobility and Modernity*

The significantly higher level of mobility that characterizes modernity in comparison with premodern times is the effect of a broad epistemological shift that resulted from a synergy among new technologies, notions of natural space, and political ideas of democracy characteristic of the Enlightenment. Mobility was crucial to the rise and expansion of European hegemony that reversed a world economic system spanning Eurasia, Southeast Asia, and Eastern Africa, and which had peaked during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the valorization of the notion of mobility-as-progress that was at the core of the Enlightenment narrative was soon transferred to various contexts beyond Europe.

Moving from the exclusive realm of the aristocrats, clergy, military officers, or building-related professionals who were mandated or privileged to form links across the world,

7

An important international architect of that era who traveled and built in several cities of the Ottoman Empire was Mimar Sinan (1492–1558). Broadly speaking, elements of Byzantine architecture were used as a base for the development of the Classical era of Ottoman architecture. In its later stages, Ottoman architecture cross-pollinated with Baroque and Rococo elements from Europe, due to frequent exchanges with France.

8

Under this system, trading and exchange between urban networks was flourishing, even though within conditions that would not fully qualify as modern. Various characteristics of modernity are to be found, of course, in various conditions of pre-modernity across the world, such as urbanization, social and physical mobility, media communication, expansion of trade networks, etc.

travel during the modern era gradually became available to a wider public. As this new traveling populace evolved into migrant workers and tourists, their new needs were facilitated by major architectural projects, from new affordable housing to luxurious hotels. Within this context, travel became viewed as a condition paramount to liberal ideas that encouraged processes of social mobility, escape, and exchange with distant others. Under conditions of global social and economic inequality, however, travel became the privilege of those who had the capacity to afford it and was accompanied by colonization that de-territorialized parts of the world only in order to re-territorialize and reorder them (HARVEY 1990: 264).

As capitalism fueled the expansion of mobility, spatial barriers were overcome and the pace of life increased, leading to what David Harvey calls the ‘time–space compression.’<sup>9</sup> This sense of the world’s inward collapse made the opposition between ‘being’ (sited in place) and ‘becoming’ (seeing place as subservient to spatial transformations) central to the history of Modernism (HARVEY 1990: 257, 283), and architecture played a pivotal role in it. Since the advent of modernity, architectural developments owe largely to innovative modes of travel. During the eighteenth century, the development of neoclassicism, the first truly international style in architecture, was inseparable from decisions by the movement’s founders to expand the grand tour beyond the frontiers of Rome to include Greece.<sup>10</sup> The École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, which taught the language of neoclassicism (among others), attracted students of various nationalities.<sup>11</sup> Owen Jones’ *Grammar of Ornament* (1856), which became an inspiration and a guide for architects from the Victorian to the modern eras,<sup>12</sup> was a result of the author’s travels in the Near East and Spain; its polychromic patterns from Europe’s ‘others’ were meant to also revitalize the architecture of the ‘center’. At the same time numerous ‘Orientalist’ architects<sup>13</sup> cross-pollinated this style with architectural vernaculars and traditions from various locales around the world, often in the service of colonizing regimes. Some important examples of twentieth-century architects’ work in the scale of the city were projects for the colonies, which exported but, most importantly, tested architectural knowledge in the new imperial territories.<sup>14</sup> Simultaneously, aspiring colonizers of non-Western countries, colonized subjects, and citizens of countries that remained uncolonized but were influenced by the overall nineteenth- and twentieth-century process of internationalism, embarked on their own itineraries in order to teach or learn from their respective ‘others.’<sup>15</sup>

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the very development of the inherently cosmopolitan Modern Movement would have been almost unthinkable without frequent exchanges among architects, designers, and artists, during a period marked by wars, revolutions, and the slow dissolution of empires. From the early twentieth century, exploratory and educational travel<sup>16</sup> was vital to the development of the international language of mod-

9 .....  
David Harvey has used the term ‘time–space compression’ to describe the sense of inward collapse of the world as spatial barriers are being overcome and the pace of life is speeding up (HARVEY 1990: 240–307).

10 .....  
These included European architects such as Julien-David Le Roy (1724–1803), James Stuart (1713–88) and Nicholas Revett (1720–1804).

11 .....  
École des Beaux-Arts students who came from abroad were the Americans Richard Morris Hunt (1828–95), Henry Hobson Richardson (1838–86), and Raymond Hood (1881–1934), or the Belgian Victor Horta (1861–1947), among numerous others.

12 .....  
This book was particularly influential to Louis Sullivan (1856–1924) and Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959).

13 .....  
Examples of Orientalist architecture are produced by Josiah Conder (1852–1920) who lived in Japan in the period 1877–1920, and who designed various buildings for the new Meiji government, such as the Tokyo Imperial Museum and the Rokumeikan, and Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944) who practiced in India in the period 1912–29 and who designed New Delhi’s Rashtrapati Bhavan (Presidential Palace) together with several other projects and the city’s plan as replacement to the old capital Calcutta, based on his invention of the ‘Delhi Order’.

14 .....  
Ernest Hébrard’s (1875–1933) urban plans and building designs in French Indochina after 1923, Le Corbusier’s various Obus versions for the colonized by the French Algiers in the period 1931–42, and the radial town plan for Tat’ung in colonized by the Japanese Manchuria, spearheaded by Kishida Hideto, Maekawa Kunio and Tshuchiura Kameki in the 1930s, are products of architects’/urbanists’ perceptions of colonized territories, as fluctuating between particularism and universality.

15

Japanese architects Yamada Mamoru (1894–1966) and Horiguchi Sutemi (1895–1984), Turkish architect Sedad Eldem (1908–88), and Greek architect Aris Konstantinidis (1913–93) are just a few such cases of architects who traveled to the West, struggling with a world order that positioned both historic and modern European architecture as superior from that of their native countries. These architects of the so-called ‘periphery’, but all paramount for the development of modern architecture in their countries, strove to find ways to position their native ‘culture’, and subsequently architectural production, within this new world system. For extended discussions on this matter, please see Chapters 3 and 4 in this book by Esra Akcan and Sarah Teasley respectively.

16

Examples of exploratory travel are Frank Lloyd Wright’s early travels to Japan in 1905, El Lissitzky’s to Germany and the rest of Europe in 1909, Le Corbusier’s to the Balkans in 1911 and America in 1935, and Sedad Eldem to Europe in 1929.

17

For instance, Japan’s Kunio Maekawa (1905–86), and the Spaniard José Louis Sert (1902–83) held temporary residence in Paris in the 1920s for working at Le Corbusier’s atelier, while Frank Lloyd Wright traveled to Japan in the 1920s having committed to the building of the Imperial Hotel and private houses.

18

It is interesting to note that in 1954 the Architecture Association launched a six-month graduate program in Tropical Architecture, which later changed its name to Tropical Studies and later to Development and Tropical Studies. The program was initially led by Maxwell Fry (1899–1987) an architect who had practiced extensively in tropical climates, and its aim was to train architects to practice in the South, including architects from Britain who worked in the Commonwealth, as well as architects from these countries.

ernism. Moreover, within this framework, travel was often necessary for apprenticeships or overseas architectural commissions.<sup>17</sup>

Landmark events in modern architecture, such as the Congrès International d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) (1928–59) (the most heroic of which was the fourth CIAM in 1933, held on a cruise ship en route from Marseilles to Athens) or the Ekistics Symposium in Delos (1965), could not have taken place but by means of traveling. The epistemological apparatus of modern travel, and the new modes of visuality and subjectivity that it evoked, were crucial to the development of modern architecture that was prone to a belief in technological utopianism. Intellectuals of the modern era realized that the various aspects of motion (from the broad allure of tourism to the specifics of automotive mobility that shaped the modern metropolis) could change individual and group experiences. Georg Simmel’s *blazé* and Walter Benjamin’s *flâneur*, two dominant though substantially different modern urban subjectivities, emerged precisely out of such realizations, expanding on Baudelaire’s notions of ‘the transient, the fleeting, the contingent’ as fundamental aspects of modernity. It was not only the pedestrian who was emblematic of modernity, however, but also the train passenger, car driver, and jet-plane passenger (URRY 1995: 141). The shifting ways of viewing the world, from the vantage point of the railway, the ocean liner, or the airplane, as well as the new gadgets associated with traveling, provided architects, urbanists, and designers with novel image-making and viewing tools (such as cameras and binoculars) but also with new ways of conceiving architecture and urban space. Convergences between architects and thinkers of the new era of speed were in effect in the work of the Italian futurists in the 1910s, who imagined an architecture dynamic, ephemeral and kinetic, in an era of ‘ubiquity and omnipresent speed’, as expressed by Marinetti (1909, CITED IN KERN 2003: 119). Just as experiments by visual artists during the early industrial era were influenced directly by optical effects produced by the rotation of the wheel and the speed of the railway travel (CRARY 1990), in the age of aviation the work of architects reflected the new mode of territorial observation from above. The horizons opened by aviation in the early twentieth century led to a new way of reading the terrain as a two-dimensional map, and brought architecture, urbanism, and landscape into unifying visual patterns.

### ***Mobility in the Post-World War II Era***

The remaking of borders and, as a consequence, of identities that was still at work in the first part of the twentieth century subsided in the post-World War II period, which emphasized national architecture and overall design production within the enclosed borders of each sovereign nation-state, many of which needed reconstruction and renewal after the war. This was paralleled by exchanges between nations with linguistic, regional, or political

affiliations (such as for instance German-speaking countries, Nordic countries, countries of the Commonwealth, or countries of the Non-Aligned Movement) that were often organized or endorsed by the respective states. During this period, the Bauhaus as a leading institution was subsumed by new educational establishments or those reinvigorated by a new director, such as the Graduate School of Design (GSD) at Harvard University or Cranbrook Academy in the United States, and the Architectural Association (AA) in the United Kingdom.<sup>18</sup> Architects and designers from around the world attended these schools,<sup>19</sup> obtaining membership in reputable international circles that provided them with support and visibility in their professional careers. Yet, despite these travels, most architects of the postwar period aspired to return to their home bases rather than work internationally. As part of their education or individual goals, architects were also eager to travel to remote regions of ‘otherness’, often motivated by spatio-anthropological quests and continuing a legacy established as a counter-discourse to Modernism in the 1930s by Bernard Rudofsky.<sup>20</sup> The increase in the number of multinational construction firms that emerged to facilitate the ‘development’ and decolonization of various regions in the world, often under the auspices of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, also contributed to an increase in architects’ and engineers’ international commissions. Numerous professionals in the construction industry expatriated to foreign countries for the construction of large-scale engineering, tourist, or housing projects.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Mobility and Globalization***

Our contemporary era, still under the premises of the unfinished project of modernity, has witnessed revolutionary growth in the modes and degree of mobility that have become a daily reality for a large percentage of the workforce in the developed world. Architecture, as well as other design professions, has been ready to respond to contemporary globalizing requirements.<sup>22</sup> In part, it has been assisted by the international scope of architectural and design education, which emphasizes a range of decontextualized ‘transferable skills’ (a notion developed by Robert Merton in 1957) beyond those generated for specific conditions, such as local construction or manufacturing methods or building codes. Most importantly, architects, as other designers, carry a sense of belonging to a clearly demarcated occupational group whose members have acquired the same ethos – one that can readily overcome national cultural differences and can transfer their ‘collective structures of meaning’ as they move in global space (KENNEDY 2004: 163). For most designers today, working within a broader regime that often views being local as ‘a sign of social deprivation and degradation’ (BAUMAN 1998: 2), ambition is intertwined with the career possibilities created by globalization. Traveling for education or work is often associated with a feeling of freedom, as is

19 .....  
 Among numerous others, Bulgaria-born, ethnic Greek Constantinos Doxiadis (1913–75), Japan-born Fumihiko Maki, China-born I.M. Pei and Japan-born Yoshio Taniguchi studied at GSD, while Sri Lankan-born Geoffrey Bawa (1919–2003) and Iraq-born Zaha Hadid studied at the AA.

20 .....  
 Such were for instance Aldo Van Eyck’s (1918–99) travels to study the Dogon settlements in Africa in the 1960s, to be emulated later on by Hiroshi Hara’s travels to North Africa with his students at Tokyo University in the 1980s.

21 .....  
 In 1951 Shadrach Woods (1923–73), George Candilis (1913–55), and Henri Piot joined the office of ATBAT-Afrique (*Atelier des Bâtisseurs*) a multidisciplinary organization founded in 1947 by Le Corbusier, Vladimir Bodiansky, André Wogenscky and Marcel Py. Works of the subsequent firm Candilis-Josic-Woods, as well as by Constantinos Doxiadis in the Middle East and North Africa, among numerous others during the period from the 1950s to the 1970s, are interconnected with such major developmental enterprises.

22 .....  
 It is important to note that the character of ‘stabilitas’ and the scale of architecture seemingly differentiate it from other design practices (such as graphic or product design, for instance) whose products are by nature more portable. In the contemporary world, however, mobility affects all design disciplines beyond scale. Not only small-scale products are promoted to wider audiences that expand beyond the closures of sovereign nation-states, but also the users and makers of architecture are in constant move due to major immigration trends and new work conditions.

23

For a discussion about offshoring by US architecture offices, see Solomon and Linn (2005).

24

For the Centre Culturel Tjibaou (Cultural Center of Tjibaou) in the French territory of New Caledonia by Renzo Piano, for instance, a building that was built as a means of reflecting and preserving the indigenous culture of the Kanak people, mahogany was harvested from forests in Africa to be shipped to France for intensive shaping, gluing and forming and finally to New Caledonia for its assemblage at the final location (FINDLEY 2005: 44).

25

Enzo Manzini is one of the first proponents of the Slow Design movement that advocates the use of local resources, transparency in production systems and de-intermediation, sustainability and sensoriality in design (MANZINI AND VEZZOLI 2008).

obvious in the third of the quotes that open this chapter. Today building construction and architecture firms are key participants in the global economy, increasingly seeking overseas contracts and establishing subsidiaries abroad. Among other types of global companies, they benefit from the revolution in electronic communications, the rise of global cities (as strategic sites for global capital that generate business opportunities and attract numerous migrants), and postnational single-market regulations, such as those within the European Union that permit all businesses and citizens within the region to bid on equal terms for contracts and jobs (KENNEDY 2004: 159).

Even though the degree to which an architect travels was seen until recently as an indicator of their status, usually accompanied by widespread publicity in the international media, this is no longer necessarily the case. Celebrity architects – Norman Foster, Renzo Piano, Santiago Calatrava, to mention but a few – do gain prestige as they travel for commissions throughout the world, but numerous architectural offices today constantly restructure their protocols, office organization, and communication in order to accommodate the ever increasing degree of mobility of their principals and staff. Well-known firms with multiple offices around the world (Ove Arup or Richard Rogers Partnership), as well as medium- and small-scale architectural practices, obtain commissions or win architectural competitions at distant locations that often result in transnational collaborations. To accomplish this effectively, practices increasingly resort to the solution of ‘offshoring’, moving large portions of their design process to regions with highly skilled and low-paid technicians, thus contributing to the increased flow of information and capital throughout the globe.<sup>23</sup> The physical materials that constitute contemporary buildings are often produced off site and transported to their actual location; importing materials from different parts of the globe is an established practice that ties architecture with transnational market networks.<sup>24</sup> Amid this delirium of mobility, current design thinkers and practitioners have become increasingly weary of the negative consequences of travel, not least for its significant ecological footprint. Many designers are working today for mobility substitution, finding it imperative to ‘design away the need to move, and foster new time–space relations: from distance to duration, from faster to closer’ (THACKARA 2005: 51). These approaches are paralleled by a recent interest in ‘slowness’ rather than speed,<sup>25</sup> as well as by efforts to reduce the inordinate movement of material that is involved in the contemporary building industry.

### *Immobility and Imagination*

A view of travel must also take into account those who, due to various restrictions, remain relatively immobile, and it must expand the definition of travel to include the imaginative capacity that is engendered during non-physical types of border-crossing. Indeed, according to political scientist Roxanne Euben, journeys

may not even require physical movement ... imaginative travel across history, for example, may well involve exposure to what is strange and estranging, a dislocation that can initiate awareness of and reflection on modes of life other than one's own.

(EUBEN 2006: 12)

These journeys start and end before physical dislocation, and involve the imaginary construction of the 'other' in opposition to the notions of 'home' and 'self'. Bruno Taut, long before his exile from Germany and his trips to Japan and Turkey, indulged in his imaginary East as the 'savior of Europe', as is obvious in his work *Ex Oriente Lux (The Sun Rises from the East, 1919)* 'treating the Orient as a region where one could search for an alternative to and ultimately redeem what he perceived as the Western crisis that culminated in World War I' (AKCAN 2006: 12). Greek architect Dimitris Pikionis exhaustively studied the architecture of Japan without ever setting his foot in the country. Seeds of the Japan he constructed through his imaginative pursuit found their way to sites in Athens, in his Loumbardiaris pavilion (1957) and his playground in Filothei (1961–65), expressed in an architectural language that aspired to be not strictly regional or national, but rather universal, 'through the admixture of sympathetic alien cultures, just as Greek archaic sculpture had once been fertilized by Egypt' (FRAMPTON 1989: 9). For Marc Wigley, the pursuit of the foreign is inherent in any act of architecture; architects are essentially foreigners, and architecture is precisely the act of turning the world into a foreign place that makes the local strange (WIGLEY 2003: 108). The fact that architects are fond of geographical fantasies – often much more than of geocultural realities – is obvious in the immense popularity of Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (1972), narratives of the imaginary places Marco Polo mentally constructed during his travels around the Middle Kingdom (China).

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## TRAVEL IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE SCHOLARSHIP

Even though it has been tangential to architectural scholarship, architecture's relation to processes of mobility and displacement in the modern world has been, in a direct or indirect manner, the subject of scrutiny by numerous scholars of architecture through a variety of theoretical frameworks, methodologies and intellectual affiliations.

Pure exploratory traveling, outside of professional obligations, has often been described as the highlight of an architect's career, a means of acquiring deep and critical knowledge by obtaining 'authentic', first-hand experience of the beaten and unbeaten tracks throughout the globe. Two obvious cases are Le Corbusier's journey to the East and Louis

For a compendium of seventy three travel sketches by Le Corbusier between 1914 and 1964 see Le Corbusier (1981–82). For a complete list of Le Corbusier's travels and related publications from his carnets and his sketchbooks to works by various scholars see Bacon (2003: xiv, 320. For Louis Kahn's sketches during his three visits to the Mediterranean (1928–29, 1950–51 and 1959) see Johnson and Lewis (1996), and for his broader travels see Scully (1991). For publications and studies of travel sketches in the Mediterranean by Alvar Aalto, see Schildt (1991). For a broader discussion on architects' travel drawings and their relation with 'travel pedagogy' see Jones (2001).

Said (1978) characterized as 'orientalist' the traveling views of Western intellectuals, politicians or artists that longed for and exoticized the Asian or Middle Eastern 'other', replicating mythologies that saw them as static, inferior and unable of progress or change. Pratt cautions against the 'anti-conquest narratives', the self-claimed innocence of a type of Western traveler who hesitated to partake in the grand process of colonization claiming their distance, while their very presence in the foreign land was only possibly due to their membership in the regime they appeared to criticize, without challenging 'older imperial rhetorics of conquest' (PRATT 1992: 7). Renato Rosaldo names 'imperialist nostalgia' the paradoxical phenomenon of 'people mourn[ing] the passing of what they themselves have transformed' (ROSALDO 1989: 107).

Kahn's travel to Rome and other Mediterranean areas,<sup>26</sup> both recorded in notebooks and considered milestones in the history of modern architecture. The celebratory tone of these publications often led to the neglect of the broader regimes that surrounded architects' journeys. Since the late 1980s, however, studies of architecture and urbanism have shown an increased interest in addressing architecture in light of broader geopolitical contexts and hierarchies, and by questioning the premises of architects' travels. Several contemporary scholars of architecture have been inspired by the works of postcolonial critics who scrutinized dominant subjects' travels to the 'other'. Prominent examples include Edward Said's discussion of 'orientalism', Mary Louise Pratt's observation of 'anti-conquest narratives', and Renato Rosaldo views of 'imperialist nostalgia'.<sup>27</sup> Along the lines of thinkers such as Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, Michel De Certeau and Paul Rabinow who view spatial organization as fundamental to the disciplinary nature of modernity, contemporary scholars of architecture have also focused attention on the ways in which architects, planners, and other spatial constituents comply with political establishments, illuminating how their travels were reciprocally supportive of various regimes.

### *The Postcolonial Shift*

Focusing more specifically on contexts of colonialism or postcolonialism, authors such as Thomas Metcalf (1989), Anthony King (1990, 2004), Gwendolyn Wright (1991), Mark Crinson (1996), Mary McLeod (1980), Zeynep Çelik (1992a, 1992b, 1997), Gülsüm Baydar-Nalbantoğlu (1997, 1998), Wong Chong Thai (1988), Abidin Kusno (2000), Annabel Whar-ton (2001), Vikramaditya Prakash (2002), Samer Akkach, Peter Scriver and Gülsüm Baydar-Nalbantoğlu (2002), Lisa Findley (2005) and Reinhold Martin and Kadambari Baxi (2007), have pioneered notable critical scholarly work on architecture's participation in such contexts. Their work examines the processes of production, interpretation, and inhabitation of architecture and urban space within broader international or transnational political relations and regimes in which the travel of both people and spatial paradigms is involved.

The works of these writers focus on several specific themes: the sociopolitical role of architectural production in contexts of contacts between the West and the 'rest'; relations between the US, Europe, and newly decolonized states during the Cold War; the impact of colonization, imported modernization, 'invented tradition', and postcolonial patronizing in architectural culture; conditions of alternative modernities beyond dominant Western paradigms, and consequences of the geocultural framing of architectural thinking in global culture. These writers see architectural and urban design, 'ranging from ornamental design to municipal regulations' (WRIGHT 1991: 7), as only one part 'of the much larger entanglement between power and the control space' (FINDLEY 2005: 4), and thus perceive sites as be-

longing to 'political' rather than simply 'urban' landscapes (WHARTON 2001: 3). Such notions make clear that architects' travels are not immune to broader imperialist frameworks: the wish to dominate is often implicit in the will to travel as well as to build. Both intentions, however, are part of a much broader operation that includes multiple agents, from politicians to health specialists. Most of these works on transnational relations also reveal that national (or, often, imperial or colonial) identities are shaped precisely based upon a view of the 'other', a process that is often constituted through the physical and conceptual frameworks of displacement.

### ***Premodern Travel and Area Studies***

Relations between travel, spatial representation, narratives and practice in conditions of premodernity have been addressed by scholars in area studies, as well as by scholars of architecture who have worked in intersections with domains of area studies. Examples are the works of Samer Akkach (2002a), Jilly Traganou (2004) and Laura Nenzi (2008), among numerous others. Such works scrutinize the influence of travel and geographical imagination in domains of culture that involve spatial thinking (but do not always have direct effects on architectural production), as expressed, for instance, in the literary – and at times pictorial – notions of the *meisho* ('famous places') in Japan, or the *fada'il* ('virtues' or 'excellences') in Islam.<sup>28</sup> Such works examine the effect of real or imaginary travels on travelers and their communities, by paying attention to their cultural, social and gender identities, and/or to modes of seeing, mapping and narrating the places they visited, as well as the broader world. Also, these works emphasize the relations between travel and broader religious and sociocultural domains, and approach travel as a multisided process that affects knowledge production and acquisition, identity formation, and sociopoetic imagination and becoming. These works look at a wider array of cultural forms that relate with or emerge through travel, from maps and guidebooks to diaries and poems.

### ***Scrutinizing Authenticity***

Notions of 'authenticity' or 'originality' in architects' traveling experiences have become the subject of interrogation by contemporary architecture historians whose works reveal how mediation and preconceived ideas, nurtured within wider cultural environments, have guided architects' appreciation of otherness. Research by Beatrice Colomina (1994: 83–90) and Zeynep Çelik (1992a) on the drawings made by Le Corbusier during his travel in Algiers and Istanbul, for instance, have revealed that they were actually produced upon the architect's return to his studio by tracing over postcards brought as souvenirs from his journeys<sup>29</sup> – an approach not unlike that of Louis Kahn's 'selective interpretation' of buildings he chose to

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The *meisho* were poetically attested locales that were scattered within the territory of Japan (TRAGANOU 2004: 1). They were celebrated primarily in poetry, but also in visual representations of premodern Japan. The *fada'il* is a premodern Islamic concept represented by a unique genre of literature. It denotes the distinctive virtues of texts, individuals, places or times. A large portion of these texts is devoted to the distinctive virtues of provinces, cities, places and monuments (AKKACH 2002A: 12). Both *meisho* and *fada'il* were often written by authors who had never visited the lands which their texts described.

29

These revelations however do not diminish the role of these sketches' in the architect's reinterpretation of what he absorbed during his travels, and their role in internalizing these interpretations into a new formal language that united his studies of places with his architectural and artistic work.



30 .....  
Nute traces several such assessments by historians and architects, including Charles Ashbee (1863–1942), Hendrik Berlage (1856–1934), Walter Behrendt (1884–1945) and Henry Russell Hitchcock (1903–87) (NUTE 1994: 3–4).

31 .....  
Major examples are Le Corbusier's Rio de Janeiro (1929) and Algiers (1931–42) projects which are strongly related with his fascination with the 'épave of the air', described in his book *Aircraft* of 1935.

32 .....  
See Boyer (2003), and Morshed (2002).

33 .....  
For recent scholarship on Jaqueline Tyrwhitt refer to Society of Architectural Historians session at the Vancouver Annual Meeting in 2005 organized by Volker Welter 'In the Shadow of CIAM and Marshall McLuhan: Jaqueline Tyrwhitt and the course of Twentieth-Century Urban Design and Architecture', with Pierre Chabard, Rhodri Windsor-Liscombe, Tanis Hinchcliffe, Deborah Lewittes, Ines Zaduendo, and Ellen Shoshkes as participants.

34 .....  
Such approaches are characterized either by the inclusion of spatial elements that involve both physical and tele-presence (such as in the work of Diller and Scofidio), or by formal considerations that take into account vectorial properties of force and motion (such as in Greg Lynn's or Markus Novak's work).

sketch, as suggested by Johnson and Lewis (1996). Mardges Bacon discusses Le Corbusier's preconceptions of the US prior to his first trip to America in 1935, influenced by travel narratives and other accounts of America, and nurtured in the environment of French *américanisme* of the 1930s that mythologized American industrialized democracy as a model for modern society. However, as Bacon observes, much of Le Corbusier's understanding and criticism of America was flawed by 'cultural stereotyping' associated with the most conservative elements of *américanisme* (BACON 2003: XIV–XVI). Similarly, Kevin Nute has argued that the nineteenth-century concept of *Japonisme* promoted by Japanese art historians as well as art collectors shaped Frank Lloyd Wright's interpretation of Japanese architecture and influenced his architectural language much more so than the Japan he saw upon his arrival in 1905. Most importantly, several historians and architects point to Wright's exposure to Japanese woodblock prints and his visit to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 as particularly influential to the development of several characteristics of his work (such as the relation of buildings to landscape, visual composition, horizontality, deep eaves, or the exposed timber studs),<sup>30</sup> despite Wright's own denial of architectural influences from Japan (NUTE 1994: 4).

### *Travel as Visual Apparatus*

Another branch of architectural scholarship, continuing the investigative line of Walter Benjamin, examines the influence of the 'modern vision' in the conception of the nineteenth-century modern city, focusing on the intersections of modern ideas of travel and pleasure. Among other theorists, Christine Boyer has studied metaphors and representations of travel that were inherent in the 'city of collective memory'. Boyer turned new attention to topographical views collected through travel that found their way to stereoscopic, binocular, and panoramic visions of the modern city, combining spectacular with documentary modes of representation (BOYER 1994: 203–91). Twentieth-century architects' fascination with aerial views<sup>31</sup> has also been the subject of architectural scholarship focusing on studies of visuality and modernity. Such studies have revealed a genealogy of visual apparatuses that inspired new architectural concepts, starting with the invention of perspective and continuing to the camera obscura, photography, film, and digital space.<sup>32</sup> This interest in the visual has recently expanded to include the thinking of late modernist planners such as Jaqueline Tyrwhitt and the pedagogical role she attributed to aerial photography as a means of town-planning in the post-World War II era.<sup>33</sup> Contemporary modes of digital mobility and animation have inspired not only new approaches to architecture<sup>34</sup> but also a recent genealogy of writing by authors who either focus specifically on cyberspace as a new 'architectural promenade', 'shaped by connectivity and bandwidth constraints'

(MITCHELL 1995: 24), or depict digital space as a realm of physical and informational networks within which people, products, capital, and information are in constant motion and exchange (THACKARA 2005).

### ***Consumption and Tourism***

Architects and architecture scholars have an ambivalent relationship with the subject of consumption and tourism. Following the Pevsnerian tradition of prioritizing paradigmatic architecture, architectural scholarship has been slow to absorb how national, global, and corporate interests interplay with architecture for the tourist industry. Like sociologists of tourism, who in the 1990s began to acknowledge the importance of 'paintings, guide books, literary texts, films, postcards, advertisements, music, travel patterns, photographs' (Urry 1995: 30), architecture scholars during the same period also expanded their material of inquiry beyond buildings. Most importantly, they also expanded their inquiry to include built works that had no particular normative value but were conducive to an understanding of architecture's participation in broader sociocultural contexts. The parallel interest in consumption as an exchange of meaning and an act of identity expression, which architecture scholars endorsed following Jean Baudrillard's description of consumer society (1968), paved the way for this new attention to tourism. Gradually, tourist-related architectural questions became legitimized as a subject of study, and the stigma that tourism carried as a mass culture practice subservient to capitalism – and thus, for some, not worthy of scholarly attention – was slowly removed.

Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio set the tone in the early 1990s with their book *Tourism of War*, which expressed a view of tourism that was unconventional at the time and suggested that

Tourism, a tacit pact of semi-fiction between sightseers and sightmakers ... results in a highly structured yet delirious free play of space-time which thwarts simple, binary distinctions between the real and the counterfeit, ultimately exposing history as a shifting construct.

(DILLER AND SCOFIDIO 1994: 53)

Since then, several notable works – by D. Medina Lasansky and Brian McLaren (2004), Keller Easterling (2005), Joan Ockman and Salomon Frausto (2005), Brian McLaren (2006), and Miodrag Mitrašinić (2006) – have addressed the relation of tourism, spatial production, and architecture, taking into account the global flow of information, investment, consumers, and consumer goods as well as broader geopolitical currencies. Importantly, these scholars, like the postcolonial scholars discussed above, situate the produc-

tion and consumption of tourist-related enterprises within larger scholarly discourses and geopolitical relations.

Lasansky and McLaren's volume *Architecture and Tourism: Perception, Performance and Place*, examines the reciprocal relationship between the modern practice of tourism and the built environment, understanding tourism as 'both a process through which sites are experienced and as a cultural force that has shaped and interpreted them' (LASANSKY AND MCLAREN 2004: 1). Lasansky and McLaren recognize the multiple forces that shape the culture of tourism: in addition to architects, there are planners, politicians, preservationists, artists, entrepreneurs and tourists; and in addition to buildings, there is a wide variety of materials, including propaganda, policy, photography, souvenirs, film, and print (2004: 2–3). In *Architourism* (2005), editor Joan Ockman coined the homonymous term as an analogy to ecotourism, addressing the dual phenomena of architectural sightseeing (which culminated in the notable 'Bilbao effect') and travel by contemporary architects to distant territories as tourist-theorists of architecture. *Architourism* expands on the views of Dean MacCannel (1976) as described in his book *The Tourist*, rejecting the derogatory perception of tourism as inferior to other forms of traveling and seeing tourism rather as an expression of modern man's 'quest for authenticity'.

### ***Travel Pedagogy***

Inquiry into architecture, space, and travel has become particularly important among the proliferating architecture study abroad programs worldwide. These programs, sponsored by architecture schools, participate in a tradition that traces its lineage to the grand tour and the American Academy in Rome, founded in 1913. In 2001, in her essay 'Unpacking the Suitcase: Travel as Process and Paradigm in Constructing Architectural Knowledge', Kay Bea Jones claimed the need to articulate a 'travel pedagogy' in order to 'resituate travel as critical to cultural constructions of architectural knowledge' (JONES 2001: 128). By the term travel pedagogy Jones means 'experientially centered studies dependent on some cultural, geographic, and paradigmatic shift that radically alters sense perception and challenges visual and spatial cognition' (JONES 2001: 127). Jones points to the loose relation between travel programs and architectural curricula, the weak engagement of foreign resources, and a notable hesitation to establish experimental methods of inquiry as well as to accept and rethink the unavoidable architectural and cultural changes that affect 'great places'. A reconsideration of travel as architectural pedagogy, beyond its potential to enrich the scholarly approach to travel, would also contribute to more reflective modes of travel for architecture students and professionals.

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## QUESTIONING MOBILITY'S INFLUENCE ON ARCHITECTURE IN THE GLOBAL ERA: AN AGENDA FOR FUTURE SCHOLARSHIP

I recognize the place, I feel at home here, but I don't belong. I am of, and not of, this place.

—CARYL PHILLIPS, INTRODUCTION: *A NEW WORLD ORDER*, 2001

Ironically, beyond monitoring the travels and works of world-renowned architects, architecture scholars have produced little research that deals in a comprehensive, intellectually engaging manner with the effects of mobility on the cultural politics of architecture and place in the contemporary era of globalization. The following paragraphs briefly outline two of the many areas of research that are essential to obtaining a critical stance toward the politics of mobility in a global world, with respect to the role of architecture within the framework of globalization. These areas have been approached thus far primarily by scholars of other disciplines, particularly social studies, anthropology, and political science. Despite the indisputable contribution of such studies in pinpointing the subject and examining architecture travels in conjunction with other areas of study, these authors sometimes perpetuate rather commonplace criteria in their evaluation of architecture or are hampered by outdated perceptions of architecture and design as primarily formalist enterprises. Thus a more appropriate manner for conducting such studies is by forming interdisciplinary teams in which like-minded scholars, representatives of various disciplines, participate and work in collaboration.

### *For an Ethnography of Mobility and Networks of Architecture and Beyond*

Our contemporary era is characterized by a system of interdependent types of mobility that distribute people, activities, and objects throughout the globe, disconnecting and subsequently reconnecting social groups through different modes of communication. These mobilities operate via various entangled and coevolving professional and social networks. From a sociological point of view, the formation of networks is a part and parcel of globalization and is a departure from community-based societies.<sup>35</sup> As sociologists have shown, an architect's professional development is strongly related to his or her 'networking' operations, which are conducted through combined physical, virtual, and communicative travels.<sup>36</sup> In today's transnational world the architecture profession is not only 'highly mobile', as architects move to study and work, but also 'rich in networking capital', as architects will often 'undertake long journeys for social networking' (LARSEN, URRY, AXHAUSEN 2006: 64, 74). Yet networking is crucial not only for contemporary architecture; it has characterized the development of the profession for decades, as Marc Wigley (2001) reveals in his study of

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A network is different from a community, 'a unit of belonging with clear boundaries providing a source of common identity' (KENNEDY 2004: 161), and functions beyond spatial restrictions.

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According to Larsen, Urry and Axhausen, 'virtual travel' happens on the internet, while 'communicative travel' is realized 'through person-to-person messages via letters, postcards, . . . telephones, faxes, emails, instant messages, videoconferences and "skyping"' (2006: 4).

According to Larsen et al., while many architects have been highly mobile as students they are not as highly mobile when they start their career. Many of their interviewees 'rather than moving to new cosmopolitan places, talk about settling down and going back to their partner's roots' or their own parents' location or place of origin, because of 'physical support' (LARSEN ET AL. 2006: 75–76).

If we take the paradigm of Bombay, each of these people 'is simultaneously living a little bit in the United States and also living substantially in Bombay. But Bombay itself, because of films and so on, is not merely empirical Bombay' (APPADURAI 2002: 43).

the circle surrounding the Greek architect, planner and politician Constantinos Doxiadis in the 1960s.

According to Manuel Castells (1996), postindustrial networks differentiate between 'spaces of flows' – nodes and hubs for the elites – and ordinary 'spaces of places'. In the case of architecture, the space of flows circulates among prestigious schools of architecture, locations designated as major construction sites for the global building industry (Berlin after the reunification of Germany, or Dubai and China today), cities mythologized as emblematic of the zeitgeist or even of the future (Tokyo in the 1980s and 1990s),<sup>37</sup> or more recently, areas of the developing world where transnational, non-governmental organizations seek architects' and designers' collaboration in improving impoverished environments and envisioning new temporary habitats for emergency shelter. Beyond the polarities observed by Castells, in the architecture profession today networks expand far beyond the well known 'epicenters' of architectural education and publicity, and it would be an exaggeration to claim that they are confined to elites. Even though one must be cautious of the asymmetries and hierarchies maintained by these networks, the architecture of the global era is characterized by multiplicity and pluralism and is being experienced and produced through various translocal networks.

An ethnography of the practices of mobile architects and other space constituents, both in terms of their professional and human parameters, would illuminate how conditions of translocality and transnationalism (in non-places, nodal-spaces, and hubs, but also in everyday localities) are experienced and reflected upon by these mobile subjects. The notion of locality is dramatically redefined today, and this cannot but have an effect on spatial practices in both their production and consumption modes. According to Appadurai, today it is not only culture that is 'delinked' from place: People also live in 'layered places which in themselves have a variety of levels of attachment, engagement and ... reality' (APPADURAI 2002: 43, 46) because they are affected by flows and linkages in an interconnected world. Spending more time away from one's home base alters one's connection with what conventionally constitutes 'home' and 'community' (family ties, collegiality, sense of citizenship), while the limited time spent at other destinations is often hardly enough to produce similarly immersive relations. In the words of Caryl Phillips, quoted above, more and more people today 'feel of, and not of' the places where they spend their lives (PHILLIPS 2001: 1). At the same time, increasing numbers of people live in more than one location at the same time, whether these people are call-center employees of US companies physically residing in Bombay, or architects/draftsmen in Belgrade or Beijing working for US architectural offices that 'offshore' part of their digital design production overseas.<sup>38</sup>

In their large percentage, architects as travelers are not immune from the typical business traveler's experience, dominated as it is by the bland infrastructural environments where traveling unfolds (from the airport to the hotel to the food court). At the same time,

the geographically scattered sites where architecture is conceptualized, manufactured, and developed give rise to new modes of architectural thinking and communication protocols that synthesize these dispersed processes, systematically or ad hoc. What is the influence of these conditions on the way space and place are being experienced and practiced from a combined phenomenological and pragmatic perspective? Investigating such relationships would require paying close attention to several interconnected activities that are part of architects' and other mobile subjects' daily routines of survival in a transnational world: from the inventive use of electronic communication gadgets and the circulation of architectural drawings between offices and hotel rooms to cultural exchanges and misunderstandings in transnational educational or professional environments. Most importantly, studying the face-to-face or mediated relations between mobile architects, their professional collaborators, and the groups with whom they interact and join in various destinations would reveal ways globalization is being localized, interpreted, and internalized beyond architects' intentions. Such investigations, performed so far primarily by sociologists but lacking focus on the consequences for architectural thinking, would illuminate crucial aspects of how practices of production, representation and consumption of space operate in the global world. At the same time, they would reveal relations between an ever-expanding network that includes architects and their clients, but also end-users, broader communities of interests, politicians, financiers, engineers, construction workers, advertisers, cultural intermediaries and so on.

### ***Travel and Identity Formation: Between National and Global Citizenship***

It could be safely claimed that most architects in the developed world today would view (or would wish to view) their identity as defined more by their profession than by other constituents of identity, such as nationality or ethnicity. As Paul Kennedy has remarked, global architectural networks have a distinctly 'postnational' character, being almost irrespective of the nationality of their participants (KENNEDY 2004: 176). This does not mean, however, that architects' national or regional identities do not cease to surface at critical moments, compromising the fluidity of their networks and limiting the architect's realm of operation to 'community'-related confinements that may seem repressive or even absurd to architects themselves. Such critical moments occur, for example, when visa restrictions inhibit an individual's mobility, or when ethnic prejudices are encountered in work or educational environments – the most obvious case in recent times being that of Muslim architects in the US or Europe in the post-9/11 era.

It is a challenge for a researcher today not to be blinded by the fluidity and glamour of such networks as celebrated in the contemporary architectural press. Scholars must also, therefore, heed Appadurai's call and pay attention to blockages that inhibit the systems of flows or push them in certain biased directions.<sup>39</sup> It is no coincidence that today, when, even

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Arjun Appadurai claimed the need to study these blockages in a lecture delivered at Parsons The New School for Design, on 6 February 2007.

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See 'The New Europe', special issue of *Architectural Design* edited by Croci (2006).

41

See Delanty and Jones (2002); Delanty (2000); Jones (2003); Jürgen Neyer's lecture on 'Images of Power: The European Union and Its Architecture,' Max Weber Lecture Series on 'Power and Architecture: The Construction of Capitals' in NYU's Deutsches Haus, March 2008.

42

As noted by Zeynep Çelik, at the time of independence after colonial rule, newly built nations heavily relied on foreign architects, due to the lack of their own. For instance, after independence, Algeria 'had only one Algerian architect and the government had to commission foreign architects and planners to develop and execute new projects' (ÇELIK 1997: 183).

43

For a comprehensive study of the portable building see Kronenburg (2002). Please also note that the commercial applications of the portable building have also proliferated recently. See for instance mobile homes designed and sold by IKEA or Muji. This indicates that the portable building operates today between two poles: on one hand, covering emergency needs for refugee-seeking or evacuated populations, and on the other, as a luxury item to facilitate middle-class, leisure-related lifestyles.

44

For a comprehensive history of humanitarian design and emergency housing that touches upon the subject of portable structures, see Stohr (2006).

45

Habib Chaudhury and Atiya Mahmood (2008) guest-edited a special issue of the *Journal of Architectural and Planning* on immigrants' residential experience.

though as James Clifford has stated, there seems to be 'no return for anyone to a native land' (CLIFFORD 1988: 173), architecture is increasingly produced or rationalized in the name of nations. Examples include architecture in newly established nation-states, such as those of the 'New Europe,'<sup>40</sup> or architecture produced within particularly nationalist frameworks, such as the Olympics or other international athletic competitions. The fluctuations in rhetoric from a universalist/internationalist focus to one deeply ingrained in the notion of nation or ethnicity (which is often symptomatic of unities that feel threatened by mobile 'others') is an important area of interdisciplinary study that has been primarily undertaken by social and political scientists rather than by architecture theorists.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, the contributions of foreign architects to the physical and mental construction of newly independent<sup>42</sup> or newly established nation-states (or regions that claim their nationhood) have not been examined in a comprehensive manner. From Louis Kahn's Bangladesh National Assembly Building in Dhaka (1962–83) to the late Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue's (EMBT) Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh (2004) and Renzo Piano's Cultural Center of Tjibaou in New Caledonia (1998), the presence of the foreign 'other' seems to be a catalyst in the definition or even recognition of national or ethnic selfhood. Analogies between such cases, in a manner that would bridge political and architectural thinking, remain to be drawn.

In recent years, architects and designers have shown a refreshing interest in seeing their profession through the prism of citizenship. This includes searching for allegiances conceived globally rather than in service of the corporate world or narrowly defined national interests. Architects and designers today are increasingly participating in the design of refugee camps, emergency shelters, subsidized housing, and other sociocultural facilities for immigrant or refugee-seeking communities, and they are often members of these communities. The works of the Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, California-based Teddy Cruz, and interdisciplinary teams such as California-based Architecture for Humanity or Italy-based Stalker are characteristic of such positions. Moreover, in these contexts, architects often become conscious that their practice is only one segment of a multifaceted design and policy operation comprising industrial design, packaging, and the planning of the distribution process, in which the portable building<sup>43</sup> is often (but some times mistakenly) seen as an optimal solution within a great number of constraints. Systematic approaches to the ways in which contemporary architecture responds to these conditions, in collaboration with national or transnational civil institutions and other design and cultural practices, or comparisons to responses in emergency cases of the past, are scarce.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, comprehensive studies of diasporic spaces in the context of their relation to group identity and material culture (currently being produced mainly by environmental psychologists or anthropologists) are rare from scholars of architecture.<sup>45</sup> This is a missed opportunity, as architects often overlook the end-users' emotional or symbolic attachments to their material environ-

ments in favor of newly conceived designs that are often devoid of such important links. A combined view of such architectural, anthropological, and sociopolitical approaches would forge new interdisciplinary paths in architectural practice, education, and scholarship.

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## **INTELLECTUAL AFFINITIES AND DEPARTURES: QUESTIONING ROOTED IDENTITIES, DISPUTING CELEBRITY TRAVEL**

*Travel, Space, Architecture* operates between two prevailing intellectual domains that both influence contemporary architectural thinking, standing in opposition to each other. The first domain involves the continually debated relationship between architecture, place, and culture that has preoccupied architectural thinking ever since the development of modern architecture. This approach culminated in the 1980s in the theory of critical regionalism, which describes and advocates the need for a type of architecture that resists the homogenization of universal culture by looking for selective such examples in various localities around the globe. The second domain relates to the recurring valorization of travel to the 'other' as a means of theorizing and renewing architecture. If the first approach values architects as 'insiders' and members of 'local communities', the second prioritizes architects' positions as 'strangers' or 'nomads' who are nevertheless always firmly connected within networks from which they obtain their legitimacy and status.

From a theoretical standpoint, one of the largest challenges to addressing travel as a central subject within architectural scholarship is the fact that several respected theories of architectural thinking and pedagogy, varying though they might be, have primarily adhered to the notions of locality and placeness. Such established theories range from Patrick Geddes' civic surveys in the early twentieth century to Vittorio Gregotti's anthropo-geographical considerations of the territory in the 1960s, to Yi-fu Tuan's *topophilia* and Christian Norberg-Schulz's theory of *genius loci* in the late 1970s, the latter based on Martin Heidegger's ideas of rootedness as the only secure foundation of sociopolitical action. The conjunctions of 'culture' and 'place' are traceable in contemporary architectural theories such as 'vernacularism, contextualism, regionalism, critical regionalism and heritage conservation', while 'even architectural history has tended to re-emphasize its geo-cultural foundations' (AKKACH ET AL. 2002: VI). As Marc Wigley has stated:

even the most dedicated international secretly cling to a rhetoric of the local. ... Almost never will an architect declare an active disinterest in the local, even if such a disinterest is not only evident in their work but is its most striking characteristic.

(WIGLEY 2001: 104)



Indeed, for most theoreticians and practising architects 'roots always precede routes' (CLIFFORD 1997: 3), and places hold largely fixed meanings, essences that architects should endeavor to unearth critically through intellectual inquiry and, subsequently, to reenact through their building.

Important theorists of critical regionalism in the 1980s, such as Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre (1981) and Kenneth Frampton (1985), influenced by the Frankfurt School, valued precisely the kind of architecture that emerges as an authentic critical practice anchored in the specificity of a place. Such theorists view architecture as a means of resistance against forces of homogenization.<sup>46</sup> These approaches, at times polemical, at times poetically argued, linked architecture with a commitment to 'place', establishing a scholarly discursive space within which architecture was framed as an antidote to the dangers of 'mediocre civilization', in the words of Paul Ricoeur – the dull, homogeneous landscape of commodification and corporate sponsorship that characterizes modern culture. As Ricoeur put it in his 1965 essay 'Universal Civilization and National Cultures', we face the paradox of 'how to become modern and to return to the sources; how to revive an old, dormant civilization and take part in the universal civilization' (FRAMPTON 1985: 313; RICEOUR 1965). This phrase, quoted by Kenneth Frampton in 1985, became the justification for a type of architecture that is both local and modern and confronts the homogenization of contemporary culture while at the same time, as emphasized by Tzonis and Lefaivre, maintains its antinomy to sterile and stereotypical attitudes of 'romantic regionalism' that construct scenic, overfamiliar settings 'for arousing affinity and sympathy in the viewer' (TZONIS AND LEFAIVRE 1996: 489).

Ironically, the opposite approach, namely the valorization of distance, has also characterized contemporary architectural discourse. Since the early twentieth century, much of the architecture theory promoted by renowned practising architects has emerged as a result of their access to remote locations that were largely inaccessible in the past. At first glance, there is nothing new in contemporary architects traveling to distant locations to discover 'unconscious' local but innovative practices that act as points of departure for exploring new architectural ideas. Indeed, the genre has a long genealogy, from Le Corbusier's *Journey to the East* (a revision of the itinerary and tradition of the grand tour) to Venturi and Scott-Brown's *Learning from Las Vegas* to the recent travelogues of Rem Koolhaas, Stefano Boeri, and David Adjaye, which focus on Asian and African countries. In most cases, architects traveled temporarily to various types of otherness, and had no particular contribution to the places where they performed their travels, except from placing them on the 'global architectural map'. What has changed since the early twentieth century is the environment within which traveling takes place, and the proliferation of travels by professional architects in an almost routine basis. At the same time, 'others' are now not merely visited by centrally

located subjects, but do travel themselves, feeding the global architectural imagination with insiders' knowledges. The most dramatic of all the changes has been the emergence of a broader geopolitical condition whose focus has shifted from the bounded localities of nation-states (conceived in the aftermath of the French Revolution to grant political legitimacy to 'a people') to the fluidity of identities, cultures, and borders that characterizes transnationalism. If within the world order of the sovereign nation-state, most architects traveled to bring back 'home' ideas from distant lands, under the contemporary conditions of transnationalism, the locations or even the existence of architects' 'homes' can no longer be taken for granted. Most architects operate within a network of differentiated places: on the one hand, their office base; on the other, the locations where education, public relations activity, and commissions take place.

In recent time, the perception of place has changed profoundly from that of an autonomous, introverted, and transcendental notion that integrates elements of nature, culture, and man's individual beliefs into a unique ensemble, to one that privileges connectivity with other locations (MITRAŠINOVIĆ 2006: 53). At the same time, as Samer Akkach states, the persistence in the understanding of culture 'as a logical, coherent, bounded system that is rooted in a specific geography' is often used as a means to 'keep people *culturally in place*'. Nevertheless, the resulting 'conventional racial, religious, geographic or cultural references (such as Arab, Islamic, Middle Eastern, Asian, European, Australian and so on) ... are becoming increasingly difficult to maintain as their defining references are rapidly losing their currency in the current global context' (AKKACH 2002B: 184), despite or in contrast to attempts of various ethno-nationalist or religious fundamentalists to do the opposite.

Most contemporary travel and the subsequent theorizing of architecture, however, continue to consider place within pre-established power relations between centers and peripheries. As such, they reaffirm rather than question pre-existing orders. Indeed, neither travels within the international nor within the global world order have been immune from hegemonic attitudes toward the 'other'. It is no surprise that most of the internationally prominent travelogues continue to be directed to destinations beyond Europe and America, which are the places of origin or office base of most established mobile architects today. If the journeys of these architects no longer search for realms of primitiveness or 'authenticity', the new preferred destinations are areas of delayed or alternative modernization, such as the various megacities of Africa, Asia, and South America, or cities in communist regimes such as North Korea and Cuba. Many of these places are often characterized by uncontrolled processes of urban development, slum conditions, and environmental degradation. These 'rural, industrial and non-photogenic' environments encountered off the beaten track, which Kay Bea Jones wished to see altering the grand tour's canon (JONES 2001: 155), do not, however, escape post-aesthetization by architects. Critics not seduced by architects'

grand ambitions have reacted sternly. On recent GSD students' trips to Lagos guided by Rem Koolhaas, journalist George Packer noted:

As a picture of the urban future, Lagos is fascinating only if you're able to leave it. After just a few days in the city's slums, it is hard to maintain Koolhaas's intellectual excitement. What he calls 'self-organization' is simply collective adaptation to extreme hardship. Traffic pileups lead to 'improvised conditions' because there is no other way for most people in Lagos to scratch out a living than to sell on the street ... The impulse to look at an 'apparently burning garbage heap' and see an 'urban phenomenon', and then make it the raw material of an elaborate aesthetic construct, is not so different from the more common impulse not to look at all.

(PACKER 2006: 66)

The publications that follow such journeys in the contemporary architectural press present in a rather sensational – even neo-Orientalist – manner the hybrid urban conditions that centrally located subjects encounter in these travels, despite their will to demystify established hierarchies of intellectual or political domination. Paradoxically, as Roxanne Euben has suggested in her review of contemporary travel writing by intellectuals of various disciplinary affiliations, 'attempts to deconstruct these mechanisms of domination have tended to reproduce this structure and organization' (EUBEN 2006: 2).

*Travel, Space, Architecture* interrogates both of the above domains: one that favors rootedness and community, and another that favors distance and networking for those privileged subjects who are entitled to draw the mental map of eminent architectural trends worldwide. By emphasizing routes rather than origins or points of departure, *Travel, Space, Architecture* aspires to an unbiased overview of the cross-pollinations that result from mobility, as well as to shed light on the oppression effected by privileging 'rooted' conditions as more 'authentic' than others. Singular views of identity that place-bound theories often seemed to assume are now impossible to sustain or defend. The privileging of singularities and the subsequent dichotomies between eastern and western, or northern and southern worlds, cannot but reify singular notions of place and identity, thereby marginalizing processes and outcomes of heterogeneity, multiplicity, pluralism and hybridism that are induced by cultural encounters and mobility. Today, as multiple identities proliferate and a variety of pervasive types of displacement are becoming commonplace, the emphasis on routes begins to frame a political but also an ethical position. This position supports the dissolution of established orders that derive both from overarching narratives of the nation-state (which often repress minorities and internal difference), and from existing international, geopolitical hierarchies. It also claims the rights of those non-privileged identities (immigrants or ethnically impure subjects), advocating their participation in the production of architecture and urban space and the politics of representation.

But on the other hand, the travel perspective interrogates the geopolitical and other hierarchies upon which processes of nomadism and architects' networking are being established. Viewed in a new way, travel does not necessarily require physical mobility as a means of searching for difference but rather relates foremost to the establishment of a 'routed' perspective that can be applied both in conditions of physical stasis and boundary crossing. This view necessitates rethinking the condition of the stranger, and thus revising the certainties that constitute the identities of individuals, groups and places. This engagement with the condition of strangeness that is proliferating in the world today is necessary for architects, as well as for intellectuals and citizens, and most importantly for those who want to see these roles in combination.

In order to establish this routed perspective, advocated in this book, it is necessary to broaden our lens, and look for connections far beyond the specificity of a given site, building or architect.

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## TRAVELING AND THE EXPANDED MILIEU

Within the different contexts of modernity, architects have conducted their work from a variety of subject positions: as physical or imaginary travelers, as tourists, or as immigrants, conforming to the requirements of a regime or the stance of the critical thinker. However, looking at the reflections of architects themselves is not the only means by which a travel perspective in architectural thinking may be established. Rather, this book aspires foremost to expand the scale and mode through which we conventionally view space and locality from seeing it as a static entity to one of translocality, which is affected by a broader network of relationships – a way of thinking that has been pertinent in urban design discourses but less so in architecture.<sup>47</sup> Two related areas here demand recognition and assessment: the first has to do with the wider epistemological and political contexts that relate architecture to other domains of knowledge; the second deals with an expansive geographical framework that surpasses the narrow view of the architectural site, perceiving it rather as a point within a broader milieu of spaces where architecture is being conceived, produced, reproduced, consumed and imagined.

It is hard to negate that traveling is a productive spatial practice, a site of cultural exchange with what is encountered during the course of such travel, and which may have unpredictable effects of renewal for an architect's career or for a group establishing its identity at a foreign locality (e.g. foreign immigrants in places of displacement). Traveling, however, not only produces new ideas that were not previously thought or explored but also often reproduces preconfigured ones. Thus the architectural and urban productions that result from traveling cannot easily avoid (and often do not wish to do so) the ideologies and

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According to urban theorists Brian McGrath and David Grahame Shane, thinking of cities as networks of relationships began with Ferdinand Braudel's studies of Mediterranean trade in the 1960s and 1970s. This approach was developed further in Emmanuel Wallerstein's world-system analysis, extended in John Friedmann's world city hierarchy diagram, documented in detail by Peter Taylor, and transformed in Saskia Sassen's global city model of superimposed rich and poor components (BRIAN MCGRATH AND DAVID GRAHAME SHANE 2005: 5).

hierarchies that, deliberately or not, their producers carry as they travel in the form of their own social subjectivities. An important premise of this book is that the potential of traveling emerges from its ability to operate in a dynamic space that unfolds between the perceptual and the cognitive: the physicality of presence on the one hand, and the conceptualization of what is anticipated or imagined, often prior to traveling, on the other. Traveling, as well as representation, are often 'conditioned more upon conceptual and imaginary notions, than on the realm of corporeality and direct experience'. These 'conceptual or imaginary repositories' from which traveling and representation derive their resources are broader than the direct physical contexts that surround travelers and affect their subjectivities in multifaceted ways (TRAGANOU 2004: 2). Thus, traveling often functions as a

framework of representation, upon which various sets of conceptual, literal or visual images are being projected. However, most of these images are not direct products of a gaze and might have little to do with the actual field of perception, vision or physical reality. Rather, they are related to major epistemological and geopolitical transformations that shape geographical desires and imaginations (TRAGANOU 2004: 3)

and which may be subsequently internalized or resisted by individual travelers or collective perceptions of travel.

One has to be attentive to the contrasts but also to the convergences between the 'geographical desires and imaginations' of a given historical and cultural context, on the one hand, and the 'epistemological and sociopolitical' conditions that constitute the framework within which travel takes place, on the other. Traveling in the service of a regime, as in the case of a war or colonization, may be substantially different as an experience from travel motivated by intellectual curiosity. By paying attention to their epistemological and sociopolitical contexts, however, we may discover that different though as they may seem, such diametrically opposed positions may be surrounded by the same broader 'regimes of truth', to use Foucault's term (FOUCAULT 1980: 133); in fact, they may often be two sides of the same coin. The mythology of the lone traveler (one who deliberately flirts with that of the dropout) lies at the heart of the modern man; similarly, the figure of the colonizer is inseparable from the project of modernity, and in many cases its precursor. Despite their superficial contrasts, one subject-position does not negate but rather supports the other. Can a traveler be immune from such broader contexts? Can a site remain unaffected by what happens elsewhere, at other sites? What concerns us as scholars interested in architecture as an intellectual and social enterprise is not merely the particular (the case of a traveler-architect or project seen in its specific location or environment), but rather a broader entangled matrix of sites of translocality – places, institutions, materials, people, and ideas from from afar or from within– that are involved in the complex process of space making.

# III. INTRODUCTION TO *TRAVEL, SPACE, ARCHITECTURE*

*Jilly Traganou*

*Travel, Space, Architecture* aims to position architecture within a field of inquiry that explores the effects of mobility on human experience and practice. In doing so, we as authors and editors wish to participate ‘in the broader acknowledgement of the materiality of ideology’ that has been overshadowed by the predominance of language and literary studies in the humanities and postcolonial studies (WHARTON 2001: 11).<sup>1</sup> This book builds on notions examined in our earlier works (TRAGANOU 2004 AND MITRAŠINOVIĆ 2006), which addressed the relationships between travel and spatial representation and design. These ideas were informed by broader theories of travel, tourism, space, visibility, and design, produced by scholars in the disciplines of anthropology, geography, sociology, and the fields of design and cultural studies. In these earlier works, we argued that traveling cannot be discussed solely in terms of an isolated act framed as a means of achieving individual freedom or escape, or as a pursuit of popular entertainment. Rather, traveling operates ‘as a manifold project negotiated by a complex set of conflicted or synergetic agents – nations, governments, commercial enterprise, artists and ideologues, popular and mass cultures – each of which associates space and traveling with selected meanings, anticipating specific practices’ (TRAGANOU 2004: 222). The processes that surround the practices and industries of travel soften the boundaries between the fictive world of the media, the works of social imagination, and the physical world, as material human experiences merge with imaginary configurations. Thus these domains of human experience – conventionally seen as separated from one another – come together into novel configurations (MITRAŠINOVIĆ 2006: 21). These intermingling domains also explicate Henri Lefebvre’s understanding of space as a perceived, conceived, and lived entity (LEFEBVRE 1984: 33; 38–40).

*Travel, Space, Architecture* investigates architecture’s position not simply in global or universal cultures but rather in conditions of ‘trans-locality’ (CLIFFORD 1997: 7).

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Annabel Wharton has rightly argued that because literary criticism dominates the postcolonial field, materiality and, accordingly, spatiality are sometimes reduced to an abstraction of language (WHARTON 2001: 206).

It also looks at 'contact zones', social spaces where disparate cultures grapple with one another, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination (PRATT 1992: 7). With this investigation, we also recognize that 'natives, people confined to and by places to which they belong, unsullied by contact with a larger world, have probably never existed' (APPADURAI 1988: 39). This book describes traveling as fluctuating between two cardinal points: on the one hand, it is a normative act, a process through which subjectivity and culture obtain a spatial definition, often conforming to prescribed orders and hierarchies. On the other hand, it is a possibility that fuels the 'work of imagination', capable of effecting emancipation from such prescribed orders and hierarchies, towards the exploration of new socio-architectural visions.

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## **THEMES AND STRUCTURE**

The following chapters explore the influence of travel on architectural thinking and spatial imagination in various historico-geographical contexts. The texts focus on travelers' experiences prior to, during, or after the completion of their journeys. Three main themes emerge:

1. **Issues of identity.** Several authors address traveling as a process that forces the identities of architects and other spatial constituents to oscillate between two determining factors: from notions of origins, which are related to architects' national or regional backgrounds; to processes of alterity, which result from encounters with various 'others'. Though seemingly opposed, both concepts are folded under the same rubric, functioning almost as antidotes to each other.
2. **The visibility of traveling.** The second theme relates to spatial representation and visibility as these are configured both physically and mentally during but also beyond the spatiotemporal realm of traveling. On the one hand, this realm denotes the views of space that emerge through the various apparatuses of traveling, and the redefined concepts of architectural space that these views produce. On the other, it denotes the conceptual visibility of place-as-culture, the anticipated notions and sets of knowledge that are configured beyond traveling by various discursive frameworks.
3. **Travel and the design process.** The third theme concerns the experience of traveling and its subsequent (re-)working during the design process by the traveler-architect or other traveling populations as mediated by memory, mental mapping, or bodily processes. This process may function in multifaceted ways, from the integration of selective visual references into subsequent projects, to the extraction of 'genotypes' that endeavor to link existing patterns or processes observed during travel with new architectural configurations, to impromptu improvisation and appropriations that take place during the condition of displacement.

The book is organized roughly chronologically into three sections that advance from the period of early modernity and architectural modernism to our contemporary times characterized by globalization. A summary of the chapters within each section follows.

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## SECTION 1: NEW VISION AND A NEW WORLD ORDER

Chapters by Andreas Luescher, Dianne Brand, Sarah Teasley, Esra Akcan, and Smilja Milovanović-Bertram address architecture and urbanism from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century, a period marked by expanded possibilities of travel and of the various types of exchanges and realizations that this travel introduced.

Andreas Luescher's chapter, 'Great Travel Machines of Sight', offers an intriguing examination of the relationship between travel, space, and architecture using the specific example of the panorama, a late-eighteenth-century visual apparatus that featured gigantic 360-degree paintings installed in purpose-built rotundas with central viewing platforms. Luescher argues that the panorama, and the broader techno-epistemological ideas that it embodied, played a significant role in reproducing particular perceptions of traveled space; these perceptions were also instrumental in their concurrent conceptualizations of architectural space. According to Luescher, the panoramic idea of space is evident in the work and writings of architects Étienne-Louis Boullée (1728–99), Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736–1806), and Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781–1841). Moreover, Luescher perceives genealogical traces of the panorama in Le Corbusier's concept of the *fenêtre en longueur* (elongated horizontal window), which the architect first expressed clearly in his Five Points manifesto of 1926 as well as in his Parisian apartment for Charles de Beistegui (c. 1929–31). As the author claims, the above apparatuses induced transitional experiences in spectators, not only through different techniques of environmental representation but also through a common investment in cinematic immersion, mobility, and experiential novelty. In Luescher's view, Le Corbusier's architecture, which was oriented toward the exterior just as the original panorama was intended to be, reconfigured the imagination and experience of the new spectator, mobilizing the ambiguity that exists between a real object and its mental or material representation – a complex discourse that united the physical and the metaphysical aspects of travel and architectural space.

The expansive realm opened up by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century advances in navigation, which both propelled and was exploited by colonization, also critically affected the establishment of urban settlements in the New World. The extended lengths of most sea journeys, and the necessary stopovers in various places along the routes, provoked unexpected cultural exchanges that influenced the inhabitation of the new lands. As Diane



Brand demonstrates in her chapter '*O Coração Verde (A Green Heart): Travel, Urban Gardens, and Design of Late Colonial Cities in the Southern Hemisphere*', European colonizers on their way to Australia in the first half of the nineteenth century were influenced more by the 'geologically younger and vegetationally vigorous' landscaped environments of Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town – be it kitchen gardens or parks and their strategic placements in the centers of the cities – than by the landscaped typologies they knew from home. Such models were integrated with and further adapted to the new colonial sites established in Australia, providing 'a founding paradigm of Australian urbanism' that was later to become the 'green hearts' of twentieth-century metropolises. These urban ideas, mutated by new experiences and knowledge, traveled to and from the colonies with travelers as they journeyed from the northern to the southern hemispheres. Thus the hybrid culture of the early colonial city that emerged in this first era of globalization was 'a product of complex, multivalent, and multidirectional' exchanges made possible by the new spatial networks introduced by modernity.

Despite the new horizons that modern travelers were eager to explore, notions of origins and roots were vital for situating physical and hypothetical travelers in a new world map. Esra Akcan's chapter, 'Nomads and Migrants: A Comparative Reading of Le Corbusier's and Sedad Eldem's Travel Diaries', and Sarah Teasley's 'Travel-Writing the Design Industry in Modern Japan, 1910–1925', document the fact that early-twentieth-century architecture in countries located on the fringes of modernity, such as Turkey and Japan, was deeply affected by the geopolitical hierarchies of a new world order that prioritized a Eurocentric perception. This new world order valued primarily historical and modern architectural works produced in Europe. At the same time, it was invigorated by selected architectural examples produced by 'others', and it organized the cultural production of these 'others' in various classificatory systems that assigned sporadic, 'supplementary' value to it, both 'valorizing' and 'disqualifying' it at the same time. Oscillating between 'fascination and disdain' (BAYDAR-NALBANTOĞLU 1998: 9–10), these views of the 'other architecture' rarely avoided the pitfalls of exoticification, stereotyping, and exceptionalism. Even high-profile architects and designers, such as Sedad Eldem, Kogure Joichi (1882–1943), and Moriya Nobuo (1893–1927), who were regarded as modernizers in their own native territories, found the processes of inscribing themselves into the new world order painful and challenging. It is no coincidence that in assessing these processes, both authors examine the travel diaries of the designers in question in tandem with their designs, avoiding formalist interpretations that have characterized earlier scholarship.

Akcan bases her discussion on the divide between nomads and migrants as established by Deleuze and Guattari: Nomads aspire to transform the place of destination by imposing the place of home on it; migrants leave the place of departure behind them.

Akcan sees both characteristics in the behavioral patterns of Turkish architect Sedad Eldem (and, indeed, of any modern traveler) during his physical and mental travels to the realm of Euro-American modernism in the late 1920s. It was the migrant's impulse that urged Eldem to leave his place of origin and embark on a search for European modernism; however, it was the nomadic impulse that, in Akcan's view, explains Eldem's relief at the discovery of Turkishness inherent in modernism. This discovery played a large part in justifying Eldem's conviction that the 'essence' of Turkish vernacular had to be preserved during the period of modernization. Akcan contrasts Eldem's anxious and constant evaluation of the merits of Turkish tradition versus modernism with Le Corbusier's untroubled celebration of the transient character he saw in Istanbul's houses when he traveled there in 1911. This transience inspired Le Corbusier's concept of a non-monumental architecture that disdains the notion of durability, the cornerstone of classical and neoclassical conceptions of architecture. Le Corbusier's confident acceptance of the old and distant as new contrasts radically with Eldem's anxiety and his deeper quest for cosmopolitanism, a notion examined in an earlier publication by Akcan (2006) as it relates to architecture.

Japanese designers also experienced unease in their attempts to situate themselves in the new world order as Japan fluctuated between statehood and empire. Sarah Teasley's chapter compares the travels of Kogure Joichi and Moriya Nobuo, two important interior and furniture designers from Japan whose overseas travels were sponsored by the state. In traveling, Kogure and Moriya were attempting to fulfill the state's mandate to contribute to the development of Japanese industry – an obvious motive of such sponsorship. The two designers were influenced by broad geopolitical hierarchies extending from the realm of the globe down to that of the Japanese empire and the nation within which their travels occurred. Such hierarchies influenced their respective travel experiences and, in particular, the process of what Teasley calls 'self-situation' – their identity as design professionals in Japan first, and as Japanese nationals in the world second. If Kogure's trip to regions within the Japanese empire (Manchuria and other colonized parts of China) was followed by 'normative imperialist' strategies (denial of agency and subjugation of his individual experience into standardized tropes), his trips from his Tokyo home to the Japanese periphery showed a much more immersive and at-ease manner of becoming acquainted with the realm of internal otherness. The strong sense of 'being Japanese' and identifying with a specific national group is also evident in Moriya's epistolary accounts from England. The missives of these influential designers, which took the form of reflections on non-Japanese modern paradigms, were means of introducing modern life styles to Japanese citizens. But these overseas experiences, as Teasley suggests, were also 'free from the behavioral expectations of the metropolis', and thus provided these designers with opportunities for reinventing themselves as individuals in addition to contributing to their profession and the nation.

The view of traveling as a means of learning from architectural paradigms within an established architectural order is deeply embedded in the premises of institutions that sponsor architects' journeys. Smilja Milovanović-Bertram's chapter, 'Learning from Rome', discusses such motives in the 1913 founding of the American Academy in Rome, an institution based on the belief that classical architecture is the valued predecessor of an evolving European architecture. The historical indebtedness to the ideals of the Grand Tour is evident both in the location of the Academy and in the sites that the Fellows were obligated to visit during their program; a legacy that continues today. The author interviews two architects who were Fellows of the Rome Academy, Robert Venturi (in 1954–56) and Tod Williams (in 1983), connecting the architectural influences seen in their work with more profound design thinking provoked by their traveling experiences. The author suggests that the process of traveling was critical in shaping the architects' thinking about design, specifically in relation to how their mental mapping of the architectural spaces and history of Rome was internalized and later recollected in their work. In his interview, for example, Williams refers directly to the 'building as wall' metaphor characteristic of many of his projects, particularly the Neurosciences Institute in La Jolla, California, of 1995, which he derived from his reading of Renaissance architecture, specifically the Tempietto di San Pietro in Montorio (c. 1502). By contrast, Venturi was primarily impressed by Baroque and Mannerist architecture and by the 'information going along the walls in the naves'. This experience instigated Venturi's exploration of signage as a significant element of architecture, a concept he elaborated on in subsequent work and further refined in his travels to Las Vegas with Denise Scott-Brown in 1970.

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## **SECTION 2: QUESTIONING ORIGINS, SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVES**

Identification with and complicity in the 'essence' of homeland implied by several of the cases already discussed above is not always the position in which a traveler wishes to reside. In the second section of the book the studies of Hermann Schlimme, Caroline Maniaque, Katharine Bartsch, Jilly Traganou and Kelly Shannon all indicate complexities in both the cultural and the political sense of nationhood as it is perceived by either 'selves' and 'others'.

During the post-World War II era, when faith in modernity was declining, increasing numbers of architects chose to travel to sites that were perceived as important to architectural knowledge but neither belonged to the established Grand Tour, associated with the origins of architecture, nor to a category associated with modernity and progress. Hermann Schlimme's chapter, 'The Mediterranean Hill Town: A Travel Paradigm', examines travels

to southern European areas in the 1960s, which provided opportunities for rethinking the social role of the architect as well as the nature of architectural form. Younger CIAM participants, who in 1953 formed Team 10, revitalized a way of thinking that began in the 1930s with architects such as Bernard Rudofsky (1905–88), partially as an antidote to the functionalist tabula rasa and abstraction of the modern architecture. This thinking was largely based on careful consideration of the spatial practices found in the spontaneous, self-organized architecture of traditional settlements in the Mediterranean region, especially Italian hill towns. As Schlimme claims, these towns became models for new innovative typologies such as the stepped Terrassenhäuser (a low-rise, high-density habitat) and, later, Giancarlo De Carlo's (1919–2005) housing projects. De Carlo, an urbanite based in Milan and a member of a trans-European CIAM team, conducted extensive field research in the hill town of Urbino, deriving an 'architectural genotype' that would enable him to apply the open-ended and process-driven development of the hill town to new architectural projects. These works are emblematic of a shift in thinking, from the early modern architects' search for formal inspirations during their travels to the 'others', to the extrapolation of deeper patterns that link architectural structures with social structures, following the inquiries of anthropologists of the same period.

Motivated by a similar urge to find elements that functioned as antidotes to the prevailing ideals of technological progress, corporatism, and consumerism, several postwar architects chose to travel to the US – paradoxically the very country where all these ideas seemed to coalesce and reside. Caroline Maniaque's chapter, 'The American Travels of European Architects, 1958–1973', explores the realm of alternative politics with which several architects identified in their wish to question the normative expectations of 'America'. These architects realized Jean Baudrillard's proposition to see the country as a 'primitive society' (BAUDRILLARD 1988: 29) rather than as one at the forefront of progress. In the late 1950s, Hans Hollein traveled to the US with the support of a Harkness fellowship; the purpose of these awards was precisely to challenge 'received opinions about the American way of life'. Although Hollein's earlier interests related to advancements in architectural technology, he soon diverged from that path to explore pre-Columbian architecture and the architecture of the pueblos of Arizona and New Mexico, sites that would 'nourish the countercultural imagination a few years later'. By the end of the 1960s, a new generation of architects had traveled to the US, motivated by a conscious 'opposition to official, mainstream American culture'. The French architect Marc Vaye, familiar with the American counterculture through the underground press, visited the Drop City settlement in Colorado and various other hippie dome communes during the period 1969–73. Through his travels, Vaye helped transfer to Europe architectural ideas about solar energy and polyhedral dome construction, as well as communication strategies he learned from the US free press. These non-

mainstream ideas and approaches to architecture, closely allied with environmental advocacy, functioned as a counter-discourse to both European and American mainstream politics.

This new appreciation for the vernacular went hand in hand with the discovery of regional architecture produced not only by anonymous architects but also by architects well versed in modernism. This discovery however, was not immune to stereotypical views of regional culture. Katharine Bartsch's chapter, 'Roots or Routes? Exploring a New Paradigm for Architectural Historiography through the Work of Geoffrey Bawa', criticizes the appraisal of the architect's work in recent architectural historiography. Recent scholarship has characterized Bawa's work as a paradigmatic case of critical regionalism in Sri Lanka, the product of a presumably 'local' architect who masterfully combined tradition with modernity. Bartsch, in utilizing a methodology derived from anthropology – particularly James Clifford's quest for 'routes' rather than 'roots' – questions not only the certainty of the architect's 'origin' in a pure Sri Lankan tradition but also the very existence of a 'Sri Lankan tradition'. She suggests that Bawa's diverse heritage (Anglican, German, Muslim, Scottish and Sinhalese) and personal trajectory (which fluctuated primarily between Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom) resist his being classified as a local. Even more so, Sri Lanka's diverse ethnic environment (Muslim, Sinhalese and Tamil) and multifaceted history (influenced by various types of encounters, ranging from Buddhist and Hindu settlers and Arab traders to Portuguese, Dutch and British colonizers) render the recognition of a singular or unified Sri Lankan 'tradition' impossible. This chapter finds that contemporary architectural historiography, in its urge to re-appreciate the regional as an 'other' to Euro-centered modernity, fell into an understanding of culture (Sri Lankan or other) as a 'homogeneous, distinct to a group, and rooted-to-place entity'. Such a view obscured internal local differences and hybridizations that had occurred through various encounters with and among others. This chapter resonates with a crucial condition of our time: As cases of multiple national affiliation proliferate, and as immigration alters the ethnic demographics of many regions throughout the globe, the relation of place to identity becomes a contested terrain. This relationship must be seriously disentangled from past interpretations that either formed under conditions in which one group dominated others, or derived from convenient, simplified interpretations of culture produced by internal or external observers.

In contemporary global cultural politics, as the world expands (rather than shrinks) and people demand greater legibility of difference and identity, ethnic and regional differences often obtain a commodified value, and places are perceived as deeply embedded within essentialist notions of culture. These developments are not just symptomatic of the ways in which international architects read or respond to notions of 'local architecture' in regions where their services are commissioned. Essentializing views of architectural culture (often caught in notions of 'reverse Orientalism') are also deeply ingrained in the 'locals', as

an indicator of (their) difference in a world that threatens to become homogenized. Such issues are explored in Jilly Traganou's chapter, 'Mobile Architects, Static Ideas: Santiago Calatrava in Athens', which examines the cultural politics surrounding Santiago Calatrava's commission to design the Athens 2004 Olympic complex. Traganou discusses traveling in relation to the condition of foreignness, and questions whether the foreignness of an invited global architect may evoke reflective views of national identity that deconstruct established (and often parochial) notions of nationhood and otherness. The employment of Calatrava (a Europe-based, international architect of Spanish descent) as the designer of a national landmark in contemporary Greece mobilized several nested identity layers, beginning with particularism (in this case, Greekness) and expanding to Mediterraneanism, Europeanization, and multiculturalism. Public discourse surrounding the project could have taken advantage of this opportunity to rethink the notion of 'Greekness' in terms of the new identity constellation within which Greece finds itself implicated today. Instead, public discourse was subsumed by a conservative interpretation of Greekness as (neo-)hellenism and of Europeanism as universalism. However, this idealized interpretation ignores the new multicultural dynamics that immigration has introduced to Greece (as well as to Europe in general today) and uses economic immigrants simply as a resource for cheap labor (for the building of the Olympic venues, for instance), failing to initiate a reworking of identities for citizens and newcomers.

Within the postcolonial condition and the parallel liberation of the market that renders certain places as ideal destinations for mass-tourism, several architects, urbanists, and intellectuals advocate models of local development that go against the prescriptions of globalization for ethnic commodification and service-oriented practices. In her chapter, 'Evolving Tourist Topographies: The Case of Hue, Vietnam', Kelly Shannon searches for a more sustainable future for the city of Hue in Vietnam, which has entered a 'complex web of relationships between modernization, spatial economy and urban development, and tourism'. Since the late 1980s, Hue has become one of the leading tourist magnets in Southeast Asia, (re)presented through a narrative replete with ancient mystery, colonial charm, and war relics. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site and an 'Ancient Capital' in 1993, Hue has become the focus of direct foreign investment aimed at preserving the city's historic sites, its imperial buildings as well as French colonial-era buildings and monuments – an endeavor made only more complicated by the communist regime's condemnation of both periods on the basis of ideology. Nevertheless, confronted with the central government's growing inability to control tourist development, and the blanketing of the country with resort complexes that cater to a global clientele, Shannon searches for 'spatio-economic policies and urban developments' for the locals that are 'conceived hand in hand with tourism-driven developments', balancing and responding to the needs of both groups. Thus

Shannon, using a 'descriptive urbanist' approach, proposes sustainable design scenarios that seek to build qualitatively on the existing potentials of Hue's landscape.

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## **SECTION 3: GLOBAL MOBILITIES**

### ***3.1 Transnational Architectural Practices***

Conditions of mobility and exchange, which are the effect of broader processes of globalized production and communication rather than outcomes of disciplinary change, are addressed in the third section of the book, with a prologue by Ken Tadashi Oshima and two conversations between Jilly Traganou and architects whose practices are characteristic of this condition: Hiromi Hosoya and Markus Schaefer, principals of Hosoya Schaefer, a transnational Zurich-based practice with strong professional ties in Europe and Japan, and David Adjaye, principal of Adjaye Associates, a practice based in London with several overseas projects and recently also offices in New York and Berlin.

Despite the relative ease and resulting benefits of modern travel, frequent mobility can give rise to inefficiencies. Oshima warns of a new set of emerging problems, ranging from the ecological cost of air travel to the sense of 'placelessness' that architects experience during their frequent traveling. Most importantly, Oshima questions what constitutes a critical practice in the condition of globalization. For Oshima, 'critical globalism' relies 'on a delicate balance between global travel and a strongly-rooted local base'. Contemporary practice requires architects to find a stance that takes into account both localism and cosmopolitanism, both rootedness and critical distance.

Issues of architectural networking in a transnational world and a newly interconnected Europe in search of a common identity are discussed in the conversation with Hosoya and Schaefer. In addition to the discursive changes on what constitutes architectural 'community', in the last decades, we witness an immense growth in new technologies and media which, as this conversation reveals, have become a 'second nature' for contemporary architects, leading to new interdisciplinary paths in architectural practice. In their various guises, the technologies of communication (from mobile and digital phones to file-sharing environments) facilitate traveling, but also become a means of securing a newly desired immobility. This newly valued sense of locatedness, beyond its effect on psychological or practical comfort for individuals, is also framed as a critical stance towards the overall environmental crisis of our times, which is heavily impacted by the technologies of traveling.

What constitutes the 'local' in the contemporary condition of border porosity, and how can one develop an allegiance with a series of localities in a pattern of life that has become unavoidably itinerant? What kind of ethics can one derive from conditions of con-

stant foreignness that are affecting more and more individuals and groups today? The conversation with David Adjaye, an architect of Ghanaian descent who had a transitory life before settling in London and eventually expanding his practice to various locations throughout the world, endeavors to shed light on such questions. In order to address the case of an architect with multiple identities and attachments such as David Adjaye (or Geoffrey Bawa, examined by Bartsch's chapter), the fixed ideas of roots and origins must be abandoned in favor of what constitutes a 'travel perspective'. This perspective also affects the way we look at place and architecture: not as entities to be invested with fixed meaning, based on architects' and privileged groups' intentions, but rather as entities that are open to a constant flux of appropriations, negotiations, and becomings. Today, as more and more national and regional settings are surrounded by porous and fluid boundaries, this adaptation becomes ever more crucial. It enables experiences of multiple identity that in the past seemed to be peripheral and exceptional (at least from a narrow, European-centered perspective) to become valuable examples from which to learn about cosmopolitanism and postnational formations. The examples of Adjaye and Bawa also remind us that the fluidity of identities and boundaries today that are narrowly associated with the postcolonial, globalized world and the subsequent quest for a cosmopolitan ethos is not something new. This fluidity is not only the product of the spread of Western cultural and economic power, but rather a condition that in many cases has preceded the present moment (EUBEN 2006: 17).<sup>2</sup>

### 3.2 Mobile Groups, Urban Remappings

Beyond individual architects' travels, various groups migrating across political, national, and cultural borders profoundly challenge architectural and urban ideas, and change the ways cities are inhabited and used. Relations between spatial realms of identification and belonging, such as homes, neighborhoods, communities, cities, and nations, which have conventionally been thought of as folded concentrically within one another, are now becoming unstable and random. Conditions of ethnic mobility and diaspora cause a remapping of existing cities and geographical areas. Beyond the specific architectural questions of design and use, such conditions also call for more fundamental questions about the nature of urbanity and civility today in relation to demands for political, social, and economic equity. At the same time, new types of consciousness and allegiance are being sought as a response to these new *ethnoscapes* being generated across the globe, 'by flows of people: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles and guest workers' (APPADURAI 1996: 33). The authors of the last three chapters of this book are eager to understand how such groups' tactical operations within the new conditions of diaspora physically and mentally change contemporary cities beyond the realm of institutionalized architects' operations.

Reena Mehta's chapter, 'Asian-Indian Diasporic Networks and Sacred Sites in the



Bay Area of California', examines a specific immigrant community, namely that of Hindu Asian-Indian populations, in the way they establish their socioreligious spaces and practices as a minority group in California. Her chapter focuses on recent immigrants (of the post-World War II era), whom the author differentiates from earlier immigrants (who arrived to the US around the turn of the twentieth century) in their operating within a geographical 'network of interdependencies that transcend sociospatial boundaries' rather than the 'geographically bounded, yet disconnected spaces' of origin and destination that characterized experiences of earlier immigrants. Mehta describes the vibrant religious culture of Indian immigrants in California with its dense array of activities through the year and numerous building establishments, which unfold from domestic spaces to public locales such as temples, parking lots, and highways during the pilgrimage periods. These sacred sites, sometimes prominent but often unassuming, form a richly interwoven 'sociospatial network' activated by the numerous religious and cultural practices of the group. Not unlike Sophia Vyzoviti's chapter (to be discussed later), Mehta's study shows the ability of immigrant groups to create robust sociocultural networks with the inventive adaptation of what is found (urbanscapes and existing buildings) into cultural facilities that satisfy their specific socioreligious needs, remaining largely invisible to the non-members, and demonstrating a dialectic stance between politics of assimilation and group distinction.

Both Eleni Tzirtzilaki and Sophia Vyzoviti address conditions of migration in Greece's capital, Athens, in the period 2002-05; Greece, a border nation between Asia, Africa and Europe being perceived by various migrant populations as a passage to Euro-America. Both chapters examine issues of spatial production and inhabitation evoked by mobility in which migrants themselves, and, in some cases, also the various governmental and humanitarian institutions that assist their reception, become agents of space-making. Tzirtzilaki examines the mode of what she calls 'habitation en route', the upon-arrival habitation of displaced populations to the city of Athens as they find refuge at the margins of the city. The chapter looks closely at the spatial layout and facilities of various refugee camps and the ways they are inhabited by their guests, exposing harsh conditions not visible to the ordinary resident or visitor to the city. The chapter claims that since political and social institutions of Greece today cannot offer satisfactory forms of hospitality, the displaced populations devise forms of habitation, eventually appropriating the city's 'voids'. As a physical space, Athens itself makes this bottom-up mode of inhabitation possible. The various urban voids – shabby areas, abandoned buildings, empty lots – in its downtown areas perforate the urban web which enables such acts of dispersed physical habitation. The author ends by advocating that architects and artists engage with groups of immigrants, mentioning the examples of several multidisciplinary groups in Europe who try to 'restore the social coherence and agency of diasporic communities that are proliferat-

ing in Europe' since the 1990s, and create 'connections between *hostis* and *hospes*, revealing their reciprocal status.'

Sophia Vyzoviti's 'Emerging Immigrant Clusters in Downtown Athens, 2002–2004' examines business areas and gathering places of various immigrant groups in downtown Athens, the most visible being those of Bangladeshi, Chinese, Pakistani, Nigerian, and Kurdish origins. These areas have also developed informally, with the immigrants' inhabiting areas of downtown Athens that have been abandoned by the Athenians, but are less fugitive than the cases examined by Tzirtzilaki's chapter. Despite the signs of xenophobia that plagued Greece's relation with its immigrants in the first years of their arrival, ethnic immigrants in Athens today seem to have effectively established their territory, appropriating a specific part of the city. The area under examination developed from an aggregation of diverse ethnic enclaves that had little relation with each other to becoming a cluster of operations that are self-organized and exhibit characteristics of synergy, cooperation, and mutual interdependence. These spaces are created by 'spontaneous appropriation and inventive utilization of all available spatial resources', and demonstrate signs of growth and inventiveness. According to Vyzoviti, these spaces become a 'lesson in an urbanism of empowerment', fulfilling 'essential sociocultural and economic needs of the immigrants', such as confirmation of their identity, enhancement of their sense of community, opportunities for employment within the area, and links with a global trade network that ensure their viability.

As it will become clear in the following chapters, this book adopts a diversity of approaches. Some of the chapters situate their findings within historical strands of urbanism and architecture, enriching their fields with new information and insights (such as Brand's study of colonial urbanism in Australia, or Maniaque's study of European architects' travels to America). Some open up new avenues within their fields of inquiry (such as Vyzoviti's study of the impact of immigrant groups on Greek urbanism), while some intersect architectural studies with other disciplines or fields (such as Traganou's study of the reception of Calatrava's design intersecting with media studies, Luescher's study of modern architecture with studies of visibility and epistemology, and Mehta's study of Indian immigrant groups in California with studies of religion).

The book's chapters also follow varied methods of work. While several of them dwell in history, some are written from praxiological points of view. Shannon's work on Hue in Vietnam, for instance, is conducted from the perspective of a landscape urbanist, and it reflects the work process of a practitioner who uses historical sources as a means to understand the past and the present in order to produce a blueprint for the city's future. Tzirtzilaki's research on immigrant populations in Athens is based on anthropological

methods of inquiry and is inseparable from the author's engagement as an architect/activist. Milovanović-Bertram's interviews point clearly to her interest in evaluating the role of travel-based memories in the process of architectural thinking and design, which is valuable for establishing a more comprehensive role of travel in the pedagogy of architecture, an area of particular interest to her as an educator and director of the Study in Italy program at the university where she teaches.

Among the chapters that deal with historical location, several distinct standpoints are revealed. For instance, if Maniaque's study of European architects' discovery of American counterculture adds new material derived primarily from oral histories and reviews of popular culture in an area of limited investigation, Schlimme's chapter questions established beliefs in his subject of study – namely De Carlo's use of the hill town paradigm as a proposition for participatory design, with the examination of primary archival resources. Even though the studies by Teasley, Akcan, and Bartsch all operate along the lines of post-colonial thinking and utilize methods of post-structuralism, they also carry distinctions. While the first two bring into light new materials – mainly travel diaries that have been unexplored in the past – and are prone to theorizing based on historically situated knowledges, Bartsch's chapter scrutinizes architectural historiography from a meta-disciplinary perspective, rather than the architect's statements or architecture per se.

*Travel, Space, Architecture* does not attempt to cover the numerous areas in theory and history of architecture that could be reinterpreted or reframed through an emphasis on travel. Conversely, it tries to trace some lines and vectors in the constellation of issues that emerge when considering architecture through the catalyst of travel, and pose, rather than answer, questions of place, identity, and spatial practice as they are modified by movements of people, goods, and capital. It is our hope that *Travel, Space, Architecture* will bring new insights to those who perceive architectural enterprises not only as acts of building, but also as a means of articulating spatial imaginaries, narratives and representations, and additionally to those who are concerned with the geopolitical implications that are always implicit in architectural practices and discourses. Finally, it has to be stated that the issues presented in this book are by no means comprehensive or conclusive, but rather preliminary sketches or attempts to address the relations between architecture and travel in the anticipation of new perspectives to emerge. It is no coincidence that most of the contributions to this book are by scholars in spatio-architectural studies who have themselves performed disciplinary and/or geographical migrations in order to produce these writings.

*A Note on Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese Names*

*Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese names throughout the book are written with the surname first, except in cases where an individual's name has been established in international publications in the Western form (given name first).*

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# 1

## NEW VISION AND A NEW WORLD ORDER

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**Great Travel Machines of Sight**

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**O Coração Verde (A Green Heart): Travel, Urban Gardens, and Design of Late Colonial Cities in the Southern Hemisphere**

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# Great Travel Machines of Sight

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Andreas Luescher

This chapter offers one mapping of the relationship between travel, space, and architecture using the specific example of the panorama, immense painted landscapes and cityscapes installed in purpose-built rotundas which provided an immersive, 360-degree viewing experience of distant lands and remote occurrences. Particular attention is paid to the role the panorama played in reflecting and shaping perceptions of space during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The panorama's detailed description of remote places and events fulfilled a fundamental desire for a more comprehensive grasp of the complexities individuals experienced towards the end of the eighteenth century, and it successfully satisfied an increasing appetite for visual information spawned by an expansion of travel and the growth of cities. It was the intent of the panorama's creator, Robert Barker (1739–1806), to offer an illusion of a vast horizon that made objects and actors, near and far, comprehensible as *à coup d'oeil*.<sup>1</sup> Panoramic depictions and their embrace made it necessary to move not only one's eyes and head in order to grasp the whole, but also one's body in order to assimilate its vast, continuous canvas.<sup>2</sup> As an image that provided sights uncommon or unobtainable in everyday life, the panorama has critical and significant relationships to travel and architecture. Its inherent structural contradictions are what makes the panorama useful as an interpretive tool for rethinking the production of spatial imaginations vis-à-vis travel and architecture. Travel involves both physical and imaginative displacements, experienced through an accumulation of singular and transitory moments which require a contemplative stillness to absorb and reflect upon. Eighteenth-century Western architecture, on the other hand, involved clear physical and imaginative boundaries, and had epitomized stasis. In contrast to it, and analogous to physical mobility and traveling, the panorama successfully simulated the human experience of architecture and urban space that relies on physical and temporal passages through hundreds of successive impressions.

The panorama's relationship with travel will also be considered through a brief

- 1 On 19 June 1787 Barker was awarded a patent for 'an entire new Contrivance or Apparatus, *La nature à coup d'oeil*, for the Purpose of displaying Nature at large' (REPERTORY OF ARTS 1796: 165).
- 2 Grand-scale spectacles were not unfamiliar to urban populations, but the active, immersed spectatorship provided by panoramas which ranged in size from 1,500 square feet to 24,000 square feet was a true novelty (ALTICK 1978: 132; WILCOX 1976: 111).

3 The *non finito*, with its attendant simulation of the imagination, is inherent to Edmund Burke's conception of the 'sublime' (GUENTNER 1993: 40–41). The *non finito* affords perhaps an even deeper insight into the process of individualization than do problems of style (WITTKOWER 1961: 292).

4 Antecedents of the panorama fall under three categories of representation: topographical prospects, illusionistic decorative painting and theatrical scenography. Fairly uniform scholarly agreement on this exists among examinations of the panorama with widely varied perspective e.g., panorama as part of the leisure industry of the eighteenth century London (ALTICK 1978; HYDE 1988) and panorama as part of the emergence of the middle-class hegemony (WILCOX 1976; OETTERMAN 1980). These representational modes are identified as having contributed both to the technical feasibility of the panorama and to its reception as a large-scale spectacle balanced in its appeal somewhere between interpretive exhibition and sensational entertainment.

5 Ultimately the idea of the panorama can be traced to many sources and not to the single model invented and patented by Barker. Others would come forward to claim the title of inventor of the panorama, notably the German decorative painter Johann Adam Breyssig who claimed in his 1799 book *Skizzen* that he had developed the scheme for the panorama over ten years earlier. However, Breyssig made no progress toward actual construction of one until 1797 when he made a series of drawings in Rome for a panorama of that city, and was not involved in an actual panorama exhibition until 1800 (OETTERMAN 1997: 5).

comparison with *vedute*, a genre of small-scale topographical prospects collected by aristocratic travelers as take-home mementos of their grand tour experiences. Unlike such private, individualized experiences of travel, the panorama popularized a vast number of remote places and historic events to mass audiences and thus had a significant impact on the production of cultural and national imaginations.

Formal and structural implications of panorama's spatial logic on the production of architecture will be discussed through the work of Étienne-Louis Boullée (1728–99) and Le Corbusier (1887–1965), considering in particular Boullée's Cenotaph to Isaac Newton, completed in 1784 three years before Barker's first panorama, and Le Corbusier's *fenêtre en longeur* and the Parisian apartment he designed for Charles de Beistegui as celebrations of the *non finito*.<sup>3</sup>

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## BARKER'S PANORAMA

Although the idea of deploying spaces of representation in lived spaces had been expressed in various forms since antiquity, it was not until the mid-1780s in Edinburgh that the mechanics of inscribing an entire 360-degree prospect were settled, and an exhibition of painting on an unprecedented architectural scale was accomplished (WILCOX 1976: 19).<sup>4</sup> The late-eighteenth-century cultural milieu of Edinburgh was an extraordinary forcing ground for talent and ingenuity of every type. Largely liberated from the restraining effects of Tory rule, Edinburgh societies fostered the emergence of numerous technical, social and philosophical innovations (STERNBERGER 1977: 39). It was Robert Barker, an Irish portrait painter and teacher of perspective in Scotland during the 1770s and 80s, who fulfilled a generalized ambition to create an image that was not formed within a rectangular boundary but which, just as human vision itself, was unbounded.<sup>5</sup> Barker created a high vantage-point painting of the city of Edinburgh on a canvas that literally encircled the viewer. He derived the name of his invention from the Greek word *pan* meaning 'all', and *hourama* meaning 'what is seen'. The previous decade had seen numerous antecedents to this scheme. In 1774, English topographical draughtsman Thomas Hearne (1744–1817) produced a sketch of the Lake and Vale of Keswick from Crow Park for the connoisseur and collector Sir George Beaumont (1753–1827), who intended to have the scene painted on the walls of a circular banqueting room. In 1781, the Irish landscapist George Barret (1732–84) painted the walls of a room at William Locke's Norbury Park in Surrey with a continuous view of the Cumberland Hills (CROFT-MURRAY 1962: 60–66). In the same year, the topographical painter Charles Tomkins (1757–1823) exhibited Circular View of Mount Edgumbe at the

Royal Academy in London. It was also in 1781 that Philippe Jacques de Louthembourg (1740–1812) from Strasbourg first presented his Eidophusikon, in which the principles and techniques of the design of theatrical scenography were applied to a purely scenic entertainment (ALTICK 1978:, 59).<sup>6</sup>

Barker was not the first to stretch the traditional prospect in order to encompass a full 360 degrees: his originality lay in giving such a view an illusionist presentation on an immense scale.<sup>7</sup> The process of gathering and transcribing a 360-degree view onto paper, then rescaling it on a gigantic canvas presented three problems to Barker's ingenuity: first, recording the scene *in situ*; second, scaling up and transferring sketches to the full-scale canvas; and third, compensating for surface distortion caused by the extreme weight of the hung canvas in the final painting. The problem of surface distortion was resolved by utilizing optical, not geometric, perspective in an approach was consonant with the reigning romantic preference for the organic over the mechanical (ALTICK 1978: 129). Contemplating the visual field as a whole through analytical and empirical observation was an approach to representation first articulated by Baron Friedrich Heinrich Alexander von Humboldt, German naturalist and writer (1769–1859). Humboldt believed that beyond scientific knowledge a harmonious view of nature was accessible only through an emotional experience of its grandeur and sublimity. Disappointed with the state of landscape representation, Humboldt contended that only large-scale scene-painting such is the panorama could succeed in 'bringing the phenomena of nature generally before the contemplation of the eye and of the mind' (HUMBOLDT 1850–59: 97). In particular he admired the 'illusionistic effect of the panorama' whereby 'the spectator, enclosed as in a magic circle and withdrawn from all disturbing realities, may the more readily imagine himself surrounded on all sides by nature in another clime' (1850–59: 98).

After the 1788 public staging of his first panorama in a temporary exhibition structure, Barker built the world's first panorama building in 1794 at London's Leicester Square, where it would stand for nearly 70 years as a thriving exhibition hall (HYDE 1988: 17). Barker's original plan for the building served as the basis for the construction of all other such buildings throughout the nineteenth century. Refinements and elaborations were introduced, but the basic idea of a circular building with enclosures that prevented observers from getting too close to the paintings remained the same. The first panorama rotunda had two exhibition spaces: one large space below that opened with the immense panorama, and a smaller space above.<sup>8</sup> Eventually exhibition rotundas appeared as far east as St Petersburg and Moscow, and as far west as North America, where they were known in the nineteenth century as 'cycloramas'. Already seen panoramic canvases regularly traveled across national and cultural boundaries in

6 De Louthembourg was a pupil of the great stage designer Giovanni Servandoni (1695–1766), a Florentine by origin and an architect, credited with the notion of the visual *coup* for a mass audience.

7 As early as the mid-sixteenth century, Belgium engraver Anthony van den Wyngaerde (b. Antwerp, c. 1525, active between 1544 and 1570 in the Netherlands, England, France and Italy) produced a complete rotational account of the Dutch island Walcheren (c. 1548–49) from an elevated viewpoint. He described his work, which was more diagrammatic and pictographic than realistic, as a 'Zelandiae Description' (RICKEN 1991: 24).

8 The large rotunda covered about 10,000 square feet, and the smaller rotunda covered about 2,700 square feet (WILCOX 1990: 11).

9 As an experiment in the representation of binocular vision, panoramas may have contributed to the emergent binocular vision of twentieth-century works such as Claude-Oscar Monet's *Nymphéas* (WATER LILIES, c. 1906–26). In the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris, Water Lilies are displayed in two large, custom-designed oval rooms. Altogether they form an all-encompassing view similar to the panorama by involving the viewer into an intimate, intense experience that underscores the mesmerizing relation between art, nature and space.

exchanged for new ones (HYDE 1988: 27), fostering spatial imaginations of mass audiences across the world and inciting real travel interest. After its first major exhibition in London in 1788, panoramas enjoyed widespread popularity in Britain and its Empire, Europe and North America through the mid-1800s, and again towards the end of the nineteenth century.

By virtue of their excess, panoramas were liberated from the confusions that beset the more conventional categories of painting in the academia and from the pressures that accompanied avant-garde movements in art. For receptive artists, the unselective nature of a 360-degree painted view may have encouraged greater compositional freedom. Wilcox suggests that Barker may well have sought to match his newly liberated art with an equally liberating approach to subject matter. As Wilcox notes, 'this was more than a novel amusement; it was a radical transformation of the nature of the painted image' (1990: 10).<sup>9</sup>

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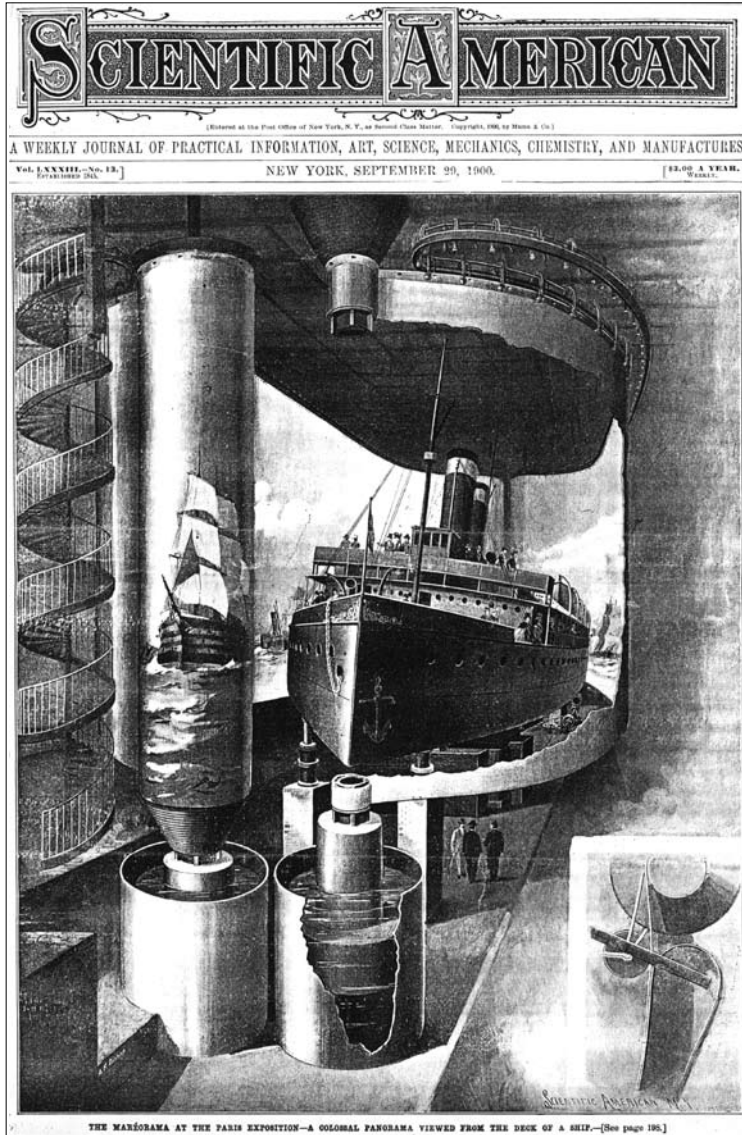
## MOVING PANORAMA

From the time of its introduction in the 1780s, the static nature of the 360-degree stationary panorama had been perceived as a limitation to its success as an illusion. Although the panorama was designed to overcome one of the limitations of traditional painting – that of the static eye – it suffered from the stasis of a painted atmosphere. Of alternative forms of scenic entertainment that arose to compete with the Panorama, the most popular were the moving panorama (peristrepthic panorama) which first appeared in London around 1810, and the diorama which first appeared in Paris in 1822 (DUBBINI 1986: 110).

The moving panorama was the invention of another Edinburgh artist, Peter Marshall (1762–1826). The mechanism of the moving panorama was simple: continuously rendered topography painted on long strips of linen or cotton that ran to hundreds or even thousands of feet, stored on large cylinders concealed behind a proscenium-like frame (ALTICK 1978: 199–210). The illusion sought to provide landscape scenery as though perceived from a moving vehicle (such as a boat or a train), or occasionally stage props (such as the wheel of a steamboat attached to the proscenium) to enhance the illusion that it was the viewer and not the painting that was moving (AVERY 1990: 52–8). It was this special conceit that the viewer was riding in a boat, carriage, or train that distinguished moving panorama from the original, and that rendered moving panorama extraordinarily popular in the 1840s and 1850s. The passing scenery implied the passage of time: changes in time of day and weather were normally represented on the

canvas and were sometimes enhanced with changes in the intensity and color of light illuminating the picture. The most elaborate panoramas of this genre were those shown at the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris where 21 of the 23 major attractions involved a dynamic illusion of voyage. However, it was the Maréorama which might have been the ultimate peristrepthic panorama. Described in a 1900 edition of *Scientific American*, the Maréorama was a colossal panoramic image which spectators – fully engaged by smoke fumes, steam whistles, and simulated weather – viewed while standing on a hydraulically-

- 10 The stormy-sea scenes, or the so-called transitional scenes, were most convenient and adaptable for the moving panoramas because they allowed for thrills and excitement.



### 1.1

The Maréorama at the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris. *Scientific American*, September 1900.

cally animated ‘deck’ sandwiched between two simultaneously rolling moving panoramas, each 2,460-feet long and 42.5-feet high (FIGURE 1.1).<sup>10</sup> Ultimately however, while these simulations provided the illusion of temporal flow, they could not compete with the environmental simulation of the panorama’s all-encompassing view.

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## ‘TANGIBLE BY THE EYE’

11 Both *veduta* and the grand tour originated in the sixteenth century but are associated particularly with the eighteenth century.

Central to the appreciation of the panorama’s influence on spatial and cultural imagination of mass audiences was the conceptual reframing of the relationship between public imagination with the seemingly boundless world of traveling, and with the dramatic growth of cities. Aristocratic travel since the sixteenth century had been associated with the grand tour, which laid the basis for an enthusiasm for Italian painting and spawned a flourishing international market of guidebooks. An important mid-eighteenth-century development in the language of spatial representation, closely associated with the grand tour, was the Italian *veduta*, also known as a ‘souvenir views.’<sup>11</sup> Like the panorama, the *veduta* was a painted genre featuring popular views of major cities across Europe, with characteristic buildings and monuments. Unlike the panorama, *vedute* could be held in the hand like a postcard. The pictorial roots of the *vedute* were in the topographical tradition of the ‘prospect’, half map and half aerial survey, a motif which thrived in the Netherlands and Italy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and was widespread in Britain during the first half of the eighteenth century (WILCOX 1990: 9). *Vedute* were uniquely engaging because their steep lines of perspectival recession in an extremely wide oblong format produced the impression that a viewer was immersed in an urban milieu.

By the early nineteenth century, the finite city that had come into being in Europe over the previous 500 years was being transformed by unprecedented migration of populations and the extension of the traditionally walled city into its already burgeoning suburbs (FRAMPTON 1980: 20–21). A consolidating movement characterized by agrarian enclosure policies, rapid urbanization and increasingly aggressive remaining imperial policies produced new and expansive worldviews as well as new cities that could no longer be surveyed by the existing techniques. By the mid-nineteenth century, almost 50 percent of the population of United Kingdom was urban-based, and by the end of the nineteenth century the overall figure was above seventy percent (BUTLIN 1993: 215.) The increasingly complex nineteenth-century urban experience in the world transformed by industry, massive population growth and growing migrations inspired a general desire for the panorama. At the same time, a revolution in the means of



traveling was making the world seem smaller: trains and steamers, railroad networks, tunnels, bridges and viaducts did not just alter the face of the landscape (STERNBERGER 1977: 39) but opened the world, the lands, and the seas elaborating thus a new world of unbounded experience. As Jonathan Crary (1990: 39) argued, when optical science shifted the emphasis from geometry to physiology and began studying the mediated relationship between human eye and mind, a distance of one hundred miles no longer implied over a day's travel for the active traveler-observer who watched space rush past the train window and saw thousands of miles collapse into seconds in the transmission of a telegraph message. His experiences began unfolding within a newly conceived space-time continuum.

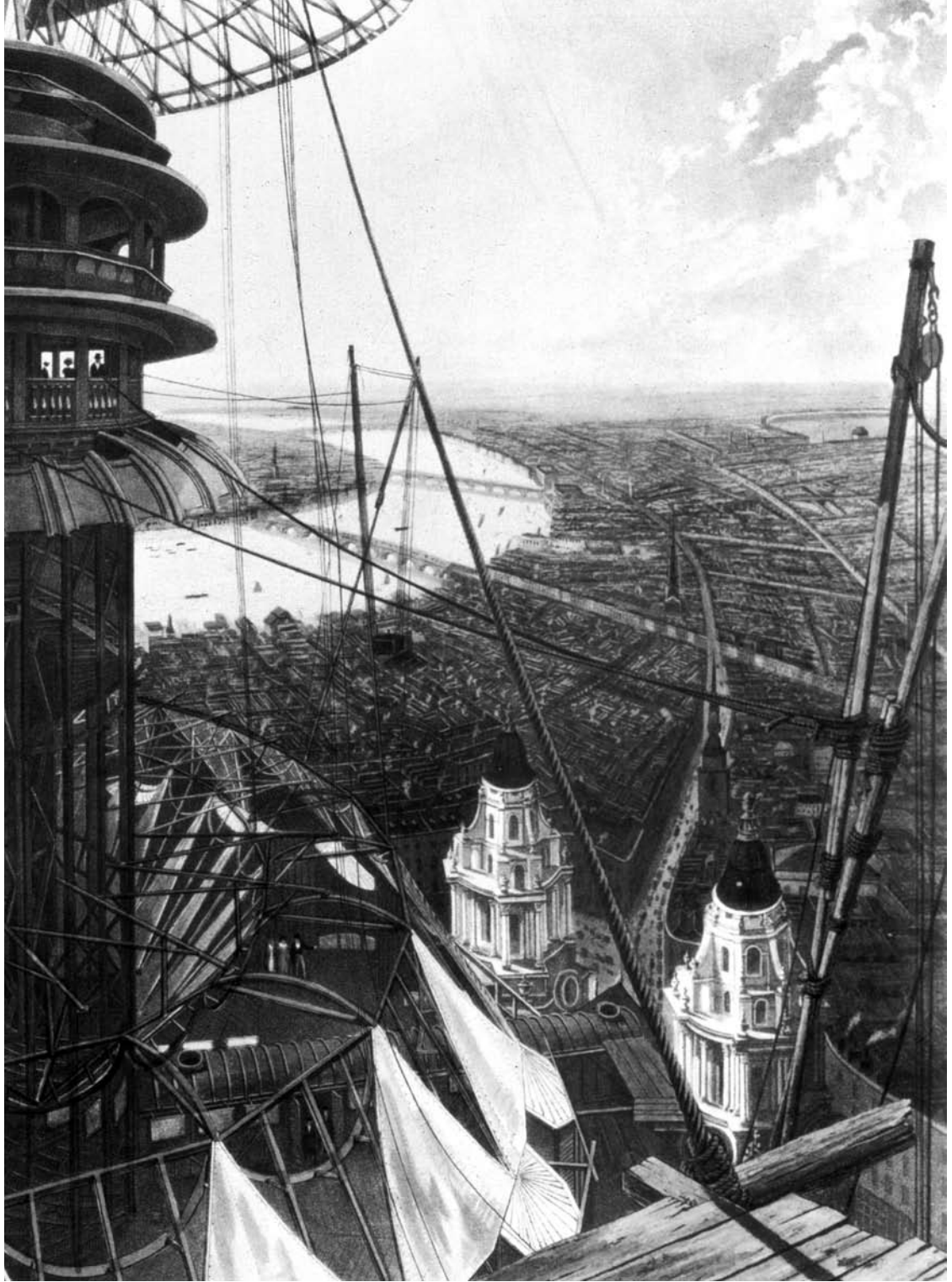
In reality, however, traveling was complicated and more often than not dangerous and unpredictable. Even for those who could afford it, the circumvention of the hardships of travel through the means of the panorama became a common theme. That the panorama was a versatile ally to real travels celebrated even as a substitute for travel was documented in newspaper articles from the period. A 1789 *Woodfall's Register* entry suggested that even the Royal Family benefited by gaining knowledge of foreign lands through the panorama. An 1824 article in *Blackwood's Magazine* developed this idea at length:

If we have not the waters of the Lake of Geneva, and the bricks and mortar of the little Greek town, tangible by our hands, we have them *tangible by the eye* – the fullest impression that could be purchased, by our being parched, passported, plundered, starved, and stenchd, for 1,200 miles east and by south...

In the 1850s, Charles Dickens poked lightly ironic fun at the phenomenon of the panorama supplanting the need for actual travel when he created a peripatetic character by the name of Mr Booley. 'Some Account of an Extraordinary Traveller' chronicled the adventures of Mr Booley who, at the age of 65, had set out on a remarkable series of journeys which carried him to all parts of the globe by visiting panoramas. In conclusion, Mr Booley revealed the true nature of his travels:

It is very gratifying to me, said he, to have seen much at a time of life, and to have acquired a knowledge of the countries I have visited, which I could not have derived from books alone. When I was a boy, such traveling would have been impossible, as the gigantic-moving-panorama or diorama mode of conveyance, which I have principally adopted (all my modes of conveyance have been pictorial), had not been attempted (DICKENS 1850, 77).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Charles Dickens published a weekly journal, *Household Words*, between 1850 and 1859. The weekly journal included articles on politics, science and history. To increase the number of people willing to buy *Household Words*, it also contained short stories and humorous pieces.



1.2 *The Colosseum: the panorama of London seen from a painter's platform, 1829, colored aquatint published by R. Ackermann & Co., London. Guildhall Library, Corporation of London.*

The panorama provided not only a surrogate reality against other modes and techniques of representation (verbal and pictorial) could be measured, but also anticipated and sometimes pre-empted actual traveling experiences to those who would later visit the sites represented (HYDE 1988: 40). Just as eighteenth-century guidebooks were often written with a city's own residents as much as with travelers in mind, attendance records of panoramas show that the most popular panoramic scenes tended to be those which depicted the city in which it was displayed. Panoramas featuring views of great metropolitan areas were often permanently installed in them and enjoyed years of local popularity.

The most extraordinary of all the static panoramas was the view of London as seen from the top of St Paul's cathedral, which opened in 1829 in the newly built Colosseum in Regent's Park, which contained London's first hydraulic elevator (FIGURE 1.2). Spectators were able to ascend to the top of the rotunda and emerge to view the real panorama of the London skyline, the panoramic depiction offering a framework for the experience of reality (HYDE 1988: 79–85).<sup>13</sup>

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## A DIFFUSE CONTAINER

The panoramic idea of architecture as a space of simulated travel is evident in the work of a small but influential group of architects during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, notably French architects Étienne-Louis Boullée, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736–1806), and German architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781–1841).<sup>14</sup> Boullée aimed not towards the conquest of space through the machine but towards a spiritual 'conquest' of space through environmental representation. In his 1784 Cenotaph for Sir Isaac Newton (FIGURE 1.3) we see the panoramic thinking in the overall scale and relational networks, in the utilization of stereometric enclosures (circle and sphere), and in the merging of rational and romantic traits. The Cenotaph is a massive, hollow sphere set on a cylindrical podium from which viewers enter the sphere.<sup>15</sup> Designed to immerse spectators in the night sky, with the moon and stars affected by sunlight filtering through apertures punctured in the sphere, Boullée's monument expressed a view of Newtonian science in which the infinite and orderly powers of nature and the universe came to be regarded as manifestations of the sublime. The interior of this memorial is empty, except for the sarcophagus: nothing distracts the eye (FIGURE 1.3). Boullée wrote of the imagined spectator:

he is obliged, as though by a hundred great forces, to stay in the place assigned to him, which occupying the center, keeps him at a distance that favors the illusion. He can enjoy it without coming to any harm by going too close out of desire to satisfy a vain curiosity (1968: 137–38).

- 13 The Panorama made no secret of its simulation, as testified by William Wordsworth in this passage from the 1805 edition of the *Prelude*:

At leisure let us view from day to day,  
As they present themselves, the spectacles  
Within doors: troops of wild beast, bird and beasts  
Of every nature from all climes convened,  
And, next to these, those mimic sights that ape  
The absolute presence of reality  
Expressing as in mirror sea and land,  
And what earth is, and what she hath to shew  
I do not here allude to subtlest craft,  
By means refined attaining purest ends,  
But imitations fondly made in plain  
Confession of man's weakness and his loves.  
(1805, BOOK SEVENTH, LINES 245-256)

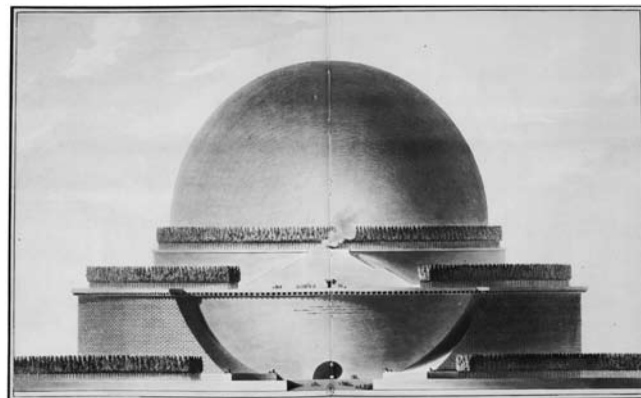
- 14 This is not a question of establishing architectural genealogy but more a striking concomitance that we record these attempts to place the individual observer in a central position, in much the same way that the world of reality is served up in the *Rundblick*, in a circular gaze that embraces the whole horizon in one take.
- 15 Cenotaph was an empty tomb, a monument erected in honor of Newton whose body was laid to rest elsewhere.

A contemporary of Boullée described the experience inside the vast globe as follows: 'The onlooker finds himself as if by magic floating in the air, borne by the vaporous images into the immensity of space' (MONTCLOS 1974: 38; COMMENT 2000: 140). The analogies between Boullée's Cenotaph and the panorama, particularly obvious when comparing the sections of a typical panorama with that of the Cenotaph, are very obvious in at least the following four aspects: both have circular plans, both contain a hidden passageway to remove distractions from the visual field of the spectator, in both visitors ascend in the center, and finally both have an elevated platform in the center preventing observers from getting too close to the illusion (VOGT 1985: 251).

Boullée's rephrasing of the confrontation of nature (seen as unpredictable, engulfing, unmanageable, transient) and architecture (understood as rational, civilized, static) can be seen as a preface to the revolutionary investigation of the full opening of architectural enclosure to a larger environmental frame by Swiss architect Le Corbusier,

1.3

Étienne-Louis Boullée, *Cenotaph for Newton*, 1784. *Bibliothèque Nationale de France.*



who described the history of architecture since the baroque as ‘the history of the struggle for the window’ (1954: 36), whereby referring to the interplay between the tectonic and the scenographic,<sup>16</sup> also a conceptual struggle of the original panorama makers. In his 1926 manifesto *Les 5 points d’une architecture nouvelle* (English translation: Five Points of a New Architecture),<sup>17</sup> Le Corbusier stipulated formal elements which would redefine the architectural enclosure in terms of permeability and flexible spatial parameters. One of the five points was the horizontal window (*fenêtre en longueur*), a narrow ribbon-like expanse of window space which Le Corbusier felt performed the mediatory function between inside and outside less intrusively than the vertical window (BOESIGER AND GIRSBERGER 1967: 44). ‘A window eleven meters long brings the immensity of the outer world into the room, the unadulterated totality of a ... scene’ (REICHLIN 1984: 72). His horizontal strip windows stood in stark contrast to conventional European windows, especially the French variety (*porte-fenêtre*) which reproduced, in their verticality, the figure of the static, standing human.

The French architect Auguste Perret (1874–1954) whose famous church at Le Raincy, near Paris (1922–23) is surrounded by a continuous wall of glass supported by prefabricated concrete units, described Le Corbusier’s horizontal window as nothing less than a condemnation to a view of an unending panorama. Perret and Le Corbusier would be engaged for decades in an ideological dispute about how to ‘cut the window’, a controversy which was as much about the integrity of the frame as it was about the iconology of the reflections, vistas, and framed views. Bruno Reichlin notes that Perret’s objection to the horizontal window concerned mostly its sacrifice of the appearance of inviolability of the wall. Reichlin points out that Perret thought the vertical window restricted the exterior view to a section of the continuum of the landscape, while the horizontal window, like the panorama, diminished the ‘correct’ perception of the depth of the view and reproduced the landscape in its entirety. The extreme distance between the vertical limits of the field of vision offered by the horizontal window broke through the cone of vision in the horizontal plane on both sides, and disappeared out of the observer’s field of view. The negative consequence of this, in Perret’s view, was that window-image lost the features of a *veduta*, that is, it lost the centralizing focus and the recessional perspectives which would ‘locate’ the viewer. The landscape seen through a horizontal window was simply ‘there in all its immediacy’, as if it were ‘sticking’ to the window because, just as in the panorama, the transition between the familiar objects close at hand and those further away remained concealed from view, so that the perception of spatial depth is significantly diminished.

Le Corbusier rejected this view and had celebrated this very attribute in describing one his many residential designs by claiming that ‘[the solid structure] merged

16 In 1922, Le Corbusier produced a widely recognized panoramic exhibition called *Ville Contemporaine* which portrayed Paris as a city for 3 million inhabitants. Underwritten by the Voisin airplane and car company, the monumental panorama was exhibited in the *Salon d’Automne* of 1922.

17 In his 1927 edition of the book *Vers une Architecture* (English translation: *Towards a New Architecture*, 1970), a compilation of articles from the review in *L’Esprit Nouveau*, Le Corbusier described ‘Five points of architecture’ that became the guiding principles for many of his designs.



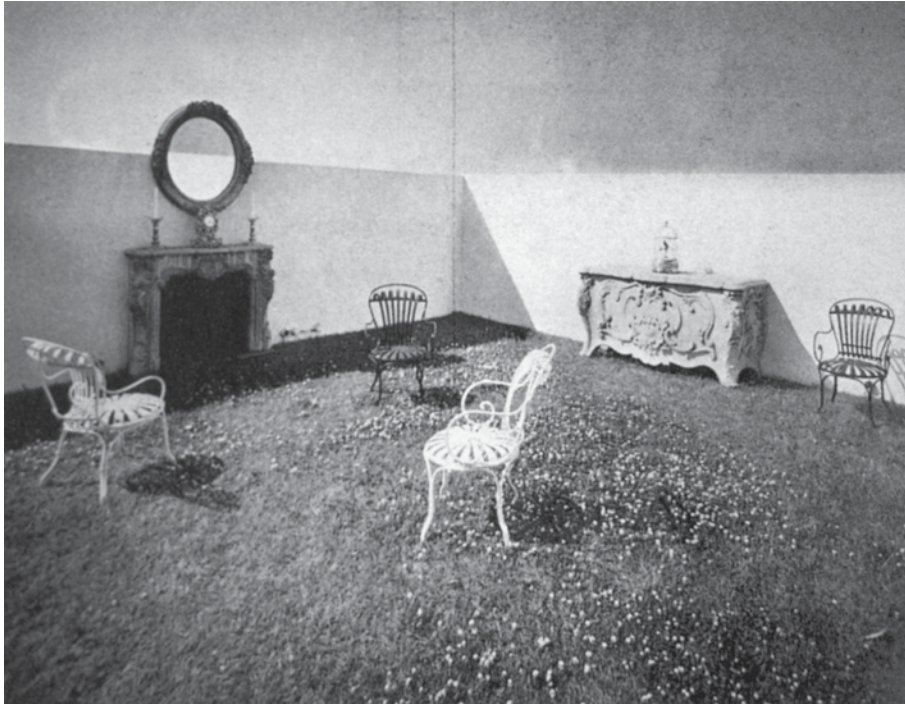
into an obscure and indistinct background against which, from one side to the other, there stood out the euphoric picture of one of the world's most beautiful panoramas' (LE CORBUSIER 1954: 30–31). Rosalind Krauss described Le Corbusier's villas as provoking three-dimensional 'meandering' in which any comprehension of even 'simple geometries' of the architectural environment established by the horizontal windows must, as Krauss puts it, 'be the product of motion around and through them' (1972: 52). To such motion, which the sliding of the horizontal window both facilitated and re-enacted, Krauss attributes the phrase 'walking on the walls' to connote the activity in space which 'both sustains the proscenic frame of the frontal view and provides the mechanism which reweaves and undermines its effects' (1972: 52). To Perret, the horizontal window called into question the values inherent in the 'personal experience of the interior' (REICHLIN 1984: 69–71) and was preoccupied with the material vulnerability represented by the panoramic cut in the wall. Le Corbusier maintained that the horizontal window was merely a logical outgrowth of technical advances in construction and not a formal or thematic intricacy of modern design. Whereas Perret equated *fenêtre en longeur* with an unscreening of private life, for Le Corbusier the wall itself was negotiable.

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## NON FINITO

If, as Le Corbusier wrote, the window was 'the chief protagonist of the house' (1954: 30–31), the wall then was its agonist. Recurrent in his writing is the idea that the natural elements of sky, earth and the horizon line could be treated as the elements of a vast outdoor room and as an extension of the single room shelter: 'the exterior is always an interior' (LE CORBUSIER 1972: 177) he wrote. While retracing the steps of the neoclassical German architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel's grand tour of Italian antiquity (c. 1911), Le Corbusier made many drawings of ruined rooms from Hadrian's villa and Pompeii, emphasizing the missing walls or ceilings that allowed nature to define the space normally enclosed by human beings. Ruins, he thought, were epigraphs of the *non finito*. In ruins, the past falls into a pleasing and romantic disrepair as it returns to nature. This reciprocity would be formalized in his outdoor rooms, which combined the horizontal window and the panoramic enclosure with an ancestor of both: the ceiling paintings of the Baroque.

Le Corbusier successfully formalized such a complex dialogue in a Parisian apartment he designed for Charles de Beistegui (c. 1929–31). The apartment featured a sparsely furnished 'living room' – a ruin – on top of the building enclosed only by four



## 1.4

*Le Corbusier, Charles de Beistegui apartment, roofgarden with imitation stone furniture, grass carpet, and daises, 1929–31. Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/FLC.*

low walls. This outdoor room, with the sky as a ceiling, a grass carpet as the floor, and an eloquently mute fireplace, had hedge-walls that screened the ‘chaos’ of Paris and allowed vistas of the great monuments only: Le Notre Dame, Arc de Triomphe, Eiffel Tower, and the sky (GORLIN 1982: 52–53, 58). In this room, the panorama’s illusion is now fully corporeal as the dome of the sky is restored at the horizon line (SEE FIGURES 1.4 AND 1.5). The position of the mirror in Figure 1.4 accentuates further the ambiguity between indoors and outdoors. Visible landmarks are turned into *objets trouvés*, such as Arc de Triomphe or Eiffel Tower, but cut in half by the high parapet wall. As if speaking about the panorama, Le Corbusier wrote:

Forms under light. Inside and out, above and below. When you go inside, you walk, look round as you walk, and the forms are unfolded, developed and combined. Outside: you approach, look, take interest, judge, walk and discover. You continue to receive different, successive emotions. Pursued in this way, the composition appears. You walk, retrace your steps, move round, keep on moving, circulating. Take a look at the ways in which a man can feel architecture: he has two eyes that can see only ahead; he can turn his body, or move his body on his legs and turn any way he likes. Hundreds of successive perceptions go to make up his feeling for

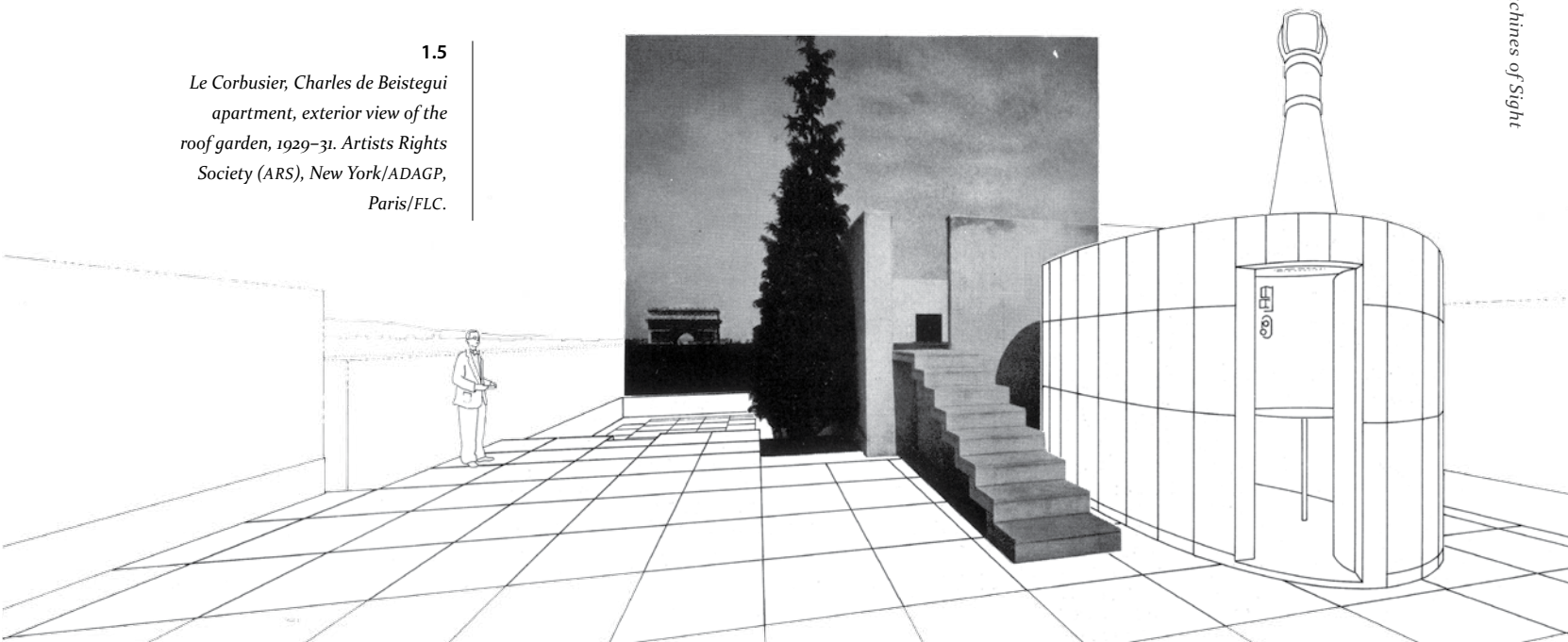
architecture. His walking, his movement, are the things that count, and it is here that architectural emotion has its origin. Consequently, the composition has not been established on a fixed central point, an ideal point that can be rotated for simultaneous circular vision (1936: 7).

Le Corbusier had succeeded in converting the conceit of the original panorama's painters into reality. Like the panorama, architecture now produced a space of representation and was employed to frame the view, imagination and experience of the new, active observer. And, as if to redeem a central contradiction of the panorama, transparent horizontal windows produced an outward-facing architecture to replace the one that was huddled, inward and defensive (BAKER 1996: 286–287).

The panorama was a part of the general shift in both popular and scholarly interest away from static, material objects that documented travelers' journeys towards immersive traveling experiences, either simulated or real. As such, the panoramic idea was at the heart of both Boullée's Cenotaph and Le Corbusier's *fenêtre en longueur*. Its elements of containment and diffusion, and the easy interchange between the visible and the tangible, situate the panorama within a larger debate surrounding the division between the mind's share and the body's share in the experience of reality, pointing to its role as a conceptual bridge between traditional concerns for universality and immobility, and a more contemporary concern for individualism and mobility. By exploiting the ambiguous relationships between real sites, painted representations, and observer's perception and imagination of them, the panorama as a structural aphorism provides a complex discourse on the physical and the metaphysical aspects of travel, space, and architecture.

## 1.5

Le Corbusier, Charles de Beistegui  
apartment, exterior view of the  
roof garden, 1929–31. Artists Rights  
Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP,  
Paris/FLC.





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# *O Coração Verde (A Green Heart):*

## *Travel, Urban Gardens, and Design of Late Colonial Cities in the Southern Hemisphere*

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*Diane Brand*

Travel has historically been a significant factor in the transfer of human knowledge between the Old World and the New Worlds in the Southern Hemisphere. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, international travel involved transiting the vast oceanic spaces in small but well-equipped sailing vessels which, due to the extended time of travel, had to call at multiple ports along the way to take on fresh water and food supplies. This chapter interrogates the mechanics of transglobal navigation and identifies how the ports of Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town<sup>1</sup> became important stops on these extended journeys to destinations in the South Pacific, and how the cities themselves came to be employed as urban models for communities colonized further afield in Australia and New Zealand. The landscape in which both these cities were encountered was topographically different from the British cities the colonizers had embarked from: geologically younger, vegetationally vigorous, and strategically chosen as defensible sites, they were perceived as both dramatic and exotic as they dominated these port cities. As a consequence of their role as supply points en route to new colonial expansions further south, these cities developed urban gardens which were also typologically differentiated from those in mainland Europe. The Company Garden in Cape Town was founded in 1660 by the Dutch East India Company as a vast kitchen garden to restock their ships sailing to the Far East. The Passeio Público (public promenade) in Rio de Janeiro (built in 1779–1783) was an experimental garden in which plants from the Brazilian rainforest and elsewhere<sup>2</sup> were investigated for possible commercial and industrial application in Portugal. Eventually, both gardens became pleasure gardens, but their presence in the heart of the city proved a compelling urban idea to the travelers in transit to the southern hemisphere and back. In discussing the influence of these garden-types, together with their urban placement at the city center rather than at the periphery, it will be argued that they provided a founding paradigm of Australian

1 Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town are cited repeatedly in the diaries and sketchbooks of the nineteenth-century travelers. Many vessels transited these harbors on the voyage south: for example in 1819, 1,626 vessels were documented in the port records of Rio de Janeiro (SMITH AND FERREZ 1960: 57).

2 During the colonial period many exotic plants were imported into Brazil from French Guiana by the Portuguese military, to supply gardens in Belém, São Paulo, Ouro Preto and Olinda.

3 The city as a commercial nexus represented for Britain both a cheap source of raw materials and labor to satisfy rapidly enlarging commercial and industrial enterprise at home, and a source of future markets for British manufactured goods. Cities were therefore fundamental to the early settlement of Australia and New Zealand, for they were crucibles of commerce. A commercial agenda typically lurked beneath whatever social or political agenda predetermined each specific act of colonization. The commercial value of the settlement usually rested on some form of exploitation of the indigenous population, and determined a defined spatial relationship between the colonized and the colonizers. The city was simultaneously a form of global culture being disseminated in British colonies, and a mechanism for commercial and cultural occupation and exploitation.

Anthony King in *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (1984) identifies nineteenth-century British colonization as the locus of the dissemination of 'common culture' otherwise known in the twentieth century as 'globalization'. His later study *Urbanism, Colonialism, and the World Economy* (1990) deals specifically with the city as the mechanism of this spatial invasion, and classifies typologically various forms of city in which these transactions occurred. Two categories which King describes that are most relevant to Australia and New Zealand are colonized societies which: (a) have substantial numbers of indigenous inhabitants with a self-sufficient economy but few, if any, urban settlements (such as the Maori in New Zealand); and (b) have very few indigenous inhabitants whose level of economic and social development is relatively simple and who have no permanent forms of settlement (such as the Aborigines in Australia) (KING 1989).

urbanism. In addition, it will be argued that it was the travelers, at the same time also the agents of the colonial project, who carried these urban ideas (together with experiences, new knowledge, and commodities) back and forth on their travels to and from the colonies. Analogous to Michel Foucault's (FOUCAULT 1984) attempt to describe colonies in displaced localities constructed as heterotopian images of travelers' homelands, this paper will discuss such a conceptual reversal from Northern to Southern Hemispheres, with a particular focus on the transit hubs of Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town and their influence on the founding of cities in Australia.

The influence of older colonial cities, such as Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town, as models for colonial development in the Southern Hemisphere in the first half of nineteenth century has been clearly understated and unexplored in both contemporary and historic scholarship on the subject matter. This paper tries to remedy this situation by focusing on how the travels of colonial surveyors and other actors in the project of colonization created a subtle symbiosis of cultural exchange. Travel was the genesis of a particular system of data collection for the colonial powers, but for colonial surveyors it also triggered the unraveling of cultural and aesthetic precepts, and set up a productive self-referential dialogue that resulted in the hybridized, 'ambivalent, pragmatic, and often unstable' (BYRNES 1995: 60) colonial cultural identity. The culture of globalization,<sup>3</sup> as embodied in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial city, was thus not a one-way process; the interchanges were complex, multivalent, and multidirectional. The following discussion of the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town explores previously hidden levels of colonial discourse and the wider catchment of historic precedents available to colonizers as they enabled the exchange of images, commodities and exotic species through a wider tropical world (COSGROVE AND CURNOW 1999: 168).

## VOYAGING AND SEEING

The natural characteristics of sea currents successfully map the processes of knowledge acquisition and exchange that occurred during sea voyages to the Southern Hemisphere in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The trajectories of these currents are crucial to the flow of European knowledge, planning models and urban experience into the urban spaces of colonial Australasia. Northern Hemisphere sea currents and winds favored a quick southwest passage across the North Atlantic, and down the west coast of Africa, on the Canary and Guinea currents. Crossing the equator into the Southern Hemisphere, the southwest Brazil current favored ease of passage first to Rio de Janeiro and, in concert with the eastern, South Atlantic current, across to Cape

Town. Sir George Staunton, Secretary to the British Ambassador to China, on a voyage there in 1798, describes the narrowest stretch of sea between Africa and South America, and the winds which assist voyages across the Atlantic to Rio de Janeiro<sup>4</sup> and south to the Cape of Good Hope:

Across this tract of ocean it is usually observed that the winds, blowing Easterly from the continent of Africa, alter their direction as they approach very near the opposite continent of America; and take a course between North and West. Such winds are too favorable not, occasionally, to be sought for by vessels in their way to, or round, the Cape of Good Hope, which lies to the Southeast. The settlements on the coast of South America afford also those refreshments in abundance, which ships sometimes fail of finding in other places.

(STAUNTON 1798: 142–43)

The geographic coincidence of strong ocean currents and lush tropical climates positioned Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro along the invisible trajectories of sea travelers, as both cities were excellent sources of fresh vegetables, livestock, grain, alcohol and equipment, all necessary to travelers undertaking long sea journeys. These cities were also established as colonies (Cape Town of The Netherlands and Rio de Janeiro of Portugal), and for those undertaking the establishment of colonies further afield they presented cogent operational models of how a colonial city might manifest itself, both spatially and materially, in the unknown world. When the careers, journeys and interests of those traveling to Australia are factored into this equation, a more complex picture of colonial linkage emerges. In a unique intersection of individual destiny and the interweaving of career paths, Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town formed a new axis of precedent for the early Australian city. The individuals at the centre of this study each took bearings on their voyages south, employing memories of familiar urban models. They absorbed knowledge via two avenues: first was the official, written and cartographic knowledge that supported the conceptualization of urban planning models; second was the idiosyncratic absorption of data embedded in memory and the subconscious, which often surfaced in personal diaries and sketches. Within the context of their time, they charted new courses as they traveled to their destinations. These threads of experience began to form new and intriguing patterns. The myriad of connections wove a net of technical and personal strands through which the design of the Australasian city was eventually realized.

Travelers to the Antipodes acquired urban knowledge by exposure to different places as a result of military service in Britain's colonial empire. Their precedents were somewhat diverse due to the wide range of trajectories their career paths traced over

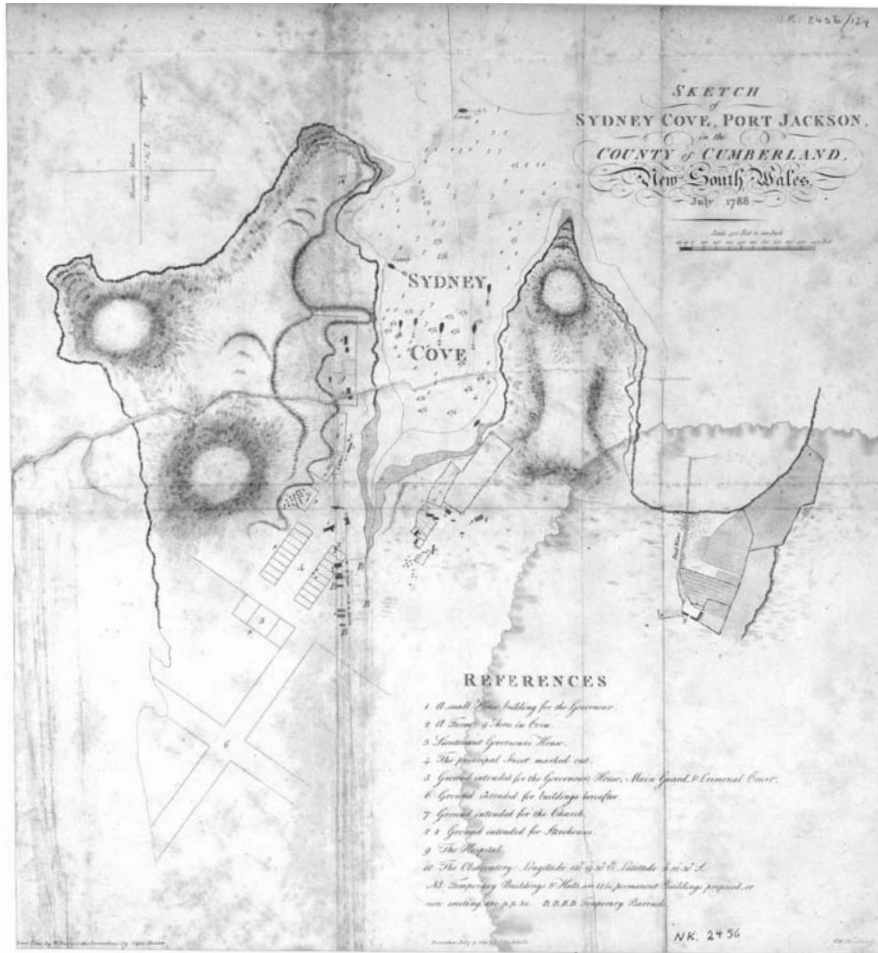
<sup>4</sup> Rio de Janeiro was closed to shipping until 1808 when the Portuguese court established itself there in exile, while Napoleon ravaged the Iberian Peninsula. *Endeavour*, the ship of the British explorer James Cook, was mistaken for a naval spy ship when he attempted to secure fresh supplies at Rio on his first expedition to the Pacific in 1768.

5 The Marquis of Pombal was a minister in the Portuguese government in 1755 when a massive earthquake destroyed Lisbon. The King of Portugal vested full authority in him to address the catastrophe. He quickly and effectively oversaw the re-establishment of law and order as well as the disaster relief, and commissioned state-of-the-art plans based on British urban planning principles to rebuild the Baixa district in the centre of Lisbon.

the surface of the globe. They shared the experience of the places they were born and grew up in, and these were predominantly the major urban centers of the British Isles. While many of these travelers were born and educated in Britain, their adult lives were predominantly lived in foreign countries, thereby expanding their urban experience and formal vocabularies. It is this diversity of influence that is eventually reflected in the diversity of the cities they were to give shape to. Thus, it is important to substantiate how the agents of the colonial project involved in founding Australasian cities mapped their understanding of urban design onto the situated colonial practice by way of precedent. The transfer of urban knowledge which is of interest to this paper is the axis of transfer from Portugal, via Brazil and South Africa, to Britain's Australasian colonies. This cross-cultural exposure was a result of Britain's long-standing alliance with Portugal, and against France and Spain, aimed at protecting British trading interests in Latin America. Four individuals of particular interest to this narrative headed to the Southern Hemisphere in the late-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century as agents of British colonization, in order to establish new colonial cities there: Arthur Phillip, first Governor of the convict settlement in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia (1788–92); Lachlan Macquarie, the sixth governor of New South Wales (1810–21) and his wife Elizabeth Macquarie; and Colonel William Light, the first Surveyor General of South Australia (1836–37) who planned the city of Adelaide.

Arthur Phillip, the first Governor of New South Wales, and the commander of the first fleet of eleven ships that transported British convicts from England to Australia in 1788, had a long and productive association with the Portuguese navy. As chief administrator of the new colony, Phillip was responsible for organizing and managing the resources of the new settlement. His authority embraced law and order, health and safety and the allocation of physical resources. He was consequently critically involved with the ongoing planning of the nascent community. Phillip's approach to urban planning was influenced by his travels in Portugal and Brazil between 1774–78 while on secondment from the British navy. Portugal and Spain were in dispute over the 'Debatable Lands', the area between the Portuguese settlements in Southern Brazil and the Spanish ones above the River Plate estuary. The Portuguese established a colony at Colonia del Sacramento that had become a conduit for illicit (British) trade to and from the Spanish colonies in the interior of the continent. Phillip joined the Portuguese navy as a Captain, and in 1775 arrived in Lisbon to take up his appointment. Lisbon was still in ruins after the earthquake of 1755, but the Marquis of Pombal<sup>5</sup> was in the process of rebuilding the city with the gridded Baixa quarter focusing on a revitalized Praça do Comércio, a major urban square fronting the River Tagus. Phillip proceeded from Lisbon on the Portuguese navy frigate *Belém* to Rio de Janeiro, where he encountered a

city closely modeled on Lisbon. The *Belém* patrolled Colonia del Sacramento (Uruguay) which had been blockaded by the Spanish until the end of 1776, charting the coast and gathering details of the Spanish coastal settlements between there and Rio de Janeiro. In October 1777, Portugal and Spain signed a treaty that predicated Portuguese taking of Santa Catarina and Rio Grande, and Spanish acquisition of Colonia del Sacramento and the lands about the northern shore of the Plate Estuary. Phillip visited Rio de Janeiro a decade later while en route to Sydney with the first fleet.



## 2.1

Map of Sydney Cove, Port Jackson in the County of Cumberland, New South Wales, sketched by Thomas Medland in July 1788. National Library of Australia.

Phillip's vision of the city of Sydney was heavily influenced by his experiences in Portugal and Brazil. He envisaged a waterfront square in Sydney (FIGURE 2.1) which was never built, but more importantly he set aside a swathe of park space in the centre of

- 6 The Indian subcontinent, with its sumptuous gardens and palaces, drew particularly eloquent commentary from Macquarie: 'I have had many fine views and prospects, but the *one* I was gratified with today from the top of this hill surpasses in beauty and variety everything of the kind I ever yet beheld. The Fort and Town of Periapatam; and the rich luxurious fertile plains of *Mysore*; clothed with the most beautiful verdure, with the fine large tanks, or large ponds of water and elegant gardens interspersed through these plains as far as the eye could reach, formed in my opinion, the most beautiful landscape, and the most ravishing and enchanting sights in the world...that I feasted my eyes with it a full hour' (MACQUARIE 1794: A768, 260–61).
- 7 The famous Spanish Planning code embodied in Phillip II of Spain's 1573 Laws of the Indies provided the basic criteria that sites considered for colonizing had to satisfy: a safe accessible harbor (or inland river), fertile land, fresh water, communication routes, remoteness from competing interests, a supply of building materials, good drainage, and a source of energy were the fundamental features of a suitable site.

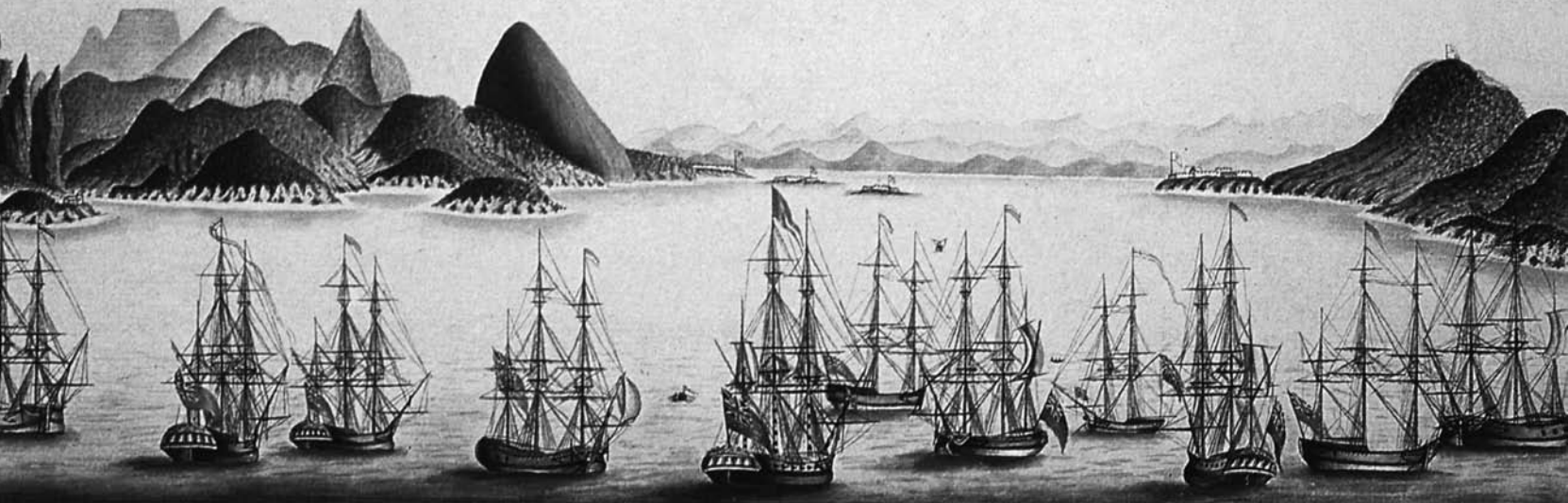
Sydney as a green heart to the city. Today, this zone is occupied by Hyde Park and the Royal Sydney Botanic Gardens. He also planned the orientation and width of the city streets to catch breezes, a technique which resonated with traditional planning practices used in the arid climates of the Iberian Peninsula. The four Australian Governors after Arthur Phillip took little interest in the development of the city of Sydney. It was not until Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie arrived in 1809 that the design of the city was seriously revisited. Their passion for landscape and instrumental interest in architecture were helped by the presence of convict-architect Francis Greenway, direct from the genteel drawing rooms of Bristol, and Irish aide-de-camp architect John Watts. Besides the fact that the Macquaries encountered both Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro on the voyage out in 1809, Lachlan Macquarie had traveled extensively in the British Isles, North America, India, the Middle East, Russia and the Baltic, on military assignments. His diaries show a predilection for beautiful landscapes,<sup>6</sup> cities and buildings. His wife Elizabeth shared this passion and was known for her landscape sensitivities by way of designs she executed for walks and gardens at her family home in Argyllshire and at Sydney Cove.

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## LANDSCAPES OF DIFFERENCE

On arrival the voyagers to Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro encountered dramatic topography and landscapes that stood apart from their European counterparts. Table Mountain in Cape Town and Pão de Açúcar in Rio are amongst the most memorable harbor landscapes in the world. Scenic drama was a logical precursor to settlement when seen in the context of the criteria applied to their selection. Both sites were chosen for ease of defense (high ground on which to construct fortresses) and good fresh water supply. Rio de Janeiro also enjoyed a sheltered and deep anchorage. This set of physical criteria formed a checklist against which sites in Australia and New Zealand were to be evaluated.<sup>7</sup> The landscapes of Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro were mentioned in the diaries of officials traveling to Australia between 1788 and 1810 as a major attraction of these cities. While many enthused about the lush and magical beauty of Rio de Janeiro (FIGURE 2.2), some commentators, such as a Lieutenant on the First Fleet Watkin Tench, were disturbed by the menacing starkness of Table Mountain that provides the backdrop to Cape Town. Commentary is no doubt tinted with the relative exuberance of Brazilian urban life, as compared to the dour and repressive quality of the Cape of Good Hope, although Cape Town was characterized by some as Little Paris during the French Garrison's occupation of the town during the 1780s. In 1788, Lachlan Macquarie





described Cape Town as ‘the town with the bay and surrounding hills form a very agreeable and beautiful prospect’ (MACQUARIE 1794: 91), and as

a very neat regular built town; the streets are not paved, but are straight and cross each other at right angles; the houses are built of brick in general and some of wood, they are neat light and airy; the town itself is most beautifully and romantically situated, at the bottom of a very fine bay and at the foot of very high hills which overlook it and all the plains below.

(MACQUARIE 1794: 97)

Elizabeth Macquarie was similarly in awe of these strange new landscapes. In 1809, her partiality for landscape drama<sup>8</sup> was evident in the way she described Rio de Janeiro as ‘one of the most magnificent scenes in nature’, arguing in parallel that ‘no description can convey to the mind of a person who has not seen this harbor, the wonderful beauty and grandeur of it’ (MACQUARIE 1809: 2–22). She was not as impressed by Cape Town, which she described as having been built on a regular plan, with large houses, and with wide and spacious streets (MACQUARIE 1809: 68).

Landscapes and gardens were a major point of difference for visitors from the north. Their prominence in colonial settings provided a fresh image of cities immersed in their landscapes, an image which challenged the traditional Eurocentric urban–rural

- 8 Elizabeth Macquarie’s preoccupation with the romance of the architectural ruin and the power of the building in a wild seascape is evident in two instances where she is thought to have influenced the commissioning of public projects: the choice of the ruins of the twelfth-century Reculver Church on the Kent coast as the precedent for John Watts’s St John’s Church Parramatta, and in the dramatic siting and symmetry of the lighthouse designed by Greenway for South Head at the entrance to Sydney Harbor.

## 2.2

*Entrance of Rio de Janeiro from the Anchorage. George Raper, watercolour on paper, 1801. National Library of Australia.*

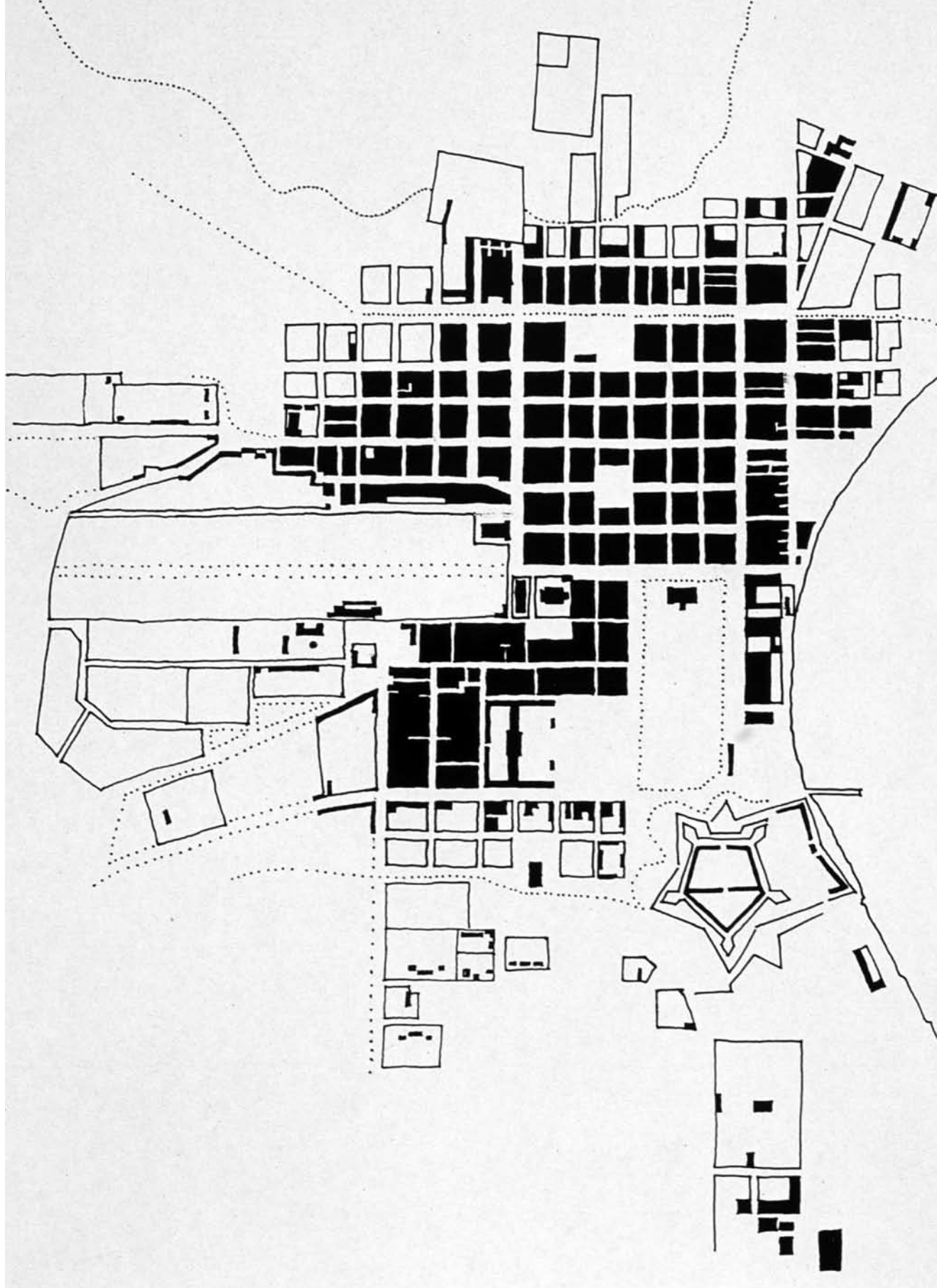
dichotomy. The difference was due in part to the predominance of the landscape over city by virtue of the vertical scale of proximate lofty peaks in both instances, while the cities themselves were still small. Vegetation was foregrounded due to the tropical and semi-tropical mantle of flora draping the land, and also due to the existence of a major green sward in the centre of the urban settlement. As Luciana Lima de Martins argued in *O Rio de Janeiro dos Viajantes: O Olhar Britânico 1800–1850* (2001), European visitors saw the colonial landscapes through a Eurocentric veil which either filtered the stark differences into something familiar, or reinforced an alien sense of difference. What they saw stood in sharp contrast to the European tradition of cultivation that commonly occurred at the urban periphery, and had predated, as in the case of Cape Town, the urban leisure landscapes of England by nearly a century.

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## O CORAÇÃO VERDE (A GREEN HEART)

- 9 Rio's garden was named after the Passeio Público in Lisbon which had been established in 1764, and the plantings followed the French formal style of the Royal Palace at Queluz.

Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town both incorporated significant urban gardens: the Company Garden in Cape Town, and the Passeio Público (public promenade) and Real Horto (Royal Garden) in Rio de Janeiro. Both gardens were derived from existing European models in their formal layouts,<sup>9</sup> but their locations relative to the urban core were reversed. In Cape Town, the garden was central to the city and located in close proximity to important public spaces and edifices, whereas in Rio the Passeio Público lay between the city center and the Southern beach communities of São Cristóvão and Botofogo. These gardens were fundamentally different from their European predecessors primarily because colonial cities were, unlike European cities of the period, typically planned as large-scale concentrations of people and goods, anticipating the influx of settlement-seekers over time, and they predated their agricultural hinterlands (STATHAM 1989: 4). They also became recruitment centers that supported the growth of inland agriculture and associated service-towns. In the Spanish colonial world, Phillip II's Laws of the Indies (1573) had positioned the garden within the urban settlement, as large tracts of land 'where people can go for recreation and take their cattle to pasture without making damage' (GASPARINI 1991: 31–32), because the hinterlands were dangerous territories often controlled by threatening indigenous tribes. *In situ*, these gardens took on several pragmatically driven functions: first, gardens fed the local population, with surpluses filling the hulls of transiting ships – the Company Garden in Cape Town, for instance, was founded as farmland in the 1650s for this particular purpose and was only later progressively converted into an urban park; second, colonial gardens acted as laboratories for botanic research as well as for agricultural and industrial development,



as was the case with the *Passeio Público* in Rio de Janeiro and other urban gardens in Brazil at the time; and third, these gardens were also meant to be dedicated, at least in part, to the leisure pursuits of the settlers. As it will be further elaborated in what follows, the triple agendas of these gardens became a propelling influence for future urban gardens in Australia.

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## EN ROUTE: CAPE TOWN

- 10 An indigenous tribe local to the Cape of Good Hope.
- 11 Bastides were gridded 'new towns' constructed in the Middle Ages in Northern France and Southern Spain. They were settlements established by royal houses as agencies of territorial expansion, agriculture, trade and repopulation.
- 12 Erven were freehold blocks for growing vegetables and raising a minimum of seven pigs.
- 13 Raised, walled, unroofed transition space giving access to a terrace house.

The Dutch East India Company occupied the Cape in 1647. Four years later, a fort in standard military design of the period was erected. The settlement focus was gardening and cattle trading with the Khoi<sup>10</sup> tribe. The conditions of early habitation were harsh, and the company maintained brutal control, reflected in the city's rigid land compartmentalization and well-defined boundaries between the urban realm and its hinterland (FIGURE 2.3). The form of the city followed typical Dutch colonial planning practice based on the bastide plan<sup>11</sup> (TODESCHINI 1983: 18–21). Typically the Dutch encircled their settlements, such as Batavia, with canals, or with irrigation ditches as in Cape Town. As a supply point for the Dutch East India Company, the town was conceived as a cluster of semi-agricultural smallholdings for the breeding of pigs (HALL 1992: 8–9). The existing vertical rows of the Company Garden formed the structure of the first eight 'erven'<sup>12</sup> in 1660, thereby establishing South Africa's first colonial town. Plot layouts reveal an obsessive concern with order and containment. The plantings of the Company Garden were likewise geometric, regular, and tight in spite of the uneven terrain, and were elaborated in a clipped geometric Baroque style. Cape Town was not a commercial jewel of the Dutch East India Company, and for that reason it struggled forward with limited resources. In addition to the clarity resulting from employing a grid plan, and from the simple repetition of building forms, Todeschini identified a gradual and selective investment strategy at work in the 'conscious acts of place-making' where main public buildings (such as the Castle, Grand Parade, the Company Gardens, and Greenmarket Square) were strategically located to foreground structures of the settlement and were devised to organize the early, overall structure of the city (TODESCHINI 1994: 33).

As a Dutch settlement, Cape Town's Baroque structuring embodied a sociable use of public space shaped by urban embellishments such as canals, trees, and stoeps<sup>13</sup> which served to secure both a visual and social integrity in the old core of the city (LEW-COCK 1963: 412). The British first occupied the Cape in 1795 when at war with France; Holland had allied itself with the French and supported the American Revolution, and the Cape became a target of British forces. With a keen interest in securing a stopover

### 2.3

*A plan of Cape Town in the 1800s.*  
*Map compiled by the author, 2001.*

on the route to their colonies on the Indian subcontinent, British forces invaded the Cape, for the final time in 1806, and the colony was permanently passed to the British Empire in 1814. English influence in Cape Town is evident in the emergence of the residential square, and the simplified Georgian facades of this period. Lewcock attributes this to a lack of architectural expertise in the colony, and the currency of late Georgian ideas popularized by imported pattern books (LEWCOCK 1963), on the basis of which the local tradesmen undertook the bulk of building in the city. Simplicity was favored as a result of the craft basis of the building-delivery system, and as an expression of traditionally valued collective regularity and restraint typical of the local culture. The Company Garden was the centerpiece of Cape Town:

Lengthwise the garden has five walks, which lead in straight lines upwards. The middle one is the broadest, and is planted with oak trees, which, though they are not very large, afford a very agreeable shade by their thick foliage uniting overhead. The other walks are equally planted with oak-trees, but they are cut like hedges. These are intersected by eleven cross walks, which are planted with bay (*Laurus Nobilis*) and myrtle trees. By this means the garden is divided into forty-four squares, in which many sorts of fruit trees, and all kinds of vegetables are grown: serving chiefly to afford refreshments to the crews of ships that touch here.

(STAVORINUS AS QUOTED IN LEWCOCK 1963: 392)

A canal and a network of aqueducts irrigated the plots, and during the British administration the garden was walled off. It was later redesigned by French architect Thibault, when the menagerie was located at its upper level end containing lions, elephants, rhinoceros, gazelles, oryx, zebras and a variety of birds. Slaves who tended the garden lived in the slave quarters on its western perimeter.

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## EN ROUTE: RIO DE JANEIRO

When the port of Rio de Janeiro was first discovered by the Portuguese in 1504, navigator Gonçalo Coelho mistook it for a river mouth and named it January River.<sup>14</sup> The site presented a large sheltered harbor protected by a ring of defensible hills and an excellent water supply. Initially founded in 1567 as the capital of Southern Brazil, Rio de Janeiro became capital of all Brazil in 1763, when tensions with Spain over Rio de la Plata necessitated transfer of the Portuguese Viceroy's seat to the south of the country. In 1808, in the wake of Napoleon's invasion of Spain and Portugal, the government of Portugal relocated to Rio de Janeiro where they remained until 1821, with the King's son as Regent. Independence from Portugal was declared in 1822.

**14** While Portuguese writers attribute the discovery of Rio de Janeiro to Gonçaves and Amerigo Vespucci in 1502, most historians credit the discovery to Coelho. Rio first appeared on maps in 1515.



## 2.4

Plan de la Ville de S. Sebastião de Rio de Janeiro. Louis de Freycinet, 1820, *Atlas, Rare Book and Special Collections State Library of New South Wales* (SRL ref.09: F990a/15 section of plate 3).



Rio de Janeiro's importance as a port came to the fore in the eighteenth century, when gold and diamonds were discovered inland in Minas Gerais. In the nineteenth century, the export of coffee replaced mining as the region's economic engine. Rio de Janeiro was the marketplace and distribution center for slaves brought from West and central Africa, who initially worked in the mines and later carved coffee plantations out of tropical forests. In 1808, when the Portuguese court took up residence, the demand for slaves was renewed and the port was opened to foreign shipping. At each of these moments of political and economic change, the city gained obvious physical benefits, as was often commented by travelers in transit to Australia.

The initial pattern of settlements was dictated by the topography and expanded along valleys and shorelines, simultaneously reflecting an essentialist and empirical approach to planning. The urban settlement initially focused on the harbor in a grid format (FIGURE 2.4) with the main street, Rua Direita, extending along the coast between

the Morro do Castelo and São Bento, and with the principal public square adjacent to the Palace centrally located on this route. The city grew west in the direction of Minas Gerais from the seventeenth century. The second agenda in the foundation of the city was control of the indigenous population. The difficult terrain surrounding Rio made escape by sea dangerous, whereas the city was internally designed to resist popular revolt with forts, barracks and police stations in every parish. The religious and military institutions of the slave-owners dominated the high ground, with Jesuit, Franciscan, Benedictine, and fortress compounds all looming on the city skyline. Churches were coupled with public spaces where slaves were routinely pilloried. The two largest spaces were the Largo do Paço at the water's edge (the centre of colonial administration), and the Compo de Santana where military parades and large public ceremonies such as coronations were conducted.

In colonial times, public improvement projects were selective and strategic, and driven by military engineers. Important elements of urban infrastructure from this era include the Passeio Público (Public Promenade) reclaimed from the marshes, and the aqueduct bringing water to fountains in the city squares. As slaves were the collectors and purveyors of water to the households of Rio, these public spaces had dual associations: of informal congregation, and simultaneously of institutionalized brutality. When the Portuguese court arrived in the first decade of the nineteenth century, an infusion of public buildings and urban embellishments followed, with the construction of theaters, a merchant's exchange, an academy of fine arts, and a botanical garden. Both the diplomatic community and the foreign business community contributed cultural capital to the ethnic and scenic charms of the city. One characteristic that observers from Arthur Phillip onward must have noted in their search for colonial models of building was the imposing austerity of the city's architecture. This architecture served as a colonial urban model on two counts: it projected a sufficient presence to establish the legitimacy of the colonial administration, while its tectonic simplicity implied an economy of means appropriate to a provincial administrative center. The combination of characteristics had origins in Portugal's declining colonial power relative to other European powers of the day, and her increasing dependence on Britain as a military ally and trading partner. The austere style pioneered out of necessity in Lisbon was adopted in colonial outposts such as Brazil.

Urban gardens were a high priority in the establishment of Rio de Janeiro. With a tropical climate and good water supply, the locality was capable of producing food in abundance. Even before the port was open to commercial activity, ships on longer hauls called in to restock supplies. The late eighteenth century was a period of tremendous interest in scientific knowledge, and new colonies presented a plethora of flora and

15 James Cook was an eighteenth-century British explorer who undertook three voyages of exploration to the Pacific. The official mission on his first voyage was to observe the transit of Venus from Tahiti. He later claimed Eastern Australia and New Zealand for the British Crown in 1770.

fauna unknown to Europeans. Expeditions, such as that of James Cook,<sup>15</sup> were motivated as much by scientific discovery as by territorial acquisition. These voyages typically included a cast of individuals recruited to observe and record new plant and animal species. Even the transporting of convicts often produced worthwhile imagery of exotic landscapes for consumption back home: the case in point is the work of convict forger George Raper who drew some of the most compelling images of the landscapes of Rio de Janeiro (FIGURE 2.2) and Cape Town. Interest in the discovery, documentation, and experimentation with new botanic species propelled the genesis of urban gardens in Brazil. In 1785, when a government edict officially prohibited manufacturing, increasing emphasis was placed on agriculture and botany, giving credibility to the argument that the first public gardens of the colonial period in Brazil were spaces designated to botanical experimentation for commercial and agricultural applications (SEGAWA 1993: 213–23). Propagation of agricultural crops was also a subject of detailed study. However, lack of finance and slow identification of suitable sites often impeded the establishment of such institutions until the beginning of the nineteenth century. While most provinces in Brazil established botanical gardens, dedicated precincts were conspicuously absent from Rio de Janeiro until the Royal court arrived in 1807. Segawa (1993: 218) suggests that botanic enthusiasm resided in the person of the Viceroy of Rio de Janeiro, Luís de Vasconcelos (1779–90), who sponsored the work of Franciscan botanist José Mariano da Coneição Veloso. The first garden in Rio de Janeiro was the Passeio Público (1779–83). Unlike other public spaces in the Brazilian colonial city, the hexagonal plantings of the Passeio Público were sited on peripheral heathland at the edge of the bay and not associated with a major public building. The garden's delights included lawns, displays of trees and scrubs and flowering climbers, sculptures, parterres, fountains, a pair of decorated pavilions, a pair of obelisks, and a granite terrace from which there were stunning views of the harbor and the aqueduct.

In 1808, the Regent João created the Real Horto (Royal Garden) near the lagoon of Rodrigo de Freitas, later becoming the Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden. The garden contained cinnamon trees, nutmeg trees, pepper trees, breadfruit trees, and many other exotic plants including a tea crop for which the Chinese labor was imported (RIVIERE 1996: 18). The garden was attended to by a special group of slaves who conducted a vigorous illegal trade in the sale of seeds and fruit from rare trees and plants. Slaves were also dispersed inland by the Imperial Museum of Natural History to enhance its collections, and many slaves were amongst the first of Brazil's botanists. Less a collection of indigenous flora, towards the mid-nineteenth century the garden became predominantly a display of exotic plants from other places, a fact that disappointed many travelers (VON SPIX 1824: 220).



Although the emphasis of botanic taste had changed by the mid-nineteenth century, colonial economic circumstance and tropical fecundity may have ensured that gardens were initially established in Brazil with more than a hedonistic intent. Public, leisure use of the public gardens apparently diminished through the nineteenth century, and it was increasingly used by the 'gay society of Rio' for elite festivities and as a backdrop to wedding celebrations (STAUNTON 1798: 162). In 1823, Arago lamented the lack of public activity in the 'wholly deserted' and 'totally abandoned' garden (ARAGO 1823: 51, 83).

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## **DESTINATIONS: AUSTRALASIAN GARDENS IN ADELAIDE AND SYDNEY**

The bountiful gardens of the Southern Hemisphere had a profound and lasting impact on those who passed through them on their way to the Antipodes. The cities and gardens of Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro gave travelers a potent vision of what the cities they were about to create could be like. Not only did these transit localities represent a model by which the urban garden could be conceptualized in new territories, they also critically provided a means of sustenance to men and women potentially facing starvation in a remote colony. A critical mass of seed and plant material which formed the basis of New World horticulture was sourced and transported from Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town. In addition to seeds from England, stocks of seeds, live plants and species acquired in Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town included coffee, cocoa, cotton, cochineal, jalap, banana, lemon, oranges, limes, guava, prickly pear, tamarind and tobacco from Rio; and apples, pears, strawberries, grape vines, sugar canes, figs, quince, bamboo, oaks, myrtle and Spanish reed from Cape Town.

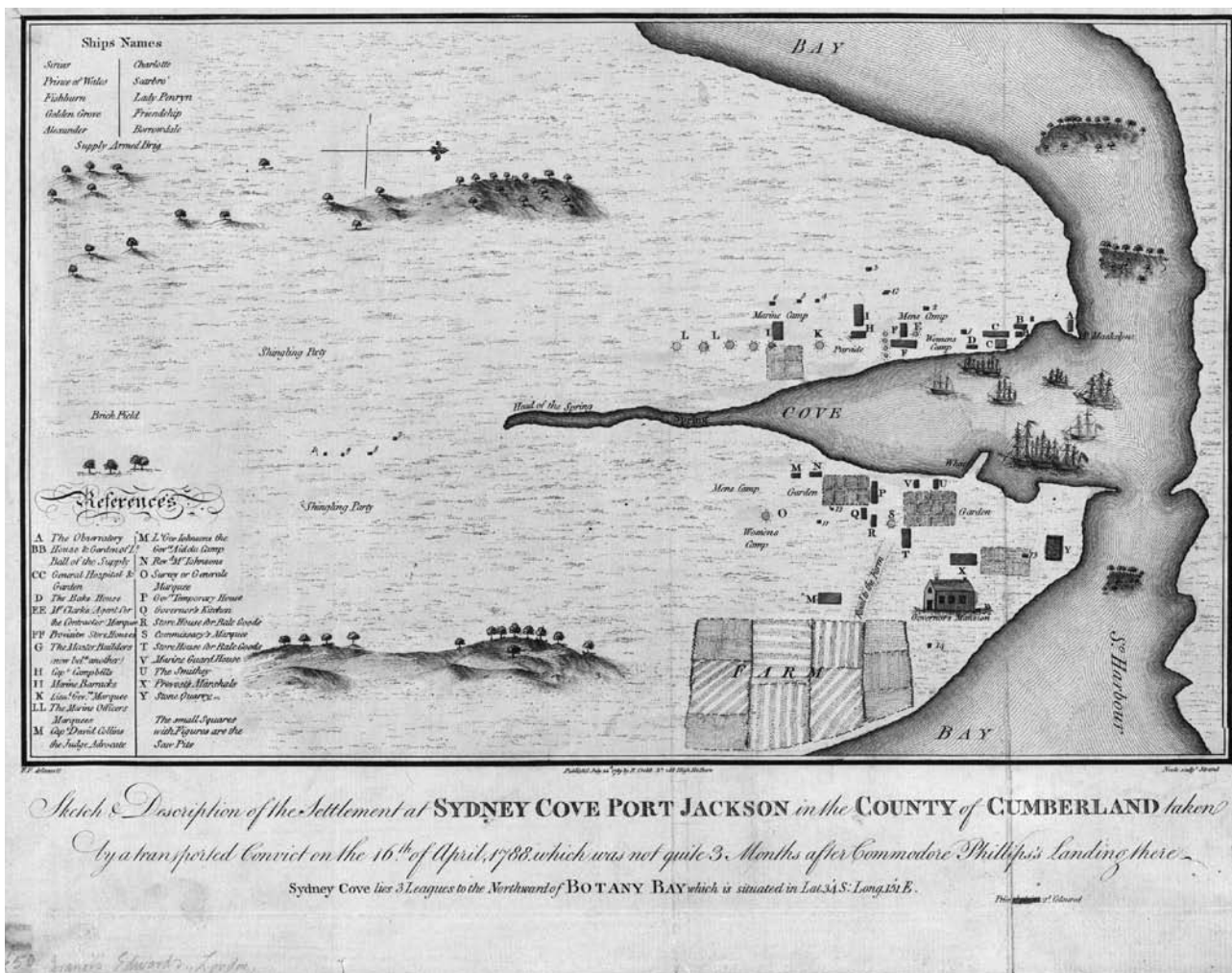
Arthur Phillip was the first to apply the accumulated knowledge of his travels to founding a city on the Australian continent. In founding a colony at Sydney Cove in 1788, the preoccupations of survival and pleasure were combined when he set aside a swathe of land at the center of the city for cultivation, military parades and recreation, thereby delivering a botanic legacy to the people of New South Wales. Even so, the security of the garden as public space was not well established until the nineteenth century. Initially, survival in the New World depended on transported stocks, and the produce of imported plants and seeds. The voyages south often took longer than expected, and the majority of the passengers arrived with scurvy requiring an urgent provision of fresh fruit and vegetables. The initial planting carried out in desperation in the autumn of 1788 did not flourish, and in order to alleviate the suffering, Joseph

Banks – the botanist who accompanied James Cook to Australia in 1768 – proposed that the fast sailing British ship the *Guardian* should be dispatched from England with fresh plants for the colony at Sydney. *Guardian* took on livestock and 150 fruit trees at the Cape of Good Hope, but hit an iceberg in late 1789 shortly after continuing the journey. A second vessel, the *Gorgon*, finally arrived in Australia in September 1791 carrying 200 fruit trees, and garden seed acquired at the Cape. The Botanic Gardens in Sydney started as a government farm at Farm Cove where the plants from Rio de Janeiro and the Cape of Good Hope, together with the fruits from the Old World (grapes, figs, pears, and apples), were planted (COLLINS 1804: 11–12).

By July 1788, nine acres of cereals (FIGURE 2.5), mainly wheat, flourished for a while, but it was not until significant numbers of livestock arrived in 1791 to manure the soil that European cultivation succeeded for an extended period at any considerable scale. Crop growing was eventually relocated to more fertile lands at Parramatta. Between 1794 and 1807, private citizens encroached on the land with leases in contravention of Arthur Phillip's edict to establish a public reserve north of a line drawn between Cockle Bay and Woolloomooloo Bay. A further line delineating the Government House precinct from the Government Farm site to the east was drawn. The Government House gardens included a kitchen garden for the governor's household, a nursery for plant distribution to local gardens, and a 'warehouse' for indigenous plants destined for Joseph Banks' collections at Kew Gardens, outside London. These plants were shipped in cabins specially fitted with tubs and tallow candles for heating, and were exchanged for exotics on the return journey (GILBERT 1986: 16). Serious botanical work with scientific objectives was a feature of this garden, as it had been in the early gardens of Brazil.

The privilege of occupation of the Government Farm tolerated by Governors King (1800–08) and Bligh (1806–08) was swiftly withdrawn with the arrival of Governor Macquarie in 1809, whose principal motivation was to enforce the seclusion of his domain. He ordered the construction of walls, extended the precinct to include Garden Island, evicted the tenants, introduced regulations for the garden's use by the public, and reinstated a revival of horticultural and botanical purpose. Between 1810 and 1821, expeditions were launched into the interior to look for plants of economic significance, especially in the fields of medicine, dyeing, shipbuilding and furniture making.

In 1813, Macquarie authorized a project designed by his wife Elizabeth, to build a road connecting Farm Cove to Anson's point, a few kilometers from the Governor's House, which was at the core of the penal colony at Sydney Cove. Its completion in 1816 came to be acknowledged as the foundation date of the Botanic Gardens, and by 1821, the year of Macquarie's resignation, it was being capably managed by Charles Fraser, the colonial botanist. In the midst of the harsh criticism of the Macquarie administra-



2.5 Sketch and description of the settlement at Sydney Cove, Port Jackson, in the County of Cumberland. Francis Fowkes, 16 April 1788. National Library of Australia.

tion, the garden and Fraser were singled out for praise, foreshadowing the appointment of scientist and astronomer Sir Thomas Brisbane as Governor (1821–25). The garden as a founding paradigm of the Australasian city found its clearest expression, therefore, in Sydney. By the time Adelaide was founded, food supplies were better assured in Australia, and the garden took on a scientific and hedonistic dimension. *In Australia and New Zealand* (1873), Anthony Trollope elaborated on the ways in which Australians became dependent on public gardens to be found proximate to all Australian cities or adjacent to them (TROLLOPE 1873: 213–14):

In Sydney, the public gardens charm as poetry charms. At Adelaide they please like a well told tale. The gardens at Melbourne are as a long sermon from a great divine, whose theology is unanswerable, but his language tedious.

(TROLLOPE 1873: 180)

The majority of people who settled in Australia and New Zealand in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came from northern European landscapes. Their native landscapes differed in two fundamental ways from those they encountered in the Southern Hemisphere: first, the underlying landforms were less dramatic for geological reasons, and second, the vegetation that shrouded the land was profoundly different. These two factors combined to give southern scenery quite a different presence in the minds of the northerners. The gardens in southern climates were of necessity integral with the city in a way they never were in Europe, where city and garden had traditionally been distinct, and even opposing entities. Only in the British Isles during the Georgian and Regency periods was landscape deliberately used as a public urban embellishment, and then it was rigidly contained by the masonry street wall and became the exclusive domain of the upper echelons of society. Southbound travelers no doubt found the idea of a major garden in the heart of the old colonial city an appealing prospect, and this was variously translated into the Australasian context. In Sydney, a major working government garden was designed into the settlement upon the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. In Adelaide, Colonel Light attempted to embed the quarters of the city on a much larger scale in an indigenous landscape known as the Parklands.

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## TRAVELING AND REFLECTING

The extended time taken in sailing to the Southern Hemisphere in the nineteenth century allowed travelers a mobile place<sup>16</sup> of transition, from one anchorage to the next. The cities they encountered en route also provided new geographic and cultural experiences. Upon arriving in the new colonies, travelers encountered the often harsh specificities of the New World, and combined multiple influences in the construction and organization of their settlements. These sites of colonization, thus, must be understood in light of experiences of the agents of the colonial project, whose ‘subjectivities are fractured – half here, half there, sometimes disloyal, sometimes almost “on the side” of the people they patronize and dominate, and against the interests of some metropolitan office’ (THOMAS 1994: 60). The dynamics of the colonial project was enacted and framed through the encounters of the colonists and the colonized ‘forced

16 Michel Foucault in *Des Espaces Autres* (Of Other Spaces) describes the brothel, the colony and the boat as extreme types of heterotopia: ‘The boat is a floating space, a space without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from track to track, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in the garden’ (FOUCAULT 1984: 49).

together' in the making of the colonial cities and gardens (JACOBS 1997: 19). Old colonial cities of the Southern Hemisphere, such as Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town, were rigidly planned through an imposition of European urban models onto the lush climates, pristine landscapes, and austere economies of colonial exploitation. The resulting cities had the bare urban hardware of simple grids and stripped-down architecture, embroidered with sumptuous gardens constructed for both survival and pleasure. These then became also the driving paradigms in the establishment of colonial cities in Australia. The garden became a dominant urban element, particularly in Sydney, even beyond the survival years of 1788 to 1793. The ability of Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro to provide appropriate precedent for new cities derived primarily from their importance as outposts of European commercial and imperial interests in the Southern Hemisphere. The dramatic landscapes of Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town elicited long-lasting emotional responses in many travelers, and stimulated other levels of perceptual appreciation with respect to the city. The experience inspired travelers and colonizers, such as Arthur Phillip and Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie, to create new urban environments in Australia and embed a major garden in the new cities, which was later to become a green heart to the twentieth-century metropolis. What made these gardens different from their contemporaries in Europe was their wide accessibility to the public, and the way in which they brought the sea, urban core, and hinterland into a new and memorable relationship. The unique and innovative spatial manifestations of the New World urbanity effectively challenged traditional precepts the early travelers to Australia held about the city, and has ever since instigated exchanges of ideas about urban design, which were to flow deep into Australian anchorages, as well as back to Europe and the rest of the World.

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# Nomads and Migrants:

## *A Comparative Reading of Le Corbusier's and Sedad Eldem's Travel Diaries*

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*Esra Akcan*

*Is it I who dreams, or is it my narrator carried away by his imagination?*

LE CORBUSIER, *JOURNEY TO THE EAST* ([1911] 1989)

*I force myself to self-admiration.*

SEDAK ELDEM, UNPUBLISHED SKETCHBOOK (1929)<sup>1</sup>

1 Sedat H. Eldem, Sketchbook, Paris, 22 March 1929. Collection of Edhem Eldem. I would like to thank Edhem Eldem for opening these private sketchbooks for my research as well as giving permission to publish some of these drawings here. Since these documents have not been categorized, I use my own notation system throughout this article. Edhem Eldem himself has written about Sedat Eldem's journey and his work in the following articles: Sedat Hakkı Eldem. *Düşünceler, Hayaller, Tespitler, İstanbul* 28 (January 1999): 28–47; Mimar Sedat Eldem'in Gençlik Yazıları (1928–29), *Aptullah Kuran için Yazılar. Essays in Honor of Aptullah Kuran*. Cigdem Kafesçioğlu and Lucienne Thys-Senocak (eds) (İSTANBUL: YAPI KREDİ YAYINLARI, 1999), 519–42.

2 The itinerary included Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Bucharest, Edirne, İstanbul, Bursa, Salonika, Athens, Naples, Pompeii, Rome, Florence and Lucerne.

Le Corbusier wrote the words above in his travel diary in İstanbul, during his now well-acclaimed *Voyage d'Orient*. When the Turkish architect Sedat Hakkı Eldem made the subsequent entry in his own sketchbook on 22 March 1929, he was in Paris in the middle of his study trip to Europe, intimidated by what he observed for quite unwarranted reasons. Le Corbusier's and Eldem's journeys to each other's cities meticulously shaped both architects' approaches at the very beginning of their long careers.

Born in La Chaux-de-Fonds, France, the self-taught Le Corbusier (1887–1965) acquired his training, in no small part, from traveling. Soon after he decided to become an architect, Le Corbusier embarked on a study tour in Italy (1907), and worked in Auguste and Gustave Perret's atelier in Paris (1908–09) and in Theodor Fischer's and Peter Behrens' offices in Germany (1910). In May 1911, he began his trip to the Balkans and the Near East with his friend August Klipstein.<sup>2</sup> Filling some six sketchbooks with hundreds of drawings and anecdotes, Le Corbusier published his travel diaries 50 years later as a book. While the Acropolis of Athens and the mosques of İstanbul were the predictable points of attraction for any architect traveling to these cities, Le Corbusier was equally interested in the vernacular houses of the Balkans and İstanbul, which makes his comparison to Sedat Eldem probing (FIGURE 3.1).

Born into a wealthy and well-known Ottoman family, Sedat Eldem (1908–88) had already spent several years of his childhood in Nice, Geneva, Zurich and Munich, where his father was commissioned to represent the Ottoman state. Most of his primary education took place in the Real Gymnasium of Munich, where he recalled





3.1 Köprülü Amcazade Waterfront House. Author's photograph.

watching the craft-based construction process of a building in Bogenhausen, with great admiration for the stone artisans (ELDEM 1983: 5–6). Becoming fluent in German and French during his immigrant life, Eldem returned to Turkey in 1924, shortly after the establishment of the Turkish Republic.<sup>3</sup> The same year, he attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul with the goal of becoming an architect. While his studio teacher asked the students to draw classical column capitals with fine, clean, and exact lines, Eldem recalls running away to sketch the Topkapi Palace, patterns for textiles and carpets, and mostly vernacular houses of Istanbul (1983: 7). During the summers, he spent most of his after-hours in the old city, the Citadel of Ankara, sketching the vernacular houses. After graduating from the Academy in 1928, Eldem received a state fellowship to conduct graduate research in Europe and began his 'Journey to the West' at the age of 20.<sup>4</sup>

- 3 In 1923, the Turkish Republic was founded under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk – a revolution that put an end to the Ottoman Empire.
- 4 The 20-year-old architect began his journey to the West in June 1928 from Athens, continued it in the southwestern regions of France and Paris (August 1928–June 1929), visited thriving industrial towns of England such as Glasgow and London (July 1929), and eventually ended with a long stay in Munich and Berlin (August 1929–30) from where he returned to Turkey. Although these are the towns Eldem mentions

in his diary, his map of the journey implies that he had also been to other cities and regions such as Vienna, Zurich, Geneva, Venice, southern Italy and the Balkans. Judging from the dates noted on the map, it is possible that Eldem lists all the European cities he knows closely, based on both this research trip and his childhood spent in Nice, Geneva, Zurich and Munich.

- 5 In his book *A Study of History*, Arnold Toynbee made some key observations about nomadic civilizations, which in turn provoked Deleuze and Guattari, who write in their book *Nomadology: The War Machine*: 'It is therefore false to define the nomad by movement. Toynbee is profoundly right to suggest that the nomad is on the contrary he who does not move. Whereas the migrant leaves behind a milieu that has become amorphous or hostile, the nomad is one who does not depart, does not want to depart . . . If the nomad can be called the Deterritorialized par excellence, it is precisely because there is no reterritorialization afterwards as with the migrant, or upon something else as with the sedentary (the sedentary's relation with the earth is mediated by something else, a property regime, a State apparatus) . . . With the nomad, on the contrary, it is deterritorialization that constitutes the relation to the earth, to such a degree that the nomad reterritorializes on deterritorialization itself'. See Arnold Toynbee (1946: 164–71); and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1986: 51–2).

- 6 Deleuze and Guattari, op. cit.

- 7 For this reason, the definition of historical nomads described by Toynbee and borrowed by Deleuze and Guattari hardly fits any modern group of individuals.

Throughout these trips, both Le Corbusier and Eldem were at times nomads, carrying their homes to wherever they went, and at times migrants, mutated by the places they stayed in. A traveler exhibits behavioral patterns that shift between those of a nomad and those of a migrant. A nomad's movement seeks some level of continuity with the place of departure; it aspires to transform the place of destination by inflicting the place of home on to it. A migrant, on the other hand, leaves the place of departure behind, or perhaps is left behind by it, but for this reason, the migrant allows the place of arrival to transform their memories of the place of departure.<sup>5</sup>

The historical nomads' distinctive character was their abandonment of agriculture, which in turn imprisoned them within a perpetual 'annual orbit', a yearly cycle, in which they moved their unchanging habitat from place to place. A nomad is perfectly deterritorialized (to use a term by Deleuze and Guattari),<sup>6</sup> never becomes reterritorialized, and is therefore the absolute opposite of, the useful antidote and the rebellious challenger to the sedentary – the sedentary one who loves territories and thus perpetuates walls and boundaries, properties and possessions, the sedentary one who never travels. And yet, herein lies both the virtue and the unfortunate paradox of the nomad. It is because nomads never reterritorialize themselves under any condition that they do not actually move or mutate. Even though they constantly change places, they are themselves unchanging. The migrant is different from the nomad because the migrant must evolve in relation to the conditions of the place of arrival. Some migrants may look for a place with conditions similar to those of the place of departure; however, not all migrants have the luxury to select the environmental conditions most similar to their previous land. For this very reason, migrants are also ideal agents of cultural hybridization. Migrants change themselves in relation to the new land. If a nomad is the antidote to the sedentary individual who never travels, a migrant, who is continuously reterritorialized, is nevertheless the antidote to the rigid nomad.

No modern soul is a pure nomad or a pure migrant, of course. The archetypal nomad who is not born into any territory is a nostalgic idealization that cannot be applied to the notion of modern citizenry.<sup>7</sup> For this reason I have defined the modern nomad as one who insinuates the place of departure onto the place of arrival. There is no 'smooth' (in Deleuze and Guattari's terminology) or abstract space of the modern nomad devoid of sedentary qualities. It would hardly be credible to claim that those who impose their own habitat on any place where they lay their bodies down do this for the sake of nomadic ideals. That is why the nomadic ideal is so fragile as to relapse into cultural imperialism if the leaders of powerful nations adopt this discourse: a nomad may easily conceive any place as his own backyard to reshape without the local habitants' approval. However, nomadism as an aspiration exists, and Deleuze and Guattari

are profoundly right to describe it as a revolt against the restraining boundaries of the sedentary. The nomad's premise is absolute translatability: the smooth and unproblematic exportation of their own habitat to any new place. Nomads assume that they operate in a world in which objects and ideas flow effortlessly between places, a world where things are imported and exported without much transformation. Migrants, on the other hand, seek to transform themselves in relation to the point of arrival. It goes without saying that migrants' and nomads' practices are de facto mixed in the minds of modern travelers, which, however, does not make the conceptual distinction unnecessary. The travelers' aspiration to be a nomad or a migrant ultimately informs what they acquire from the act of traveling.

I would like to draw attention to the behavioral patterns of both Le Corbusier and Eldem as they shifted between nomad and migrant. It may be this precise fluctuation that became the main productive tension informing the architects' work. I have analyzed Eldem's sketches and diaries during his European trip more closely elsewhere (AKCAN 2005), as well as the trip's influence on his future architectural career. The documents that disclose the facts about Eldem's journey testify that his 'Turkish house style', as it came to be known over the years, was the result of a translation process that took place in part during this travel in Europe. Here, I will limit my analysis to a comparison of Le Corbusier's and Eldem's different definitions of the same traditional vernacular houses in Istanbul, and suggest how these different interpretations might have led the two architects to their distinct architectural approaches. Rather than comparing Le Corbusier and Eldem as nomad and migrant, or vice versa, I am suggesting how the hybridization that took place in each particular case during the architects' shift between nomadic and migrant tendencies produced results in their work.

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## FIRE AND MODERNITY

Le Corbusier's perception of the 'East', which fluctuated in relation to his Orientalist gaze and an inspired imagination, did not lend itself to easy categorization. On one level, Le Corbusier's *Voyage d'Orient* is a good example of a text that exposes the risks of over-romanticizing learning from travel. The travel diary is full of factual mistakes: 'as a rule Turks do not eat meat. Limiting themselves to a vegetarian diet' (LE CORBUSIER [1911] 1989: 76), or 'Istanbul is a desert, that is why whenever they build they plant trees' (166). Zeynep Çelik (1992a) has rightly pointed out the Orientalist undertones of the architect's approach to the veiled women of Istanbul as well as the city itself, which he gendered as an exotic Oriental woman.<sup>8</sup> Le Corbusier referred to them as 'delicious' 'hidden treasures', but always in need of Western help and salvation, because they were

8 'I worship the young women and little donkeys of Istanbul; I find between them certain affinities and resemblances' (Le Corbusier, [1911] 1989: 128).

‘slaves of a despotic custom’ (LE CORBUSIER [1911] 1989: 29). Le Corbusier did not usually treat ‘the East’ as a dangerous place to be hated or feared; this is not where the charge of Orientalism originates. Rather he saw it as an exotic dreamland, personified by a helpless fragile woman, primitive and backward, penetratable and controllable. For Çelik, Le Corbusier knew exactly what he wanted to see in Istanbul, just like many of the nineteenth-century Orientalist painters who portrayed and constructed the image of the East in the Western eye without going there. Many scholars have also noted Le Corbusier’s strict categorization that divided European cities into three: those with industry (cities in Britain and France), those with culture (cities in Italy, Greece and partly Istanbul) and those with folkloric heritage (cities in the Balkans and partly Istanbul). The depiction of ‘the East’ as a land without civilized culture or industry but merely the home of peasants’ folklore also maintained stereotypes.

Istanbul, in Le Corbusier’s eyes, was a city of the past, one that had not been and should not be touched by modernization. He probably held this attitude not only during his trip but also decades later, when he refused to design a new master plan for the city because, he recalled replying, Istanbul should have been left with all its dust and dirt (DEMIREN 1949). The architect liked Istanbul (and Edirne) because the streets were filthy, dusty, and un-modernized. This filth was ‘chic’, according to Le Corbusier, even though he would soon participate in the myth that associated cleansing with modernizing, and would soon be in favor of white walls and crisp surfaces. ‘The advent of modern times’ would be like a ‘hideous disaster, the catastrophe that will inevitably ruin Istanbul’, Le Corbusier wrote – quite surprising words for an architect with his convictions (LE CORBUSIER, [1911] 1989: 60). Upon leaving the city, he noted:

As the ship’s wake was rapidly opening to touch the green banks of the Bosphorus, our hearts filled with melancholy at the sight of the wooden konaks disappearing into the water... I don’t believe I shall ever again see such Unity. ... For me it was as if the veil of my little temple had also been torn away!

(LE CORBUSIER, [1911] 1989: 152)

Le Corbusier’s Orientalism nevertheless also stimulated his discovery of something *principally* modern in Istanbul. He regarded the city’s vernacular houses as the architecture of the worldly, of the people, as opposed to the architecture of God. Making a distinction between the mosques and houses, he said:

[In Istanbul], every mortal’s dwelling is of wood, every dwelling of Allah is of stone. Here there are only two types of architecture: the big flattened roofs covered with worn tiles and the bulbs

of the mosques with minarets shooting up. They are linked to each other by cemeteries.

(LE CORBUSIER, [1911] 1989: 96)

While the Ottoman mosques were a predictable point of attraction, Le Corbusier's equal, if not further, interest in residential architecture is worth notice: 'Wooden houses with large spread out roofs warm their purple colors amidst fresh greenery and within enclosures whose mystery delights me' (LE CORBUSIER [1911] 1989: 90) The architect's sketches of Istanbul depict this duality explicitly (FIGURE 3.2). In these sketches, the houses are drawn with ambiguous lines representing anonymous structures. It is almost impossible to determine whether these lines refer to buildings in silhouette or simply to the texture of the ground. Behind the shy dots and lines of these houses, on the other hand, the solid drawings of the mosques are placed with determined precision. The mosques inscribe permanence, the houses transience.

To underline the mortal, replaceable, and temporary character of these vernacular houses, Le Corbusier reserved ample space to describe the fires that burned them down.

Almost every night there is a fire ... we Europeans, are watching with looks of terror. As for them, they let the flames spread persuaded that these things are predetermined. There is a silence that only one who has heard it can imagine ... It is said that the city sheds its skin in this way every four years! Behind ... the great mosques remain invincible.

(LE CORBUSIER [1911] 1989: 96, 98)



3.2 Istanbul, sketch on paper, Le Corbusier, 1911. From *Journey to the East*, p. 86. Courtesy Fondation Le Corbusier.

Le Corbusier's emphasis on the fires that 'renew the skin of the city' every four years was not an exaggeration. In her book *The Remaking of Istanbul*, Zeynep Çelik (1986) gives a detailed account of the extensive fires and the subsequent Western inspired urban renewals that shaped the new streets and neighborhoods of Istanbul's historical peninsula during the second half of the nineteenth century. In Istanbul, 229 fires were recorded between 1853 and 1906, including the Aksaray fire of 1856 that prompted the implementation of a grid street pattern on the burned areas; the HocaPaşa fire of 1865 that caused one of the biggest catastrophes in the historical peninsula, burning down the area between the two seas to the north and south (the Golden Horn and Marmara Sea), the Hagia Sophia–Sultan Ahmet mosque area to the east, and Beyazit Mosque to the west; the Pera fire of 1870, in the European section that motivated the grand plan of Pera; and numerous fires that brought the implementation of new regularizations for the old neighborhoods. As a result of these fires, Istanbul's peninsula underwent a piecemeal process of reconstruction, modernization and Westernization. The streets were widened and straightened for easier access, and stone construction was encouraged in place of wood (even though this was not extensively implemented). Fire, in other words, brought the relative Hausmannization of Istanbul, giving birth to a more 'modern', namely, planned and regularized street pattern emerging out of the ashes of the older vernacular buildings. Even though the peninsula maintained its unique urban tissue, especially when it is compared to the Westernized Pera district across the Golden Horn, the fires made a mark in collective memory as incidents rapidly erasing the old Istanbul.

The abundance of fires, or more precisely, the acceptance of fires as part of life's ordinary misfortunes, signaled something anomalous about Istanbul in Le Corbusier's eyes: its 'melancholy'.

I would like to say something about the Turkish soul, but I will not succeed! There is here an unbounded serenity. We call it fatalism to disparage it ... Too much serenity leads to suffering from melancholy. That is what I really wanted to say. I saw them speechless amid 'fatal' flames: Stamboul was burning like a demonic offering.

(LE CORBUSIER [1911] 1989: 95)

Istanbulites accepted the disappearance of their houses in fires with a surprising silence, with a have-seen-it-all muteness, with what Le Corbusier called a 'melancholy'. In his chapter entitled 'The Istanbul Disaster', Le Corbusier wrote down his observations of an Istanbul fire:



From a house threatened by the flames, a corpse is carried away, already shut in its coffin; six stooping men run, taking it away into the crowd. Where will they deposit this strange package?

All these Turks in long silk gowns and white turbans look on gravely; the cafes overflow into squares, and the trees barely protect the people from the downpour of burning embers flying frenetically in the sky. The street vendors sell their lemonade, their syrups, their ice cream, their fruit. It seems like an intermission at a theater where a great, extraordinary spectacle is performed, but whose audience is blasé because they know it all and nothing more can interest them. For Stamboul has been burning like this for centuries.

(LE CORBUSIER [1911] 1989: 156)

Le Corbusier was not necessarily interested in the modernization process that followed the destruction caused by fires. What enthralled him, rather, in these otherwise tragic events was the interwoven nature of death and life, symbolized in the ‘melancholic spectacle’ of fire.<sup>9</sup> Yes, fire was a spectacle in Le Corbusier’s eyes, one that opened its curtains quite frequently in Istanbul. The abundance of cemeteries and their noticeable placement in the central parts of the city was another testimony: ‘Constantinople is a kind of wilderness; people build houses, plant trees, and where there is any space left, they bury the dead’ (LE CORBUSIER, [1911] 1989: 23). Death was an incessant reminder in life, and life was always at the edge of death. The vernacular architecture of Istanbul was captivating for Le Corbusier because, to him, these houses seemed to represent the absolute opposite of classicism. These houses did not intend to stay ‘forever’. They were of wood as opposed to stone, temporary as opposed to permanent, mortal as opposed to divine, human as opposed to Godly, ephemeral as opposed to enduring. While vulnerability was the price paid for the ephemeral expression of these houses, they embodied something principally attractive in their short-lived existence: they were just as transitory and fleeting as a captivating experience of modernity.<sup>10</sup>

The nomad in Le Corbusier knew exactly what to expect in his destination and resisted its change. Even if this expectation was the opposite of conditions in his place of departure – so his resistance to their change may at first sight appear contradictory to the very definition of the nomad – it fits well with what the Orientalist nomad would have predicted to find there: the search for an exotic ‘other’ of the West in Istanbul is a quite ordinary stereotype. Le Corbusier’s insistence that Istanbul be left as an un-modernized, unorganized city with filthy and dusty streets, while throughout his career he promoted modernization for Europe, also suggests the perpetuation of the ‘modern West-traditional East’ polarity that maintains the category of the Orient as the ‘other’. Nonetheless, the migrant in Le Corbusier, eventually gave way to a unique interpretation of Istanbul’s vernacular houses as well as of the melancholic fires that reduced

9 Le Corbusier referred to the fire in Istanbul with the words ‘spectacle’ and ‘melancholy’ quite a few times, narrating how the grandeur of the city’s historical peninsula, with its mosques and minarets, was accompanied by the burning houses. See Le Corbusier ([1911] 1989: 156–58).

10 Within the scope of this paper, it would obviously be impossible to do justice to the complexities of Le Corbusier’s approach to the transitory and permanent values of modern architecture throughout his career, or the extensive scholarship invested on this topic. My comments are limited to the architect’s fascination with the burning vernacular houses of Istanbul at this early stage of his career.

them to ashes. Nourished by a partially demonic inspiration, at this instance at least, Le Corbusier embraced the transitory and the ephemeral as values of modernity that inescapably forced extinction.

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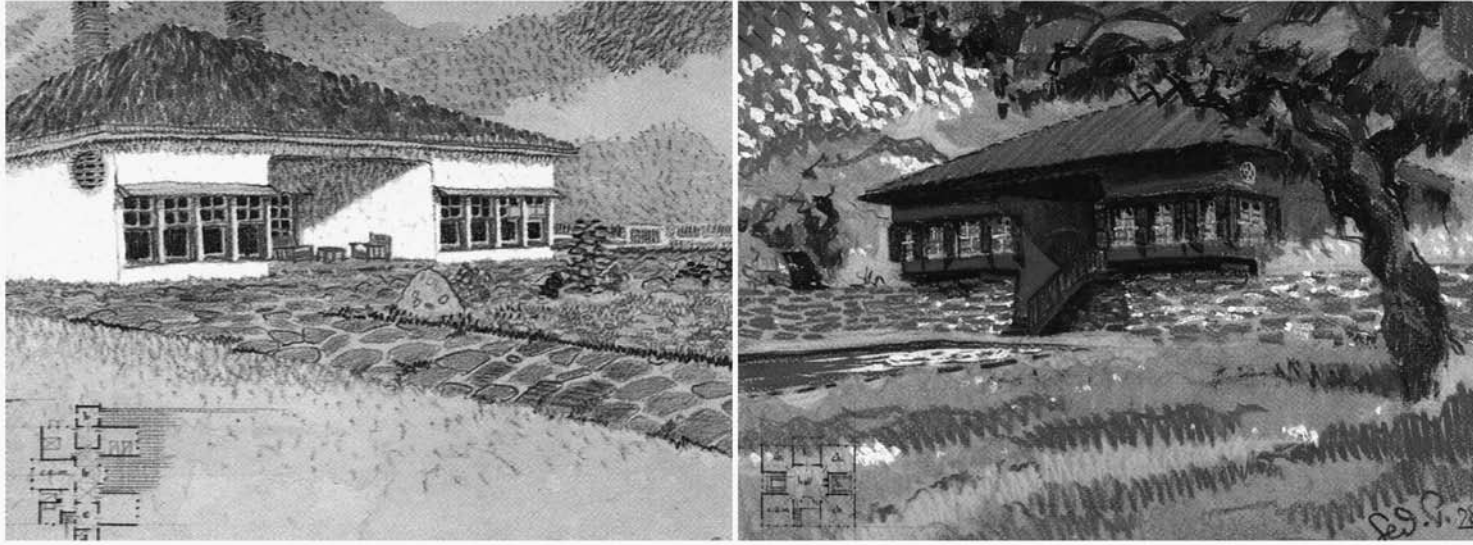
## MELANCHOLY AND MODERNITY

11 The construction of the Turkish Republic was both a modernization and a nationalization project (turning the Ottoman Empire into the Turkish nation). While the cultural expressions of the two often remained in tension, modernization and nationalization processes took place simultaneously in Turkey.

Eldem was equally concerned with the fires that slowly destroyed the urban tissue of Istanbul. For him, however, the vernacular architecture of Istanbul was valuable for a reason quite the opposite of Le Corbusier's: these houses had to be carefully preserved in memory and revived in new buildings precisely because they were so vulnerable, because they bridged the past and the fleeting present, and because their newly born representations would help assuage the melancholy of their loss due to the Western-styled urban regulations after fires. The abundance of burning and decaying old houses should have motivated the urgent need for more permanence, according to Eldem, not for rapid change and renewal. Istanbul's vernacular houses were further threatened by the advent of Turkish modernization and the arrival of new living customs during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Eldem's lifetime project was to find a place for these vernacular houses within the changing times – an urge that can already be observed in his travel diaries.

What is most striking in the sketchbooks and diaries that Eldem kept during his trip to Europe is the architect's incessant anxiety about his identity, caught between Westernization and nationalization,<sup>10</sup> – his swings between admiration of and aversion to both the modern European achievements he observed during his trip, and the memories of the Ottoman vernacular houses he had explored before he departed. I suggest that this anxiety can be described as a melancholy, defined in terms of the architect's perceived distance from the ego-ideal that was being collectively constructed as 'Western' at the time; and in terms of his fluctuations between love and hate, fascination with and reaction to the attributes of the 'West' and the 'Turkish' (AKCAN 2005). This melancholic and yet productive tension has to be differentiated from the nostalgic longing for a lost past. Here the lost object producing melancholy is not only, or not even necessarily, the decaying traces of an older world made anachronistic by the forces of progress. The cultural milieu of the early years of the Turkish Republic, of which Eldem was a part, was more futurist than historicist, more enthusiastic about progress than it was nostalgic. The anguish that causes melancholy in Eldem's case is not necessarily the inability to confront the changes wrought by the zeitgeist, but rather the desire and the subsequent loss of being a part of this zeitgeist and a subject of one's own





3.3 'Turkish house's.' Sedad Eldem, watercolors, 1911. Eldem Archives at Koç University, Turkey.

history at the same time. While Le Corbusier, embodying the melancholy, perceived Istanbul's burned-down vernacular houses as a fruitful reminder of the transience of modern times, Eldem struggled to work through the melancholy caused by the forces of Westernization that threw these vernacular houses out of favor.

Let us illustrate this with an analysis of Eldem's travel diaries. Writing in his diary in 1929 in Paris, the architect had moments of doubt about his own watercolors that depicted these vernacular 'Turkish houses' (FIGURE 3.3):

I almost finished my collection of Turkish houses, I had too much of it anyway. It is a shame for the amount of time I spent on it. I will leave the colors and look for volumes. I am fed up with drawing fancy perspectives too. All these make me feel good rather than exhaust me, since it proves that I have an honest nature and that all complications and lies disgust me. I will try to represent the true me. Besides, I can pretty much say that I don't have the right to be ashamed of myself.

An architect should not do his renderings in perspective, the geometrical drawings suffice (Michelangelo, etc.). Because all perspectives and colors are somehow meant to deceive the public a little bit.

But what if I will not show them? Then I should be free to paint them. Because I see my own house in the middle of nature – I will now design the city house, with unbelievable purity and severity.

(ELDEM 1926–1930: IN PARIS, JANUARY 1929)

What do the fluctuating statements in this text indicate? Drawing colored perspectives of vernacular houses in the landscapes of Anatolia was ‘wrong’, based on what Eldem learned in his journey to Paris. His own renderings of this kind were complicated and untruthful; whereas geometrical drawings, city houses with ‘purity and severity’, were ‘true’ and modern. Eldem’s willingness to be stimulated by the contemporary architectural milieu of Europe impelled him to disapprove his own work, at least momentarily. Yet the next moment the architect felt uncomfortable with this self-denial too. What if he continued working on such perspectives, as long as he hid them from the eyes that decided ‘right’ from ‘wrong’?, he asked. What if he designed ‘pure and severe’ city houses, although his own house was meant to be in ‘nature’ like the ones he had painted before he got to Europe? Shouldn’t he be allowed to continue exploring the ‘Turkish house’ as long as he kept it in his personal sketchbook?

When Eldem writes in the passage above, ‘I will try to represent the true me. Besides, I can pretty much say that I don’t have the right to be ashamed of myself’, the very slippery nature of the term ‘true me’ exemplifies the indeterminacy at stake. At the moment this sentence appears in the passage, Eldem implies that his own drawings of ‘Turkish houses’ are untrue to his nature and that he was concealing his ‘true’ self behind these colored perspectives. A few lines below this, however, he suddenly says he sees his ‘true’ house in the middle of nature, just like the ones he drew before he arrived in Europe, implying that he now must conceal his ‘true’ self behind the pure and severe city houses. The true self that the architect consoles himself not to be ashamed of shifts from one to the other in no more than a few lines in the diary.

Eldem’s sentiments fluctuating between those of a migrant and those of a nomad are transparent in many other parts of the diaries. Juxtapose, for instance, the previous quotation written originally in French with the following one written in Turkish:

Show ... Turkishness with pride. Don’t take anything from Europe – It does not have to be beautiful for them. I want to analyze Turkish art. Just as foreign language would corrupt in foreign [another] land, just as foreign animals cannot live in foreign [another] region, those foreign houses would not live.

(ELDEM 1929–30)

In a sentence he crossed-out later, Eldem continued:

In the last 10 years, European products colonized Turkey. This destroyed Turkish art. If this continues, we would be completely absorbed by Europe.

(ELDEM 1926–30: IN BERLIN, 1929)

Reading these conflicting statements as a self-contradiction may not be accurate. Rather, these words must be seen as the young architect's hesitant and pending response to the dissemination of European modernism in Turkey. Eldem's opinions about contemporary architecture in Europe were no less undecided. At the beginning of his journey, in August 1928, he wrote in his diary:

Every epoch has an architecture that characterizes itself. Yet to make this characterization possible, this epoch should have already formed a 'character'. What represents such an epoch? A certain time that has started with a big novelty ... Art realizes that what it produces is outmoded and no longer of the times ... We realize suddenly that after having searched with meaningless forms, industry that is not occupied with these forms but is under a more direct influence of the times has created an 'art' that at least represents the epoch (silos, bridges, autos, standardized furniture).

(ELDEM 1926–30: IN FONT-ROMEU, AUGUST 1928)

During his trip in France, the young architect often persuaded himself to overcome what he described as his own 'romanticism' by undermining some of his own designs as 'middle-age like', 'invaluable' and 'disastrous' (ELDEM 1926–30: IN PARIS, 2 FEBRUARY 1929). One comes across various statements that are a testament to Eldem's swing between insecurity and confidence. 'How come I trust my work so much, whereas I am so unsure of myself in life?' he noted on a spring day of 1929 in Paris (ELDEM 1926–30: IN PARIS, 22 MARCH 1929), and continued a month later:

Life is not any more gay than it appears to me. I have to get used to the idea that I am made to torture myself all the time and will never be happy ... This is why I am incapable of following today's absurd world. A house should be produced with no effort, no artistic volition ... like a tennis court or a trunk ... Let's not forget that a *paquebot* or a plane has nothing to do with a house, and that our houses are still fixed, composed of walls and openings like before, but we, we believe we have to live in an ambiance of radio (t.s.f) and factory.

(ELDEM 1926–1930: IN PARIS, 27 APRIL 1929)

The comparison of these two passages – the first written in Font-Romeu in August 1928 and the second in Paris in April 1929 – shows that Eldem had hesitations about modern architecture of Europe as well. The earlier passage indicates that at the beginning of his trip, he was familiar with the contemporary modern architectural movements in Europe, yet considered them to be fashionable clothes that are put on and taken off in an attempt to catch up with the speed of the times. In 1928, he agreed

with Le Corbusier's arguments in *Vers une Architecture* (English translation: *Towards a New Architecture*) that the art (style) of the times was already hinted at in industrial landscapes. Yet writing in his diary a year later in Paris, Eldem had changed his mind. He was now suspicious of the 'absurdity' of Le Corbusier's *machine à habiter*. Now, a *paqueboat* or a plane, a radio or a factory had nothing to do with a house. Traveling, in other words, enabled an individual to take the liberty to hesitate, to adore a trend and then dislike it, to take time off from the sedentary and try out other selves.

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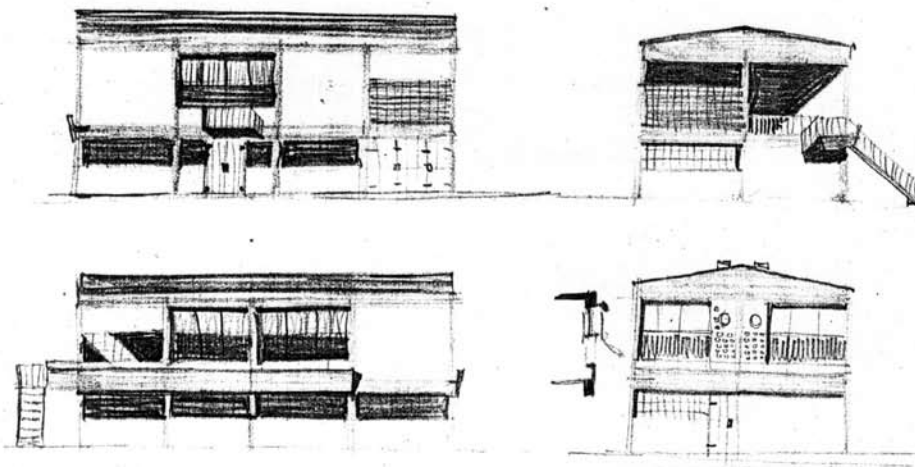
## TRAVEL AND PRACTICE

Both Le Corbusier's and Eldem's modes of representation transformed significantly during their travels. While Le Corbusier made dark-colored chalk drawings with an emphasis on the details of surfaces, ornaments, and materials at earlier stages of his trip, he shifted to single-line continuous drawings that represent only borders of buildings and silhouettes of cities, without any emphasis on surface characters (FIGURE 3.2). This abstraction penetrated the architect's written descriptions of buildings as well. Throughout his journey, he increasingly described structures by using abstract geometrical vocabulary, such as 'a cube with a sphere on it' or 'an elementary geometry orders these masses: the square, the cube, the sphere' (LE CORBUSIER [1911] 1989: 104). The same was true for Eldem. Beginning with colorful, detailed and ornamented water-color perspectives, he transformed his representational mode into one of abstract line drawings (compare Figures 3.3 and 3.4). While Le Corbusier might not yet have moved toward abstraction deliberately for the sake of modernism, Eldem's sketches were made at a time when the association between abstraction and the Modern Movement was more than evident.

In addition to the representational modes, these trips also made an impact on both architect's future buildings. Scholars have already drawn attention to the transformative effect of Le Corbusier's trip, substantiating it by pointing out the explicit shift in his architectural expression from the early houses in his hometown La Chaux-de-Fonds to the legendary ones in France. Enis Kortan (1983) and Adolf Max Vogt (1998) have demonstrated formal similarities between the Ottoman vernacular houses and Le Corbusier's buildings of the 1920s and 1930s, suggesting the possible influence of this trip on his architectural practice. Vogt has argued that many signature features of Le Corbusier's houses, such as living spaces raised above the ground, and flat roof, were stylized versions of vernacular houses in the Balkans and Istanbul. He writes:

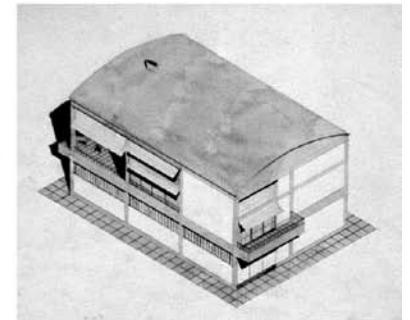
[O]f the ‘5 points’ which Le Corbusier published fifteen years later, the Turkish wooden architecture anticipates as many as three: points one (*les pilotis*), four (*fenêtres en longueur*), and five (*la façade libre*). The result of this anticipation comes close to what Le Corbusier will later call *la boîte*, the box. In Melling’s engraving of the small coffeehouse we observed the foldable, easy-to-open box, and in the Köprülü köşk and the Bebek köşk, the *raised box*, a preliminary step to the *boite en l’air* that floated before the mind’s eye of the creator of the Villa Savoye. (VOGT 1998: 68)

Eldem went through a similar transformation during his travels as well. In resolving the dilemma between following the agendas of European architects and developing a style of expression based on ‘Turkish houses’ as it was outlined above, and in aspiring to preserve the memory of the vernacular houses while simultaneously participating in Turkey’s modernization project, Eldem ended up with a very specific formula that he ‘invented’ during his trip to Europe (AKCAN 2005). As the transformation of Eldem’s sketches and representational modes testifies, this formula entailed interpreting these houses as artifacts that embodied *modern* principles in the first place. Eldem designed numerous hypothetical houses during his trip. In Paris, he began to draw facades and perspectives that expressed the constructional logic of reinforced concrete. He designed several two- or three-story houses, for which he emphasized the exposed reinforced concrete structure infilled with textured aggregate and linear windows (FIGURE 3.4). Some of these sketches bear a notable resemblance to the work of Auguste Perret, whom Eldem met in Paris. Years later, Eldem recalled (or post-rationalized) that he felt an implicit familiarity existed between the logic of construction in Perret’s buildings



## 3.4

Single-family houses, sketch on paper.  
Sedad Eldem, 1929–30, *Travel Sketch-  
books, Book 9*. Courtesy Edhem Eldem.



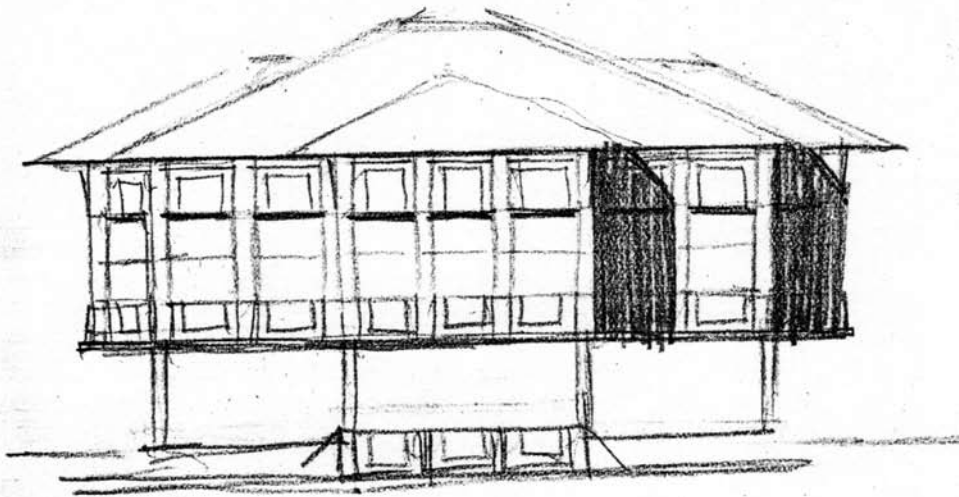
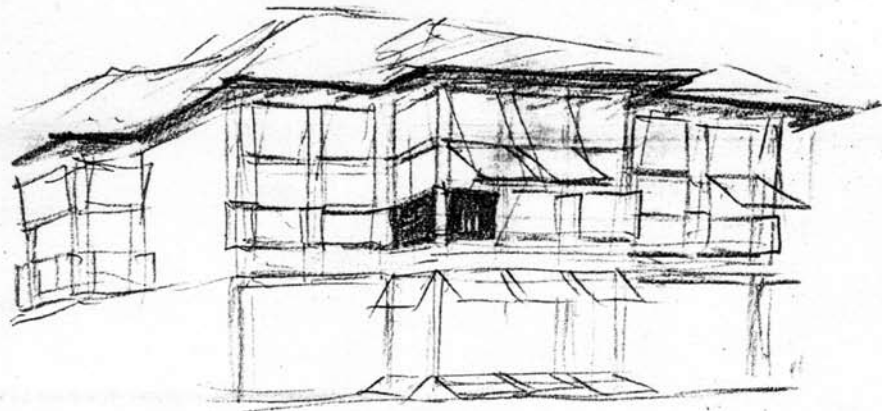
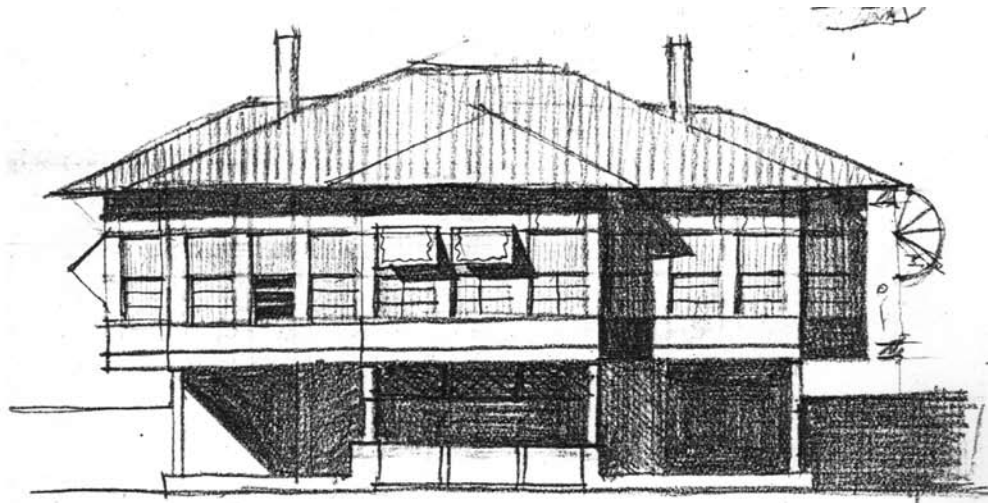
and that of traditional ‘Turkish houses’. He explained that he ‘dreamt the infill walls colored as they were in Ankara, Kastamonu and Amasya’ when he realized that ‘the beautiful concrete framework had to be visible without any concealment’. (ELDEM 1980) The other formal possibility that Eldem realized in the use of reinforced concrete was the potential to liberate the mass from the structural limits of masonry, and thus explore large outdoor balconies. Arguably, Eldem found a similarity between these modern outdoor spaces and the traditional outdoor sofa (a very memorable common room in the ‘Turkish houses’) that he used to draw in his colorful perspectives back in Turkey. Just as he justified his interest in exposed reinforced concrete with references to the wooden framework of vernacular houses, he might have conceived his large balconies carved into the general mass of the building as modernized, technologically advanced versions of the sofa in the traditional houses. Eldem’s interest in the constructional logic and formal possibilities of reinforced concrete testifies to his migrant sensibilities: leaving behind the place of departure and opening himself to foreign architectural influences. On the other hand, his continuing hunt for the Turkishness of the European movement exposes his nomadic instincts: projecting his place of departure on the place of arrival.

To give another example, when he visited Germany during this trip, Eldem was exposed to Frank Lloyd Wright through the pages of a publication rather than through physical proximity. Later, in 1980, he recalled his experience of ‘discovering’ Frank Lloyd Wright’s prairie houses in the Wasmuth album during his visits to the Volkerskude Museum in Berlin as follows:

I believe I had discovered some important elements of the Turkish House of the future in these designs [Wright’s prairie houses]. The long low lines, the rows of windows, the wide eaves and the shape of the roofs were very much like the Turkish house in my mind. But how had Wright arrived at these forms? ... Wright’s sources were not in America but in Asia and ‘prairie’ was merely a metaphor for his horizontal linearity.

(ELDEM 1980: 91)

Eldem’s sketches in Berlin confirm this statement (FIGURE 3.5). In the last pages of his German sketchbooks, Eldem began to draw some images that resembled Wright’s houses in Oak Park in Chicago. These sketches also bear striking similarities to Eldem’s future work. The discovery of an American architect during a trip to Germany, and the belief that the ‘sources’ of prairie houses were nothing but the vernacular houses of Asia, gave Eldem the courage to search for the roots of modern masters in places other than the ‘West’, and subsequently, to justify the future of his ‘Turkish houses’ with places other than Turkey.



### 3.5

*Single-family houses, sketch on paper, Sedat Eldem, 1929–30, Travel Sketchbooks, Book 10. Courtesy Eldem Eldem.*

Eldem's approach to Wright was in fact no different than his reception of many other architects associated with modernism. Whatever Eldem defined as the 'Turkish house', he usually liked to justify with a well-known building in Europe or the United States. For him, the constructional logic of the 'Turkish houses' equaled the exposed concrete of August Perret; the linear low lines of the Ottoman vernacular houses were similar to those of Wright. It is surprising that Eldem felt less empathy toward Le Corbusier, but had he been aware of the latter's *Voyage d'Orient*, he might have reconsidered his reception of the Swiss-French architect. Modular and exposed structural framework with infill, low horizontal lines, carved-in outdoor spaces, close relation with nature, structure raised from the ground – these were some of the principles that Eldem believed the 'Turkish houses' shared with Western modernism, and it was his travel diaries that anticipated the architect's continuing validation of the vernacular 'Turkish houses' by referring to their perceived 'modernness'.

The careers of both Le Corbusier and Eldem were significantly touched by the study trips to each other's cities, partially due to the explorations they made about the same anonymous buildings. While Le Corbusier was observing Istanbul's vernacular houses by adding his unique understanding, Eldem kept them in his memory constantly, comparing them to the recently designed buildings he examined in Europe and hybridizing them with a modern aesthetic sensibility in his new projects. Both architects aligned these houses with modernity, albeit for quite different reasons. While Le Corbusier celebrated Istanbul's vernacular houses for their transient character, which may have inspired him for the concept of a non-monumental, non-classical architecture in no rush for durability, Eldem treated these houses as memory traces that needed to be preserved in future modern buildings, because, to his eye, they already embodied the formal and structural principles of modernism. In a way, each architect arrived at his definition of modern architecture partly by looking at similar houses but seeing different values, one ephemerality and the other cultural legacy in need of preservation. As much as these architects' formulations may appear to us today as incomplete understandings of modernity and vernacular architecture, we have to recognize the creative impulse that resulted from 'distorted' travelers' eyes. It was not only the destinations of their travels but also the migrant and the nomadic sensibilities between which they fluctuated, that constructed the resulting hybrid between the vernacular house and the emerging principles of the Modern Movement.



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# Travel-Writing the Design Industry in Modern Japan, 1910–1925

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*Sarah Teasley*

In the early summer of 1914, Japanese furniture designer and educator Kogure Joichi (1882–1943) left Tokyo for Manchuria, where he was charged by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Industry to supervise the creation of a new factory to produce wooden furniture for the Chinese market. Kogure went back to Tokyo in the fall of the same year, but returned to Manchuria the following summer, before going on to tour Beijing, Shanghai and other major cities in China. He compiled a market report based on this trip, which he submitted to the Ministry in the fall of 1915, and would visit China again on his way to Europe in 1921, but would not discuss the 1914 and 1915 trips in his many writings until his 1942 autobiography. In this text, in comparison to his account of an earlier posting to western Japan, Kogure's description is remarkably devoid of local actors, whether the Chinese and Manchurian employees of the factory, or the Chinese consumers whose daily life and living spaces he had observed.

Five years after Kogure's Manchurian experience, Kogure's colleague Moriya Nobuo (1893–1927) set sail for a two-year tour of Europe and the United States by way of Asia. Moriya had been recruited to teach furniture design at the newly founded Tokyo Higher School of Arts and Technology and was to survey recent trends in furniture design, education and the organizational structure of the different national industries. During his voyage, Moriya published monthly missives in a Tokyo-based professional journal, reporting both on new design trends and on daily life in the cities and nations he visited. Unlike Kogure's lack of representation of Chinese consumers and Manchurian employees, Moriya illustrated his reports with close descriptions of interactions with European consumers and professionals. In the articles, Moriya positioned himself as both an outside critic of Western furniture design and contemporary culture and an industry insider. His missives transmitted information to colleagues in Japan, and established Moriya's position both as a design professional qualified to comment authoritatively on the furniture and interiors he encountered, and as a cultural outsider, a Japanese man in a foreign world.

While with different immediate goals, and to different destinations, Kogure and Moriya's travels shared some similarities. Both men were first products and then participants in a new state system for higher technical education, and both received their postings abroad as the result of this affiliation. More importantly, both men were sent overseas by the State for the purpose of further developing a modern furniture industry in Japan, and both were expected to relay the information gained overseas with colleagues at home. Furthermore, while Moriya's trip to Europe was not directly part of Japanese colonial expansion in Asia, both trips reflected the importance of colonial expansion for the growth of the furniture industry, and the quiet but very real role that furniture design and manufacturing research played in Japan's acts of self-situation in the world order in the early twentieth century.

Moriya and Kogure's travels emerged as part of greater state strategy to develop an indigenous industry in wooden Western-style furniture, and to increase furniture industry profits in national and overseas markets. Their travels were enabled by steamships that transported design information to Japan and products and designers from it, and catalyzed by state identification of technical education as the key to modern industrial production. In the modern period, the rise of such technologies for the travel of people, goods and information accelerated the global flow of design knowledge, but how did travel and travel narratives in particular influence the formation of the furniture design industry in modern Japan, and what did the cognitive maps drawn by traveling Japanese designers have on them? This chapter employs the travel records of Kogure and Moriya, two seminal figures in the formation of the Japanese furniture and interior design industries, to illuminate the impact of travel in two phases of a process that we might call self-situation: first, the process by which furniture and interior design professionals attempted to create a site for themselves within the higher education system and the industrial structure of modern Japan, and second, Japanese designers' situation of themselves as Japanese nationals in the world.

Designers traveled within the Japanese archipelago, first to the educational centers of Tokyo and Kyoto to pursue higher education, then out to supposedly peripheral sites within the archipelago, the rapidly expanding Japanese empire and the world at large. Travel within the archipelago allowed designers to assert the primacy of Tokyo and Kyoto as centers for advanced design research and education, and to identify themselves with modernity from the top down, in contrast to local woodworking practices developed largely outside the state system for industrial promotion. Travel within the empire, which by the time of Kogure's trip included Okinawa, Taiwan, Korea and southern Manchuria, functioned as part of the implementation of colonial policy on a larger scale, not only by exploiting colonial resources and asserting Japanese presence,

but also by attempting to develop local markets for colonial Japanese-made goods. Travels within the empire such as Kogure's trips to Manchuria and China and his recollections of these trips during the Pacific War also allowed designers to recreate imperial power relations between urban centers and colonies as personal experience, and to transmit this system through its narration.

By contrast, travel outside Asia led designers both to position themselves as members of an elite international profession, and to assert national-cultural difference between Japan, Asia and the west. Prior to their departures, designers like Kogure Joiichi and Moriya Nobuo understood themselves as participants in an international community of modern furniture-makers and interior designers linked by the possession of specialist knowledge gained through higher education. However, while in Europe and the United States, they not only gathered information about design practice in foreign nations but also represented another foreign nation: Japan. Thus, time abroad not only provided them with concrete ideas for bettering the Japanese design industry upon their return, but also brought them to question and ultimately to reconfirm their relationship as individuals within the furniture design movement, the Japanese nation-state and the modern world order. Together, travel within the archipelago, the empire and the world helped designers in the early years of the profession create a dynamic professional and national identity whose shifting registers both strengthened the profession and revealed its instability.

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## THE GROWTH OF THE FURNITURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN INDUSTRY IN MODERN JAPAN

In the early twentieth century, furniture and interior designers in Japan had only begun to inhabit a disciplinary home from which they could set forth. This is not to say that the practices of furniture-making and interior design did not exist before the late nineteenth century. To the contrary, *shitsurai*, the selection and placement of artworks and other objects appropriate for the season, was integral to the overall staging for tea practice. Among carpenters (*daiku*) who specialized in furniture (*sashimono*) some master carpenters produced *hinagata-bon*, woodblock-printed compendiums of drawings for tables, shelving and other furnishings. However, the conception of the designer as a creative individual responsible not for the material object but for the idea of the thing – its function, form, construction or manufacturing methods and decoration – and for legible plans enabling its reproduction by an anonymous worker in industrial mass

production dates to changes following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, during which the Tokugawa regime which had governed Japan for over 250 years was dismantled, and modern economic, legal, educational and other systems based on those of modern nation-states such as France, England and Germany installed. The shift from a unified design and manufacturing process within local workshops to a factory division of labor distinguishing designer and maker began with designs (*zuan*) for export ceramics and other crafts for display and sale at international expositions beginning with Vienna in 1874, and grew through the expansion of state-sponsored higher technical education after the mid-1890s (IMPEY ET AL. 1995).

Unlike export crafts, furniture-making did not immediately experience similar industrialization. For most of the Meiji period, indigenous furniture workshops coexisted with new workshops specializing in ornate carved furniture for the export and elite domestic markets. In the early 1900s, the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce identified wooden furniture as a lucrative use for the nation's timber resources, and began sponsoring furniture-manufacturing research and publications. This period also saw the institutionalization of building construction and furniture-making as separate educational and professional areas, as technical and higher technical schools reorganized woodworking (*mokko*) departments based on the earlier concept of carpentry as including both into separate courses.

In contrast, interior design developed in response to the need for trained professionals to decorate the interiors of the Western-style buildings produced for banks, government offices and elite entertainment spaces, including Western-style houses for industrialists and the peerage. Design programs in the Tokyo and Kyoto Higher Technical Schools emphasized Western-style interiors, and functioned as a corollary to the architectural course in the Engineering College at the Tokyo Imperial University. Graduates joined the design departments of local governments, general contractors and department stores, and worked in tandem with architects.

Thus, interior design and furniture-making developed as separate professions. The two came together with the establishment of a professional organization for higher-school trained educators and practitioners of both fields, the Kenyokai, or Oak Leaf Association, in 1918. By the 1920s, the popularization of Western-style interiors, the expansion of higher technical education and the growth of department store furniture departments meant increased employment for designers, and self-recognition among designers, particularly those affiliated with the Kenyokai, of their role as specialists in modern furniture design and interior decoration as an international profession. Travel played an important role in the creation of the disciplines of furniture design and interior decoration. In the late nineteenth century, after the success of the Iwakura

1 The Iwakura Mission traveled to the United States and Europe between 1871 and 1873 to observe Western institutions and practices. See Kunitake 2002.

Mission of 1871–73, the Ministry of Education established its Overseas Research Fellow system.<sup>1</sup> The system sent recent graduates of institutions such as the Imperial University, the Tokyo School of Fine Arts and the higher technical schools to study abroad to familiarize themselves with new technologies and educational practices, with the understanding that Fellows would return to teach in Japan. While stressing the traveler's responsibilities to the nation, the Overseas Research Fellow system also recalled the English grand tour, with its emphasis on personal refinement. Fellows in a creative field, in particular, could link personal refinement to improved artistic production.

Designers used information gained during their experiences abroad to further their personal work, and shared this information through their work as educators, and through publications including textbooks, articles in industry-specific journals, speeches and books. Earlier overseas postings with direct impact on the design industry included those of Notomi Kaijiro (1844–1918) and Hirayama Eizo (1855–1914), who remained in Vienna after traveling there as part of the Japanese delegation to the 1873 International Exposition, then returned to found regional technical schools for export crafts production (Notomi) and create designs for export products (Hirayama) (FUJITA 2001; AMAGAI 2003). After 1900, artist Asai Chu (1856–1907) and architect Takeda Goichi (1872–1938) encountered Art Nouveau during postings to Europe, and translated this style to their designs and work as educators in the design department at the Kyoto Higher Technical School (MIYAJIMA 2003). Similarly, in 1910 designer Yasuda Rokuzo (1874–1942), a graduate and faculty member of the Tokyo Higher Technical School, traveled to Vienna, where he studied under Josef Hoffmann. Yasuda's experience of Austrian design education was key to the establishment of the Tokyo Higher School of Arts and Technology in 1920, and thus to the preparatory trips of Moriya and his colleagues.

Like architects trained at the Tokyo Imperial University, designers like Moriya and Kogure studied Western-style drafting and construction techniques, and were often better versed in historical styles and contemporaneous developments in England, Austria or Germany than in vernacular traditions. The disjuncture between a state-sponsored design system catering to exports and an expanding but nonetheless high-end local market on the one hand, and a local woodworking industry producing traditional furnishings on the other, eased somewhat in the 1900s, concomitant with the appearance of an urban bourgeoisie and popularization of the concept of home as a physical space (SAND 2003). However, since most Japanese homes retained *tatami* mats and a lifestyle based on sitting and sleeping on the floor until the 1950s, in the 1920s, when Moriya Nobuo visited London, furniture and interior design researchers considered themselves part of an international profession that spanned the globe from South

Kensington to Grand Rapids, but remained marginal within the domestic economy. Travel and the recording of travel experiences in print for a mass audience was one way for them to begin to position them in the center. Not only did it introduce new practices and ideas, but it also demanded that designers identify a place from which to start and boundaries between ‘home’ and ‘away’, and provided them with a textual genre – the travel report – by which to disseminate and justify that starting point.

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## **KOGURE JOICHI IN MANCHURIA**

Kogure Joichi’s 1914 Manchurian assignment allowed him to transcend the limits of his work in Tokyo while reinforcing his identification as a professional practitioner of modern design and an imperial subject. In April 1914, Kogure was posted to Antung (now Dandong), a city on the east bank of the Yalu River, the border between Manchuria and the Korean peninsula. There, he served as head technician for a new furniture factory operated by the Yalu River Lumber Company, a former Qing state firm reorganized as a Sino–Japanese joint venture in 1908 (ORYOKU-KO (ORYOKKO) SAIBOKU KOSHI, 1919). Kogure was to prepare the new factory’s facilities, determine efficient processing methods and select Japanese heads for the machining, furniture construction and finishing divisions. He returned to Tokyo in the fall of 1914, leaving behind the division heads to oversee actual operations.

Like the Twenty-One Demands that Japan submitted to China in January 1915, the trip must be understood as part of a larger Japanese strategy to gain political and economic power in China that only accelerated after the outbreak of World War I destabilized the earlier colonial balance of power. After victory over China in the Sino–Japanese War of 1894–95, Japan gained Taiwan as a colony. Following the Portsmouth Treaty that concluded the Russo–Japanese War of 1904–05, Japan occupied the Liaodong Peninsula and acquired the right to build railroads in southern Manchuria, then annexed Korea in 1910. Japanese-controlled areas on the continent asserted Japanese presence to other colonial nations like the United States, Germany and England, and offered the economic benefits of gaining natural resources. The Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce’s Forestry Agency conducted surveys of forests, industry and markets in China, Korea and other areas from the early 1900s. In the mid-1910s, after the completion of the South Manchuria Railway lines and construction of civilian infrastructure like schools and hospitals necessary for colonization, the Agency identified the development of the Manchurian forestry industry and cultivation of the Chinese market as lucrative areas for growth. The Ministry urged corporations like the

2 *In Brave New Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), Louise Young discusses similar Japanese experiences taking advantage of the relative freedom of the colonies to explore new opportunities. See particularly pp. 241–303.

Sumitomo Forestry Company to open Manchurian operations, and sent representatives like Kogure to direct the operations of existing firms.

The terminal for the Antung–Mukden branch line of the South Manchuria Railway, the gateway between Manchuria and the Korean peninsula, and a shipping port for eastern Manchurian timber, Antung was a logical site for the new factory (FIGURE 4.1). Some Antung factories specialized in making wood boxes for fertilizer and other soy products that dominated Manchurian exports, but the city’s principal role in the lumber industry was as a distribution centre for logs floated down the Yalu River and processed into beams for construction in the city’s sawmills (*Ringyo Gaho* 1917) (FIGURE 4.2). In contrast, the Yalu River Logging Company factory was intended to manufacture Japanese- and Western-style furniture for use in Manchuria by Japanese families, and for direct export to China (KOGURE 1942). The shift reflected a larger Ministry strategy to increase logging industry profits by manufacturing the entire product in Japan or its colonies before export, rather than exporting raw materials or rough materials for construction.

Kogure, an expert on wood processing and furniture manufacturing working within the state system already, was ideal for the assignment. Kogure graduated in architecture from the Industrial Arts Instructor Training Institute of the Tokyo Higher School of Industrial Arts in 1908, and was assigned to a joint research initiative in wood-processing techniques based in Tokyo. He published the results with Tokyo trade publisher Hakubunkan as *Zoki riyo saishin kagu seisaku ho* (*The Latest Manufacturing Techniques for Furniture Using Miscellaneous Woods*) in two volumes in 1914 and 1916, and coauthored a series of furniture designs for use in woodwork education, *Mokko seizu oyobi seisakuho: Shuko tekiyo* (*Drafting and Fabrication Techniques for Woodwork: Suitable for Handcraft [Education]*), also from Hakubunkan, in 1913. As an educator and researcher, Kogure could develop processes and suggest new applications, but work at an actual manufacturer fell outside his purview. The assignment to the colonies, in an area under Japanese control but not part of ‘Japan proper’, allowed him to apply his research in an actual production setting.<sup>2</sup>

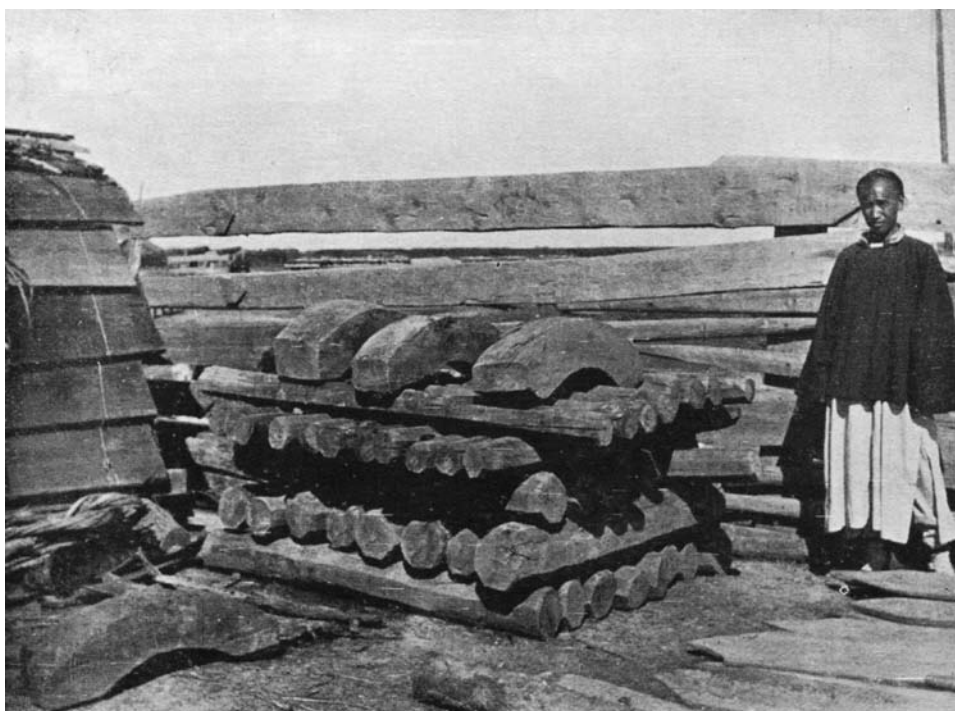
Developing the Yalu River Lumber Company’s manufacturing output would strengthen Japan’s colonial claim to the region and capitalize on potential local markets. Yet Kogure’s 1942 autobiography, in which he published an account of his time in Manchuria and reproduced his 1915 Ministry report, records little interaction with factory employees or Chinese consumers (KOGURE 1942). One exception was an exhibition held at the local products exhibition hall several months after Kogure’s arrival:





## 4.1

*A lumber yard at Antung, c. 1903. From Noshomusho Sanrinkyoku ed. (1903), Shinkan ryokoku shinrin shisatsu fukumeisho (Report of Observations on Forestry in China and Korea) (Tokyo: Noshomusho), np. Photographer unknown.*



## 4.2

*Illustration from the section on Antung lumber yards in the 1905 Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce publication Shinkoku ringyo oyobi mokuzai shokyo shisatsu fukumeisho (Report of Observations on Forestry and the Condition of Wood Products Commerce in China) (Tokyo: Noshomusho). Photographer unknown.*

3 All translations from the Japanese, unless otherwise noted, are by the author.

After two or three months, we had stockpiled a decent number of products, so we planned a large exhibition and sales event to introduce the new factory broadly to society. Many important Japanese and Chinese officials came, and the event had a great advertising effect.

(KOGURE 1942: 26)<sup>3</sup>

Kogure's elision of 'society' and 'important Japanese and Chinese officials' implies that he was not yet considering actual Chinese consumers, but rather asserting the factory's role as a sign of Japanese colonial presence. Furthermore, while Antung had a sizeable Japanese colony by the mid-1910s, including merchants as well as a military detachment, the only visitors mentioned by name were Yoshida Shigeru (1878–1967), then the consul at Antung, Count Makino Nobuaki (1861–1949), temporarily in Antung to visit his daughter – Yoshida's wife Yukiko (1888–1941) – and the Japanese head of the design division. As an educator at a technical school, in Tokyo Kogure would have had few if any chances to mix with elite statesmen like Makino, who served in multiple cabinets and would later represent Japan at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, and Yoshida, who would go on to lead the Liberal Party and become Prime Minister after World War II, so the chance to present the factory's work to such representatives of the metropolitan elite would be an unusual opportunity worth mentioning. But references to Tokyo society only situate Antung even more firmly as peripheral to the metropole rather than a place in its own right.

Kogure's account of the China trip similarly lacked local actors. Kogure returned to the continent in the summer of 1915 to survey living conditions in Beijing, Tianjin, Jinan, Tsingtao, Shanghai and Nanjing as market research. However, his report relates neither local conditions nor interactions with residents who would presumably compose that market. Instead, following the model of market reports set by earlier Ministry visitors to China such as the 1905 *Shinkoku ringyo oyobi mokuzai shokyo shisatsu fukumeisho* [*Report of Observations on Forestry and the Condition of Wood Products Commerce in China*], the account reads as a dry, analytical report on economic prospects and marketing strategies for furniture based on the living habits of 'the Chinese' (*Shinajin*) as a collective (KOGURE 1942: 28–31). Like photographs by other Japanese visitors to the continent that included Manchurian, Chinese or Korean workers in the image but did not mention their presence in the accompanying caption, for example a photograph of the Antung lumber yards from the 1905 publication whose caption describes the wheel parts seen piled up, but does not mention the Manchurian worker standing beside them, Kogure was merely following convention. His use of the convention also embodies the standard colonial strategy of asserting dominance over the colonial other through the refusal of naming, indicating the extent to which Kogure chose to identify with the colonial project.

In general, Kogure's textual records of overseas travels give only slight weight to interaction with local residents. Following the Ministry of Education's decision to establish the Tokyo Higher School of Arts and Technology in 1919, Kogure became head of the school's woodcraft department, and, like colleagues including Moriya Nobuo, traveled overseas again in 1921–23 to survey wooden furniture production in Europe and the United States. During his trip, he published descriptions of sites visited in the monthly journal of the *Ken'yokai*. While more forthcoming about Kogure's personal reactions to the style and scale of sites visited, as appropriate for articles published as letters to colleagues in a professional society journal rather than as market reports, these missives similarly avoid personal encounters, and privilege manufacturing processes and general trends in usage that could be useful for product development in Japan. 'Beikokujin no seikatsu to sono jutaku' (Americans' Lifestyle and Their Houses), published in the November 1921 issue of the *Ken'yokai* journal *Mokko to soshoku* (*Woodworking and Decoration*), provides a list of American customs, for example, 'Americans are always thinking about how to amuse themselves well' (KOGURE 1921: 2). Kogure illustrated each statement not by relating conversations with actual Americans, but through observations of mass actions such as the weekend crowds at amusement parks, and offered such generalized interpretations as 'In summary, Americans' amusements are almost entirely like those of children; there is a general taste for competition, and for amusements that offer danger and thrills' (KOGURE 1921: 3). After the United States, Kogure traveled on to England, and his first report from England does mention a visit with the architect Raymond Unwin (1863–1940), one of the few non-Japanese named in his article (KOGURE 1922). However, in this article too Kogure related not his actual interactions with Unwin, but rather Unwin's body of work and its impact on British urban planning.

This approach contrasts sharply to Kogure's accounts of an earlier trip within Japan, to the city of Tokushima, on the island of Shikoku in western Japan. Soon after graduation in 1908, Kogure spent several months in Tokushima, ostensibly teaching in the prefectural technical school, but spending much of his time studying vernacular furniture-making techniques at local workshops. His record of this trip in his autobiography focuses on interactions with teachers and members of the local furniture industry, including stories of dinners, visits and actual conversations (KOGURE 1942). In other words, Kogure's Tokushima recollections are a description not of Tokushima itself, but of his personal experiences within Tokushima society. Unlike the 1915 Chinese market report and descriptions of American furniture factories in 1921, both of which convey practical, empirical information to colleagues who could not encounter them directly, Kogure recounted his Tokushima trip within his autobiography, so the choice to employ

4 In *The Tokaido Road: Travel and Representation in Edo and Meiji Japan* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), Jilly Traganou explains the literary conventions of diaries and other travel writing in Japan from the premodern to modern periods. See chapter 3, 'Traveling Practices and Literary Tokaido', pp. 99–144.

a more personal tone and describe human interactions fits the more personal tone of an autobiography. Furthermore, very real linguistic barriers would have limited the extent of his overseas interactions. Despite this, the stark difference between Kogure's vivid recollections of human interactions in Tokushima and only cursory coverage of them in the Antung chapter of the same autobiography also indicate Kogure's choice to position himself with the woodworkers of Tokushima, and in contrast to the residents of Antung.

Even when surveying furniture manufacturing in Europe and North America, Kogure positioned himself as having been sent 'out' on a fact-finding mission rather than having arrived at the source of Western-style furniture. Paradoxically, though, the closer Kogure was to home, the more precarious his position representing the metropole. His affiliation with a national educational institution under direct control of the Ministry of Education still identified him with Tokyo-based central authority, but he represented a profession that remained economically peripheral and – as the professor at a technical school in a system capped by the Imperial Universities in Tokyo and Kyoto – was only marginally elite. His accounts of local travels may have described human interaction not only because of familiarity, and because the regional designers and woodworkers mentioned were often also his readers, but also because within Japan, he had less authority to claim distance from them.

Kogure narrated his Tokushima and Manchuria trips with conventional phrases expressing the wonder and excitement of travel. Of Manchuria, he wrote:

When I look back at the early days of the founding of the Antung Lumber Mill, it was my first time to set foot on foreign ground, and there were so many truly unusual and nostalgic memories ... Everything I saw and heard was so unusual, and I had an extremely pleasant trip.

(KOGURE 1942: 24)

Since Kogure composed his autobiography in 1942, a wartime sense of urgency or the speed with which Kogure wrote the text may have kept him from literary experimentation. However, published to commemorate his sixtieth birthday, Kogure's biography was clearly meant for consumption by his peers and students. The repetition of set phrases like 'unusual and nostalgic memories' (*mezurashiku mata natukashii omoide*) that could have described a trip anywhere, not only to Antung, made it more public.<sup>4</sup>

Kogure's confession of disbelief at his assignment to the Antung project contained similar platitudes.

At the time, the Antung Lumber Mill was a newly built factory for a timber company. Its goal was to increase the use of the rich resources of the Yilu River. Faced with this sudden devel-

opment, I couldn't help but question how a complete fledgling like myself could possibly complete this important international mission. But it was an order from my former teacher, so I boldly accepted after only two replies even though I had no experience and had no idea what was lying in store for me. This one incident alone should help you imagine just how badly we lacked woodcraft technical experts at the time.

(KOGURE 1942: 24)

Kogure's statement points to the still-under-construction nature of his discipline, but is replete with conventional niceties used to downplay one's status in a particular situation, from doubting his own abilities to placing the ultimate agency not with himself but with his former teacher. Kogure's expressions of modesty position him as not the actor but the pawn in the situation, a strategy common to colonial travelers outside of Japan as well. In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt describes the tropes with which eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century European travel writers cast themselves as innocent travelers caught in larger European maneuvers for control in Africa. Pratt describes this self-positioning as 'anti-conquest', glossed as 'the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony' (PRATT 1992: 7). In this rhetorical move:

Things happen to him and he endures and survives. As a textual construct, his innocence lies less in self-effacement than in submissiveness and vulnerability, or the display of self-effacement ... as a receptor, not an initiator, as devoid of desire as his scientific counterpart.

(Pratt 1992: 78)

According to Pratt, this was a function of an imperialist apparatus in which the reader entered a complicit fiction with the traveler-author's naïve stance and denial of agency. The refusal of knowledge was a tacit privilege that allowed unaccountability, fulfilling the imperative of innocence necessary to maintain the imperial system at home.

Pratt's wanderers were self-motivated and self-funded, while Kogure represented state institutions of control and knowledge. Furthermore, Kogure's constant self-subjugation for the good of the nation repeats the language of individual sacrifice for the larger common good mandated by the Meiji period Imperial Rescript on Education (1890) and intensified during the Pacific War. However, enough similarities exist to make Pratt's formulation useful. As an agent for the Forestry Agency, Kogure played an overt role in the imperial project, but while Pratt's false naïfs may be nominally independent, they too participated in imperial projects of mapping and classifying,

thus bringing the ‘unknown’ into a system of ‘universal’ knowledge. Given the extent to which Japan’s colonial project in Asia consciously drew on European models as a way to render the Japanese project legible and legitimate to other nations, Kogure’s self-positioning reads as normative imperialism. By using set models to narrate personal experience in the public arena of print media, Kogure subjugates his individual experience into standardized tropes that could be easily understood.

Kogure’s self-situation within already legible tropes is particularly strong in his references to national identity. Writing during the Pacific War, he tied personal experience into a standardized imagined experience of the Japanese people at war, thus locating his development as a woodcraft professional within a greater national narrative. For example, he described his feelings on leaving for Manchuria with the three Japanese factory managers as follows:

Thus the four of us pledged our lives and left Japan together. Our feelings at the time did not go as far as a final parting, but I think they must not have differed much from the feelings of the heroes who leave for the continent in response to today’s times.

(KOGURE 1942: 24)

Kogure’s invocation of ‘heroes leaving for the continent’ is standard wartime rhetoric, but significant in its choice to represent his subjective experience and chosen discipline of furniture research as resounding with that of the larger group. Kogure’s travels in Japan and Manchuria identified him with the geopolitical centre of the nation and a modern, scientific approach to the world in the form of state-sponsored academic woodcraft research in contrast with the places and people visited. This reproduced the Japanese state’s efforts to position itself as an imperial power, and compares to Pratt’s conceptualization of European travel writing as practising and participating in what she calls European ‘planetary consciousness’, one element of the larger imperialist project (PRATT 1992: 9). However, given the newness of both factory-made Western-style furniture in the Japanese economy and the Japanese presence on the Asian continent, Kogure departed aware of this instability of this identity and the power relationship it implied with the culture to be visited, and was complicit from the moment of departure with the fiction that his position entailed. Kogure was constituted both as representing the centre and by his glaring failure to represent it, or, to put it another way, by his hopelessly unavoidable subjectivity as an individual. Thus, travel exposes both the fundamental impossibility of separating individual and group subjectivity and the instability of group identifications.

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## MORIYA NOBUO IN ENGLAND

The European experiences of Kogure's colleague Moriya Nobuo amplify this point. In 1920, the year before Kogure embarked for the United States, Moriya Nobuo left on a similar trip, traveling first to London, then to the European continent and North America before returning to Tokyo in 1922. Moriya's encounters abroad gave him direct comparisons through which he strengthened his self-situation as a member of the furniture and interior design industries and the Japanese nation. However, his identifications as a designer and as a Japanese national were not always mutually complementary. Rather, he privileged first one and then the other in his interactions with locals, his interpretation of his sensory experiences of place and his narration of these interactions and experiences to a readership back in Japan. This slippage between professional and national identities was further complicated by subjective reactions that could be neither explained by nor packaged neatly into his group identities.

Like Kogure Joichi, Moriya Nobuo was a product of state promotion of the Western-style furniture and interior design industries. Moriya studied in the Industrial Design Department at the Tokyo Higher School of Industrial Art and joined general contractor Shimizu-gumi after graduation in 1915 as an interior designer. After cofounding the Kenyokai with Kogure and four other graduates, he was appointed to the faculty at the Tokyo Higher School of Arts and Technology in 1920 and sent to Europe and North America by the Ministry of Education that fall.

From his private diary and monthly missives published in the Kenyokai journal, we learn that Moriya boarded ship in Kobe in October 1920 (FIGURE 4.3), then visited Shanghai, Singapore, Colombo, Port Said, Naples and Marseilles before arriving in London in December (MORIYA 1928).

Moriya left London in July 1921 for Paris, from whence he embarked on an extended tour of European design schools, factories and craft and furniture museums. He then sailed to the United States, where he visited furniture factories in cities including Chicago and Grand Rapids before boarding ship in San Francisco for Japan. After arriving 'home' in Tokyo in June 1922 to take up his teaching post, Moriya continued to publish articles on European furniture-making practices and design education in *Woodworking and Decoration*, and actively entered designs of his own in public exhibitions, thus disseminating the knowledge he had gained. This fulfilled the duty implied in his posting as an Overseas Research Fellow to use individual experiences abroad for the betterment of his discipline and nation.

### 4.3

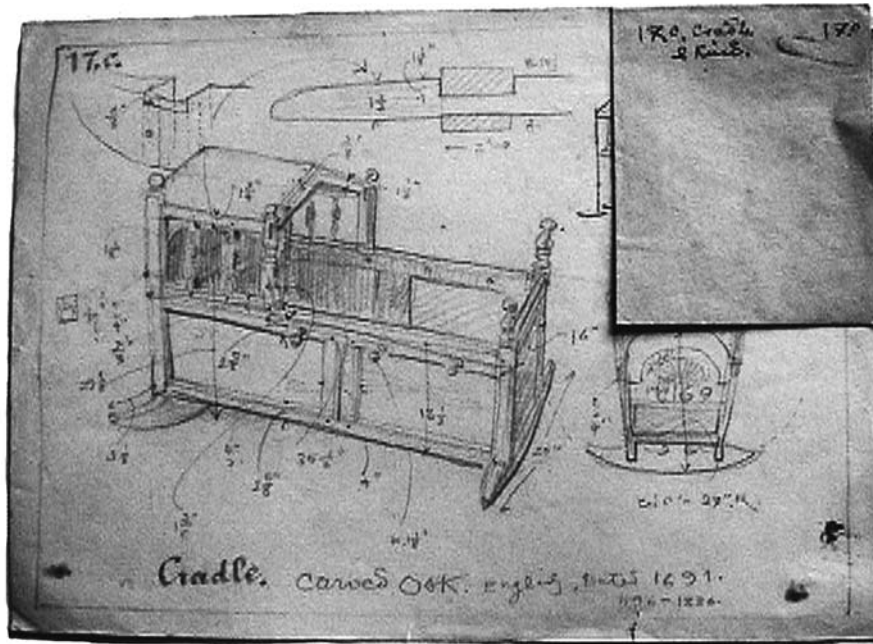
Moriya Nobuo on board ship, c. 1920-22. From *Moriya Nobuo* (1928), *Moriya Nobuo ikoshu* (*The Posthumous Collected Writings of Moriya Nobuo*) (Tokyo: Tokyo Koto Kogei Gakko Mokko Kenkyushitsu), np. Photographer unknown.



During his travels, Moriya approached the ‘study’ of Western-style furnishings and interiors from multiple angles. He studied historical English furniture from books and by sketching English furniture in the Victoria and Albert Museum and British Museum (FIGURE 4.4). He surveyed the current state of the industry by visiting design associations, contacting manufacturers and viewing exhibitions, and enrolled in classes at the Royal College of Art and the London County Council Central School of Arts and Crafts.

As the detailed list of activities suggests, Moriya’s London articles in *Woodworking and Decoration* were highly personal yet public, written to give his colleagues a virtual experience of the spaces and flow of daily life in England which they could then use to make furniture and interiors at home. Moriya’s mission was to not only discover current trends in his field – in this case furniture-making education – but also to expe-





## 4.4

Moriya Nobuo's sketch of a seveneenth-century wooden English cradle from the collection of the South Kensington (Victoria and Albert) Museum, c. 1921, private collection.

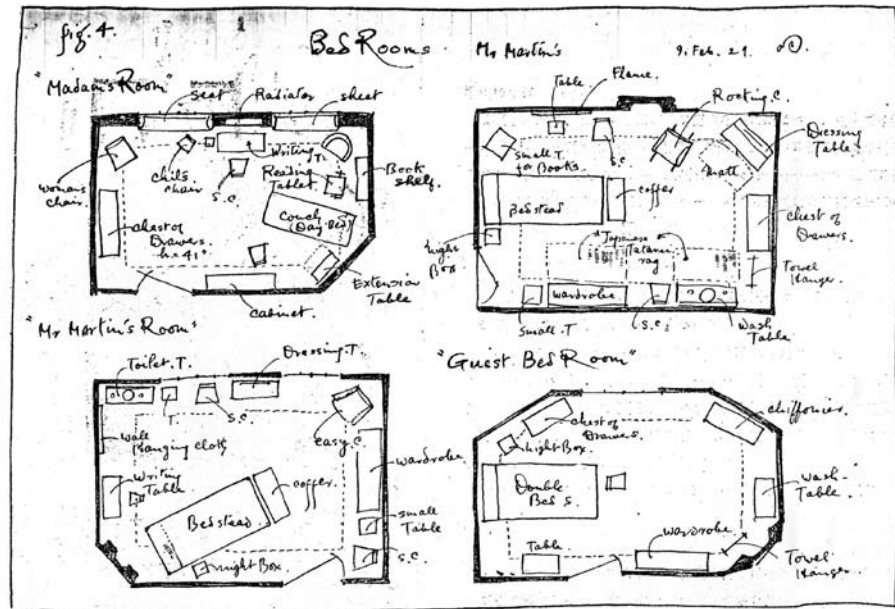
rience first-hand how 'native users' of Western-style interiors occupied and furnished everyday spaces. He accomplished this by documenting the style, dimensions, contents and his own visual and corporeal experience of the hotel rooms, restaurants and streets of his destinations, and through a sort of participant-observer ethnography in which he visited the homes of local residents to examine the floor plan and decoration of their homes, and record the occupants' uses of space.

The ultimate goal of these studies was not only to enable their reproduction in Japan, but also to distill some kind of national taste or character from them, suggesting that design was both tied to its geographical or cultural origins and translatable across geographical or cultural boundaries should other conditions, namely the ability of the designer to reproduce them, be in place.<sup>5</sup> For example, 'Eikoku ni okeru jutaku no shitsunai soshoku no ittan' (A Taste of the Interior Decoration of Houses in England), a 1921 article in the *Ken'yokai* journal (MORIYA 1921A), described the taste, furnishings and layout of a typical English house, framed as the record of a visit to the home of a middle-aged couple, the Martins, outside London. The article combined anecdotes, detailed description and analysis of the home's interiors and commentary on the general characteristics of English domestic interiors. Photographs and floor plans reinforced the close textual description, effectively unpacking the home's interior into specifications with which readers in Japan could recreate the spaces on their own, while

- 5 Like its counterparts in Edwardian England, much Japanese design discourse of the time ascribed national design sensibility in part to climate. See Fujii Koji, *Nihon no jutaku* (1928), as well as Watsuji Tetsuro's more general musings on climate, geography and national character in *Fudo: Ningengaku-teki kosatsu* (*A Climate: A Philosophical Study*, 1935).

## 4.5

Moriya Nobuo's sketches of rooms at the home of the Martins in Ewell, England, 9 February 1921, printed in Moriya Nobuo, 'Eikoku ni okeru jutaku no shitsunai soshoku no ittan' (A Taste of the Interior Decoration of Houses in England), *Mokuzai kogei* (Woodcraft), 47 (January 1923), p. 21.



anecdotes of how the afternoon was passed functioned as a practical 'user's guide' to English homes for colleagues in Japan who lacked direct experience of them.

Moriya approved of the Martins' home (FIGURE 4.5), praising its comfort, but disparaged most English taste as 'over-decorated' and 'extremely lacking in youthfulness. It has no vitality of invention' (MORIYA 1923: 12–22). In the article, he attributed this tendency to England's weather and national character, and posited a connection between climate and national taste:

In that land with its gloomy winter, people are beginning to think that somewhat brighter colors are necessary; the power that nature has over people is great. England follows exactly the opposite path from hot countries whose architecture and interiors use strong colors. Nature exerts more influence over the people who live in that place than we can know or measure. This gloomy feeling is related not only to colors but also to the form, materials, finish and other aspects of every kind of furnishing. As the history of interior decoration in England demonstrates, this truth can be observed in all things.

(MORIYA 1923: 14)

Moriya allowed that English taste was evolving to include bright, airy interiors, and used the Martins' home to exemplify specifically English good taste. However, while he

pieced apart both their home and their lifestyle in such detail that a reader might recreate both in Japan, Moriya also explained that English design worked only in England. He cautioned readers that ‘direct imports are one condition the Japanese are unable to like from their hearts’, and urged readers to reconfigure these elements to correspond to some kind of national Japanese taste instead (MORIYA 1921A: 7).

As he explained to British colleagues in an invited article in the English journal *The Cabinetmaker*, the key to Japan’s introduction of foreign concepts and designs was not their adoption, but their adaptation:

Japan has been, in earlier days, very much influenced by Chinese literature, arts and manufactures, but these were modified and adapted to the special conditions ruling in Japan. Geographically, China and Japan are in close proximity, but it is interesting to note that Japan has not been content slavishly to copy Chinese civilization. Similarly, should we learn anything from Europe, we shall also strive to adapt Western ideas to our conditions, and to the poetical and artistic temperament of our people. One of the prominent characteristics of our race is that we keep an open mind, and are always prepared to adopt improvements wherever we may find them.

(MORIYA 1921B: 21)

Moriya was interested in observing Western design as a reference point for the improvement of Japanese design, and in selecting production and consumption practices which, adapted to a Japanese context, would aid this process. By suggesting that a comparison was possible, Moriya’s critique countered possible reactions by British readers who might assume he was in England only to learn from English furniture-making. He placed Japan on equal footing with England, supporting his claim to Japanese modernity, continuing:

It has been necessary for me to study each country’s tastes in order to find out which is the nearest to Japanese ideals, and in this way I shall gain a sure foundation to work upon in endeavouring to beautify Japanese homes. I thus do not hesitate to learn lessons from English furniture, but I do not consider it necessary to copy your Chippendale and Hepplewhite styles: neither do I intend to copy the Jacobean embellishments. What I am actually trying to discover is the spirit which underlies the best English furniture design.

(MORIYA 1921B: 21)

Echoing attitudes towards taste and national origin developed by John Ruskin and William Morris decades earlier, and present in 1920s English furniture trade discourse,

6 Moriya's designs displayed a historicism that sampled 'Chinese' and 'Japanese' styles alongside English woodworking and German Expressionism as a way to express both local tradition and cosmopolitan modernity. However, he died in 1927, before arriving at a stable style. See Sarah Teasley (2003) *Furnishing the Modern Metropolitan: Moriya Nobuo's Designs for Domestic Interiors 1922–1927*, *Design Issues* 18(3): 57–71, for a discussion of national identity in the furniture of Moriya Nobuo.

this 'spirit' was ahistorical and transnational, a sort of immutable 'good taste', as well as the product of national geography and culture. Similarly, Moriya's own self-positioning – including his use of the first-person plural – used both the specificity of being Japanese and the general authority provided by his professional knowledge to justify his right to criticize English design to his English audience, just as his invocation of shared group identity with fellow designers back home and his elite position within the design community allowed him to speak authoritatively of English design in Japan.<sup>6</sup>

According to Pratt, European narratives of travel outside Europe in the early modern period were defined first by a dualism of objective and subjective modes, then in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by a balance between scientific and Romantic ways of viewing and writing the world (PRATT 1992: 75). Moriya balanced objective accounts and self-positioning within the group with more epistolary accounts that emphasized subjective impressions and emotions, foregrounding individual subjectivity and refusing complete identification with a group. The inclusion of subjective moments indicated personal ties to the colleagues reading his missives, but also counteracted his treatment first as 'Japanese' and only then as a designer or an individual while overseas. They gesture both to Moriya's feelings of distance from the cultures enveloping him during his time overseas and to the impossibility of subjugating the self entirely to his chosen public roles.

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## CONCLUSION: TRAVEL-WRITING THE DESIGNING SELF

How did travel and travel narratives – both overseas and intrainperial – shape the modern Japanese design industry, and how did travel influence the configuration and reconfiguration of the world psychogeography of Japanese designers? On a practical level, published accounts of designers' trips shared knowledge with colleagues back home, fulfilling the mandate to contribute to the development of the industry implicit in state sponsorship for overseas travel. Whether published synchronously like Moriya's missives or years later, like Kogure's autobiography, accounts of experiences outside the geographic and cultural norm also strengthened their authors' self-identifications with a specific group. Travel accounts like those of Kogure that privileged Tokyo as a cosmopolitan centre likewise inscribed other areas as 'peripheral' and disavowed the possibility of personal contact with colonial subjects. They aided in the formation of mental maps in which the Japanese empire radiated concentrically from Tokyo and industrial practice similarly grew from rational, scientific education. With the profession itself

still inchoate, missives like Moriya's, which underlined the central nature of furniture and interior design in Europe, were also a way to argue for the validity and importance of the discipline, and for Japan's need to adopt Western-style furnishings and interiors as part of the natural progression of modernity.

For their authors, men whose visible roles in promoting the development of the design industry led to permanent state employment in Tokyo, official travel within the Japanese empire and overseas was an order to represent the center, the nation and the design industry, but also an opportunity to experience an environment free from the behavioral expectations of the metropolis. Writing their experiences allowed them both to reposition themselves in the appropriate role by first confessing and then overwriting any digressions from that role. But while some travelers like Kogure contained themselves within 'correct' boundaries for behavior within Japan, in the colonies and overseas, others like Moriya used textual representation to acknowledge – and thus to contain – the impossibility of performing that role perfectly by allowing traces of subjective experience to interfere in the story. If travel writing is a process of translating experience into words and ordering newly acquired experiential knowledge of the world for transmission to readers back home, then it is also a way of writing the self into one's spatial understanding of the world, a world dominated in the early twentieth century by the nation, and into history. The men who represented themselves as furniture and interior design professionals during this time were thus fabricating that identity through its very performance. At the same time, they were carving out social, economic and political spaces for their profession. For Japanese designers in the early twentieth century, travel writing both aided them in establishing design as a discipline and allowed them to establish self-identity within it.

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# Learning from Rome

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*Smilja Milovanović-Bertram*

This chapter explores relationships between travel and the conceptualization and production of architecture by presenting conversations with two prominent American architects, both Fellows of the American Academy in Rome (FAAR): Robert Venturi (b. 1925, FAAR 1956) and Tod Williams (b. 1943, FAAR 1983). The intent is to discuss specific projects through the perspective of Venturi and Williams's studies at the American Academy in Rome (AAR) and to suggest that both the act and process of traveling were critical in shaping the architects' thinking about design, as they internalized images of foreign cultures and later recollected them in their work. How do personal observations and experiences influence an architect's philosophy of design? How is the new context observed, assimilated, processed, remembered, and finally instrumentalized? The hope is that through the following introspective conversations it may be possible to understand how Robert Venturi and Tod Williams conceptually mapped their experiences in Rome, and how Rome influenced their subsequent professional work.

Each architect referred to different historical layers of urban fabric as sources of his ideas and chose different routes through which to experience Rome. Both Venturi and Williams readily acknowledge the profound influence of the AAR experience on their architectural practices. Both studied at Princeton University and designed buildings on the Princeton campus that were admittedly influenced by their Roman experiences. However, the differences between Venturi and Williams are also important to this study, as they trace the evolution of the idea that travel is a constituent part of the process of architectural learning.

Each architect attended Princeton University's School of Architecture at markedly different times in the evolution of the school's architecture program. The founder of the School of Architecture was Howard C. Butler (1872–1922), a brilliant classicist, archeologist, and a Fellow of the American School of Classical Studies in Rome (1898),



the forerunner of the American Academy in Rome. At that time (1919–22), Princeton’s was the only school of architecture in the United States directed by a historian of architecture and not by a practising designer. Its curriculum was systematically integrated with studies and courses in art history and archeology. When Robert Venturi began his studies at Princeton University in 1944 (Bachelor of Architecture 1947, Master of Fine Arts 1950), Princeton stood apart from comparable American universities in insisting on its original, integrated, history-focused curriculum. Venturi’s most influential professors, design critic Jean Labatut (1899–1986) and historian Donald Egbert (1902–73), were educated in the Beaux Arts tradition and had encountered Modernism as a challenge in the 1920s and 1930s. Robert Venturi described Donald Egbert as ‘advocating evolution, not revolution’, while Labatut, in Venturi’s words, ‘presented design as less a creative process than an evaluative one’ (VAN ZANTEN 1989).

By the time Tod Williams arrived at Princeton in 1961 (Bachelor of Architecture 1965, Master of Fine Arts 1967), his most influential professors were rising modernists such as Michael Graves, Richard Meier, Peter Eisenman, and Kenneth Frampton, all recently recruited to the school by Dean Robert Geddes (1965–82). Unlike Venturi, who applied to the AAR in 1954 motivated by his devotion to the study of architectural history (particularly Baroque and early Christian architecture), Williams noted that it was the younger faculty mentioned above who encouraged him to pursue architecture studies and travel outside the United States; years later, while teaching at Cooper Union, his associations with John Hejduk (1929–2000) and Ricardo Scofidio (b. 1935) were instrumental in shaping his AAR proposal in 1982.

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## THE AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The American Academy in Rome, founded in 1913, is the most prominent American research institution abroad. The academy, claimed architectural historian Vincent Scully, is ‘where hundreds of American architects and other artists have learned their trade or refreshed themselves at the incomparable Italian fountain’ (SCULLY 1998: 8). Since its founding, the AAR was envisioned as a community of artists and scholars. Although its strict original mission – to promote the supremacy of the classical arts of antiquity and the Renaissance – has changed, the vision of a collaborative union of artists, architects and scholars remains. After a rigorous competition process, fellows are invited to the Roman campus, where they exchange ideas with fellow scholars and work on projects that offer renewed understanding of Italian history and culture. Italy, with its distinct geography, culture and landscape, and its manifold contributions to European civiliza-

1 Louis Sullivan (1856–1924) noted in his *Autobiography of an Idea* (1949) that the Exposition's 'neo-classical styling', its City Beautiful principles, and its insistence on Beaux Arts had set back architectural development in America by decades (SULLIVAN 1949: 325).

tion and culture, is the general subject around which all studies are organized. Today, the Academy continues to foster a significant degree of synergy among its members through a uniquely conceived interdisciplinary environment.

The initial idea of an American school of architecture to be founded in Europe originated at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago (VALENTINE 1973: 1). The Columbian Exposition was conceived as a reflection of 400 years of progress in America, a showcase of American industrial technology, manufacturing and culture. With eminent Chicago architect Daniel Burnham (1846–1912) serving as the Director of Works, the fairgrounds were designed in accordance with City Beautiful principles. Prominent architects of the day constructed exhibition buildings in the Beaux-Arts style. The adoption of the Beaux-Arts style, with its neoclassical references, was meant to promote a growing national self-awareness and escalating international aspirations alike. One of the Exposition Committee members was the successful Beaux-Arts architect Charles Follen McKim (1847–1909), who advocated and encouraged the ideal and virtues of cooperation among the arts, and who later established the American School of Architecture in Rome. His firm, McKim, Mead and White, deliberately promoted the aesthetics of neoclassicism to the American public in the nineteenth century (YEGUL 1991: 9); McKim's Boston Public Library of 1888, reflective of Renaissance palazzo style, was a prominent example of the collaboration of architects and artists.

With the political and cultural turmoil of the late nineteenth century in the United States, critics claimed that 'imitations' of European buildings were necessary because Americans 'had no architecture of their own, and were lacking entirely in the intellectual culture' (YEGUL 1991: 218). The aim of the Columbian Exposition, and the work of McKim, Mead and White, was to educate the American public by associating forms and typologies of European origin with 'high culture'. Classicism provided a large number of commonly understood architectural elements that could be combined and adapted for a great variety of purposes. Beaux-Arts principles promoted at the Columbian Exposition were simultaneously incorporated into the curricula of American schools of architecture and art, despite strong criticism by some contemporary figures,<sup>1</sup> and many aspects of the Beaux-Arts curriculum persist to this day. McKim himself attended L'École des Beaux Arts in Paris and felt that it could serve as a model for an American architecture school in Europe, which later became the American School of Architecture in Rome (VALENTINE 1973: 3). France, Spain and Germany already had academies for the arts, humanities and archaeology in Italy, so the establishment of an American academy was also a matter of national pride (YEGUL 1991: 11). McKim advocated for an academy located in Rome rather than Paris because he argued that Rome held the greatest number of examples for classical studies (YEGUL 1991: 24).

The American School of Architecture in Rome was officially founded in 1894. Almost simultaneously, the Archaeological Institute of America founded the American School of Classical Studies in Rome in 1895. As McKim's architectural firm gained social and professional prestige, his influence and advocacy for the American School of Architecture in Rome increased: Valentine described him as a 'burning enthusiast and dogged protagonist' (VALENTINE 1973: 4). Along with Daniel Burnham, who steadfastly encouraged McKim's efforts, he periodically contributed personal funds during the American School of Architecture's early years of operation. In 1905, the American Academy in Rome was chartered by an Act of Congress. Soon after McKim's death in 1909, permanent financial backing for the academy was secured through donations from J. P. Morgan, Henry Frick, Henry Walters, W. K. Vanderbilt and the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations (YEGUL 1991: 13). The American Academy in Rome was founded in 1913 by merging the American School of Architecture and the American School of Classical Studies in Rome.

In its early years, much debate surrounded questions of curriculum for the newly founded academy: McKim's original idea was that it would not be pedagogical (YEGUL 1991: 11). In the beginning, the AAR was open only to unmarried American citizens who had received architectural education at an accredited school of architecture and had at least one year of professional training in an architecture firm. As a means of admission, design competitions were held in New York following a version of the French Prix de Rome competition. The selection committee members were prominent practitioners and scholars who were usually trustees and former fellows of the AAR. Committees changed little over the years and remained a closed inner circle of 'gentlemen by instinct and breeding' (YEGUL 1991: 36) with connections to McKim, Mead and White as well as to New York's exclusive Century Club. Initially, fellowships lasted three years, the first of which was spent in Rome and central Italy, with the remaining two spent traveling across Italy and Greece. During their travels, all fellows were required to produce measured drawings and renderings of classical buildings, in the European academic tradition (YEGUL 1991: 37).

From the start, a required project called the Collaborative Problem was seen as the epitome of the academy's goals: the successful synthesis of the arts to achieve a project of classical style and ideals. The Collaborative Problem involved a design project with a team of assigned members: an architect, a sculptor, and a painter (YEGUL 1991: 39). In the 1920s, the Collaborative Problem became a point of dissension among fellows and scholars of the academy, as the administration maintained a rigid belief in the 'supremacy of the arts of Classical Antiquity and the Italian Renaissance' (YEGUL 1991: 80). Yegul argued that this conservative, anti-modern attitude was damaging to

2 Following is a list of influential AAR Fellows and Residents in various disciplines: Robert Venturi (FAAR 1954); Jean Labatut (FAAR 1959); Michael Graves (FAAR 1962); Aldo Van Eyck (RAAR 1966); Edward L. Barnes (FAAR 1967); Colin Rowe (RAAR 1970); Richard Meier (FAAR 1974); Frank Israel (FAAR 1975); Charles Moore (RAAR 1975); Romaldo Giurgola (RAAR 1978); Donlyn Lyndon (RAAR 1978); William Turnbull (FAAR 1980); Stanley Tigerman (RAAR 1980); Fay Jones (FAAR 1981); James Stirling (RAAR 1983); Tod Williams (FAAR 1983); Antoine Predock (FAAR 1985); Jorge Silvetti (FAAR 1986); Billie Tsien (RAAR 2000); James Ackerman (FAAR 1952); Richard Krautheimer (RAAR 1955); Siegfried Gideon (FAAR 1966); Vincent Scully (RAAR 1998); Frank Brown (FAAR 1933); Lucy S. Merritt (FAAR 1950); Malcolm Bell (FAAR 1970); Laurie Olin (FAAR 1974); J.B. Jackson (RAAR 1983); Mary Margaret Jones (FAAR 1998); Maya Lin (RAAR 1999); Gyorgy Kepes (RAAR 1975); Frank Stella (RAAR 1983); Chuck Close (RAAR 1996); Wendy Wasserstein (RAAR 1999); Aaron Copland (RAAR 1951).

the academy in the years between the world wars because some talented potential fellows declined to work under such restrictions (YEGUL 1991: 119). In addition, as Yegul argued further, because the academy's trustees were artists and architects, and not art historians, their academic backgrounds were informed by historical precedent rather than being grounded in theory (YEGUL 1991: 82). After all, the AAR was a private institution steeped in the conservative traditions of the American financial elite.

In 1946, the AAR appointed a new director, Laurance P. Roberts (1907–2002), a Princeton University graduate (1929), a scholar of Asian art, and a former director of the Brooklyn Museum of Art (1938–42). Roberts made numerous changes to the AAR's policies, including reducing the length of fellowship to one year, eliminating the stipulated work requirements for fellows, and abandoning rules against admitting married fellows or those over 30. He subsequently changed the academy's curriculum and instituted the grand tour of northern and southern Italy, extending to the Mediterranean, with Italian scholars as guides. 'Walk-and-talk' tours of sites in Rome became a tradition. Roberts launched the Resident Fellows program for prominent architects, artists, and scholars, both foreign and American. During the decades following World War II, the academy promoted a more supportive relationship between modern design and architectural history, and aligned itself strongly with the current trends in architectural practice and education. As Yegul observed, 'many of the creative names in architecture in the 1960s and 1970s made their peace with history through the Academy and Rome' (YEGUL 1991: 119–20).

The academy is located on the Janiculum Hill, in 10 buildings on an 11-acre site. The main building, commonly referred to as the academy building, was designed by McKim, Mead and White in 1914. From the Janiculum Hill, one descends into the city via winding streets to reach the Trastevere neighborhood; crossing the Tiber River leads to the Campo dei Fiori, the heart of Rome. The academy building accommodates the fellows, the academy's library, galleries and administrative offices. The library has an expansive collection of more than 136,000 books in art history, architecture, archaeology and classical studies, and a rare book collection that dates back to the early Renaissance.

Today, an annual national competition awards the Rome Prize to 30 individuals.<sup>2</sup> 15 awards are distributed among architects, landscape architects, designers and other visual artists, historic preservationists, conservators, writers, musicians and composers; and 15 among scholars working in the humanities (ancient, medieval, Renaissance and modern Italian studies). In the selection process, primary emphasis is placed on examples of creative work, a proposal statement and letters of recommendation. Fellows are awarded stipends, room and board, and a study or studio in the academy building.

Fellowships now typically begin in September and end in August. There is no teaching faculty in residence, or predetermined set of courses and studies; instead, residents pursue their own interests and paths of study and research. Structured learning occurs in three ways: through self-driven research, random cross-disciplinary encounters among resident scholars and artists, and tours organized by the academy. The tours still include city-wide walk-and-talk tours and the grand tour of the Mediterranean that includes sites in Greece, Egypt, and North Africa. In spring each year, residents prepare a number of events culminating in a final exhibit that synthesizes the work from that year. The academy assembles and publishes an annual catalogue, and often displays the work in its offices in New York City.

Travel, as an act of displacement but also one of search and discovery, has been instrumental in forming cross-disciplinary insights among AAR fellows. The relationship between architects and archaeologists has been particularly interesting: of many such collaborations, two that stand out are those between Louis Kahn (1901–74, FAAR 1951) and the archaeologist Frank Edward Brown (1908–88, FAAR 1933) in the 1950s, and Tom Phifer (FAAR 1996) and the archaeologist Malcolm Bell (FAAR 1970) in the 1990s. Louis Kahn was deeply inspired by Roman geometry and construction after accompanying Brown on enthusiastic tours of Roman sites (SCULLY 2003: 298–319). Similarly, archaeologist Malcolm Bell introduced Tom Phifer to the methods used to design and construct Roman cities and temples.<sup>3</sup> Inspired by Bell's guidance at Roman sites in North Africa, Phifer readily attributes aspects of his work to specific Roman examples.

The remainder of this essay explores Robert Venturi and Tod Williams's experiences at the American Academy in Rome in the form of conversations preceded by brief background and contextual information. For both architects, Rome was a catalyst for transformation in their design thinking and practice.

3 Tom Phifer, interview with the author, July 2005.

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## CONVERSATION WITH ROBERT VENTURI

Venturi attended the American Academy in Rome from 1954 to 1956, at age 29, a relatively short time after graduating from Princeton University and before his professional practice began in earnest. Upon his return from Rome, he held various teaching positions as the University of Pennsylvania. The course material on architectural theory he developed at the University of Pennsylvania later become the basis for his seminal 1966 book *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. Between 1961 and 1964, Venturi designed his mother's residence, the Vanna Venturi House, in Philadelphia, which was a pivotal representation of his then controversial ideas. He founded his firm with John

4 The firm's practice has been prodigious and includes buildings worldwide, including: the Sainsbury Wing (1991), National Gallery, London (1991); Provincial Capitol Building, Toulouse, France (1999); Guild House, Philadelphia (1966); and Vanna Venturi House, Chestnut Hill (1964). Publications by Robert Venturi (and Scott Brown) include: *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966), *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972), *A View from the Campidoglio: Selected Essays, 1953–1984* (1984), *Iconography and Electronics Upon a Generic Architecture: A View from the Drafting Room* (1996), and *Architecture as Signs and Systems for a Mannerist Time* (2004).

Rauch in 1964, and Denise Scott Brown joined them as partner in 1967. Rauch retired in 1989, and the firm was renamed Venturi Scott Brown & Associates. Venturi and Scott Brown have won numerous design awards and honors, and Venturi won the prestigious Pritzker Prize in 1991.<sup>4</sup>

After the success of his first building at the Princeton University campus, Gordon Woo Hall (1983), Venturi was commissioned to design the Lewis Thomas Laboratory (1986) in partnership with Payette Associates of Boston. This was a collaboration that divided design tasks: Payette Associates designed the interior spaces, while Venturi's firm designed the building's exterior. Despite the fact that critics, including Paul Goldberger (GOLDBERGER 1988), have maintained that the nineteenth-century New England Gothic Revival was the façade's inspiration and primary reference, as the conversation with Robert Venturi will confirm, the building – in its rationally planned facade and the systematic ordering of windows – is essentially analogous to Renaissance palazzos such as Palazzo Farnese (1535) designed by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (1484–1546) and Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564). Also, the laboratory's façade is constructed as a single skin (brick veneer) and appears to be three-dimensional by way of the brick pattern. This type of illusion is a clear analogy to Baroque trompe l'oeil, in which two-dimensional surfaces are painted to appear to have three-dimensional depth. On the north façade, lounge and conference areas project outward in a bow that is analogous to Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne (1539) designed by Baldassarre Peruzzi (1481–1536), one of Venturi's favorite buildings in Rome. In the chapter 'Contradiction Adapted' in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, Venturi cites Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne as an example of the design strategy of juxtaposing contradictions in order to 'make the whole impure' (VENTURI 1966: 52).

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM: Can you describe your education at Princeton University and point at potential connections to the curriculum of the American Academy in Rome?**

**VENTURI:** It was most significant that I had gone to Princeton University when the School of Architecture there was out of fashion. At that time, at Harvard University or Massachusetts Institute of Technology there would have been hardly any history within the curriculum. Modern architecture was all that students there were relating to and evolving from; modern architecture was the ultimate end of architectural evolution, and history was not relevant. At Princeton, modern architecture was not an end; professors there taught architecture as continuing to evolve. So, it was appropriate to look at history and understand the evolution. At Princeton, the Department of Architecture was within the History of Art department, which, at the time, was considered the leading such de-



**5.1a** (above)

*Lewis Thomas Laboratory, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ. Robert Venturi and Payette Associates, 1986. Photograph by Matt Wargo.*

**5.1b** (right)

*Palazzo Massimo, alle Colonne, Rome, Baldassarre Peruzzi (1532-1536). Author's photograph.*



partment in the country. Second, I started out with an inherent interest in, and love of, the history of architecture, and that's why I was lucky to go to Princeton. Sherley W. Morgan was the head of the department and was responsible for starting the Department of Architecture at Princeton after World War I. Morgan also appointed Jean Labatut as resident design critic. Morgan taught courses in professional practice, and I later realized how much he supported me as a student and a designer. Then there was Donald Drew Egbert, who was a great historian of modern architecture. Jean Labatut was a great critic in ways you did not get at Harvard University and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology because he employed comparative analysis and architectural analogy, and a lot of my work in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* came out of this. In a way, Labatut was most influential through his use of analogy when he was critiquing modern design. Concerning design, Labatut was completely a modernist, although he studied at L'École des Beaux Arts.

In those days, if you were a student of architecture, and a modernist, you didn't look at history, you really didn't like history. Of course, the American Academy in Rome was originally set up in a period when you went there as an architect to do historical revivalist, eclectic architecture. You went to Rome to learn specifically about Roman classical and ancient Roman architecture more than Baroque. I was never very interested in ancient Roman architecture.

The people at the American Academy were also very important to me; they were wonderful people. The academy was administrated as a community, so you could learn a lot about your own media by associating with people and artists and scholars in other media. I made some very good friends there. One wonderful couple was the director, Laurance Roberts, and his wife Isabel. They were very important in making the academy a friendly community and then introducing you to the greater Roman community. There was also Richard Krautheimer (1897–1994), who was a great historian. Krautheimer gave us great advice on Baroque architecture, and when we went to Germany, he enlightened us on German Baroque in Bavaria and elsewhere.

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM:** Describe your experiences in Rome, and your travels through Rome and elsewhere. Did you take notes of your experiences and your readings of Rome?

**VENTURI:** In Rome, I did not make notes, and I did not take photographs, and I did not make sketches. My approach was that that would be distracting; I just wanted to absorb. What I did was I lived there, I enjoyed eating in the restau-



rants, and I walked every day all over the place admiring the great as well as the everyday architecture and urbanism. I traveled in Egypt, Turkey, South Germany and all through Italy. I had a nice little Volkswagen that I drove all through Europe.

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM: Which particular layers of Italian and Roman history most fascinated you in your travels, and became later instrumental in your work?**

**VENTURI:** The Baroque was what I first loved in Rome. I loved the Baroque quality of the urbanism and the architecture, the exteriors and the interiors. I loved Michelangelo Buonarroti and Francesco Borromini (1599–1667), but they were quite mannerist Baroque architects. For me, it was essentially the great interior and exterior spaces and the pedestrian scale that I most loved and learned from. It was later that I came also to love the conventional basilica and the churches of the early period, and I realized the importance of iconography, of scenographic signs and symbols. Of course, you learn that from the early Christian basilicas and the Baroque; information going along the walls in the naves. I love the very quality of convention that they employ, and then Mannerism takes this convention and twists it.

The week before I was to leave the academy and return home, in 1956, I suddenly realized it was Mannerism that really turned me on. I realized I loved Baroque, but it was Mannerism that I really found relevant. That was a wonderful epiphany. The title *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* probably should have been 'Complexity and Mannerism in Architecture'. I never used Mannerism in the title, but a photo of a Mannerist building is on the cover, and I refer to Mannerism a lot in the text. Baroque was thrilling to me, and then Mannerism near the end was even more so, along with early Christian basilicas.

The early Christian basilica accommodated a convention which was almost Mannerist via its contradiction: the Roman law court made into a Christian church. And then, the interiors were covered with Christian murals, which were signage. Marilyn Lavin's book *The Place of Narrative* (1995) discusses this aspect of Renaissance murals using the thesis that we look at them as art, but it is only incidental that they are art. They were meant primarily to be read as signage, giving out messages. But the murals were created so effectively and therefore beautifully that we think of them as art: this justifies the thesis of signage as a significant element of architecture. The emphasis on space began when Modernism started out by promoting a contradiction: that of getting away from the signage of eclectic historicism to become abstract via space, and then, by

the way, symbolically employing American industrial vernacular. What Denise and I are now saying, a century later, is that it is not American industrial vernacular that is relevant now, it is American commercial vernacular that we can learn from. That's why I was saying that Main Street is fascinating, even though I was thrilled by the non-Main Street quality of Baroque and medieval European cities.

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM: Why is it that you were not interested in Ancient Roman architecture?**

**VENTURI:** I was interested in seeing buildings as a whole within a real, existing urban context, rather than as fragments to learn from in a Romantic landscape. I was interested in the interiors as well as the exteriors. What you see in the ancient Roman areas in Italy are essentially Romantic ruins. If you're a historian, you can learn from those ruins what the whole was by making assumptions concerning the fragments. But that didn't interest me. I think the most thrilling thing for me in Rome was seeing the pedestrian scale that American cities don't have much of – you can walk in the middle of a Roman street, and then you come to the piazza, and the piazza is essentially a great pedestrian place – therefore, the vivid urban context of Baroque Rome was most significant to me.

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM: You were, thus, reading American commercial vernacular via an analogy to the layered Roman history?**

**VENTURI:** I realize that there has been an irony involving American expatriate artists like Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) and F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896–1940): they could write most effectively about America while they were living in Europe; when they saw America from that perspective, perhaps they got to see America more vividly, more understandingly, and were thereby more sensitive to the American cultural quality. That's where I got the idea of Main Street as a positive thing in the American urban aesthetic. It had not been positive to me before. Living in Rome, I learned from the piazzas and the Roman streets about accommodating pedestrian scale, whereas the streets in America were essentially for automobiles. I found that I was an expatriate who was seeing his country, America, more effectively by living in Italy. This is part of the idea of the expatriate being able to see his or her native country in a different, more vivid way. Also, I loved reading Vince Scully's 1957 book *The Shingle Style* – about a vividly American style – when in Rome. When I came back, I learned a lot about Las Vegas and the everyday because of my Roman expatriate experience.

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM: How did your travels and your stay in Rome inform your design thinking?**

**VENTURI:** When I first got back from Rome, I found myself pretty much lost. I worked on my own at first, and then in a partnership with some other young architects. Eventually, through Krautheimer, I got a job at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. I also did another building about that time, the North Penn Visiting Nurses Association building. Then I began teaching at the University of Pennsylvania and at Yale University. I initially went to be a studio critic at University of Pennsylvania, but the Dean, G. Holmes Perkins (1905–2004), a very strict Harvard modernist, asked me to compose a course on architectural theories; out of that course and those lectures came *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. Then I did my mother's house after my father died, in the early 1960s. She moved in on April 1, 1964. That's when things finally began to gel. At about the same time, I met Denise Scott Brown. While I was already interested in Main Street, she re-encouraged me to look at the everyday. When she moved out west to teach at the University of California at Berkeley, and then at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), she invited me to conduct a studio with her at UCLA in 1966 and 1967, and she took me to Las Vegas!

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM: If you had not gone to Rome and attended the Rome Academy, would you have written *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*?**

**VENTURI:** I think so, yes. I think it came more directly out of the course I was asked to give at the University of Pennsylvania. Now, the course might have been different if I hadn't had the Roman experience. It is hard to answer, but I think what I did in Rome was looking at history in order to learn from it. Learning from history and engaging comparative analysis was really important, and I learned that from Jean Labatut at Princeton University prior to traveling to Rome.

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM: Could you speak about the role of memory, via analogy and comparative analysis as methodological tools, in your design thinking and your design process?**

**VENTURI:** Every project evolves differently, there is no single approach, but I think analogy is an important element. You can look at a problem and make an analogy – this problem is like so-and-so, or is different from so-and-so – you can learn a lot from comparative analysis. So, I think inevitably you combine thinking. Engaging evolution rather than revolution is important. You don't start all

over again, like Modernism, but you test your ideas via comparative analysis. You critique yourself as you create. As T. S. Eliot said, much of being creative is being a critic and critiquing what you are doing. I think it is both. Yes, I am inspired by starting all over again, starting afresh, and at the same time testing yourself via your memory, being inspired by your past experience, testing also via historical examples. That process is complex and is easily misunderstood. *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* was clearly misunderstood; postmodernism presumably came out of that misunderstanding.

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM:** Is your later book, *Architecture as Signs and Systems: For a Man-nerist Time* (2004), linked to your travel experiences, particularly to Rome?

**VENTURI:** There is some irony here: it is interesting that when I was in Rome at the Academy, I was not aware of the significance of the symbolic dimension of Baroque architecture, or of early Christian basilicas where symbolic dimensions are very important. Space was all the rage. I really had to go to Las Vegas to see the significance of signs as well as space. In a way, it was not from Rome that I derived the [idea of the] building as signage, but rather from Las Vegas. It was wonderful to go to Las Vegas, to discover the sign and then come back to Rome to see a whole new dimension beyond space. I now get fed up with space, because it is a cliché that is still used a lot: architecture is shelter. Architecture is signage! Denise and I love to say: 'From Rome to Las Vegas, and then from Las Vegas to Rome!'

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## CONVERSATION WITH TOD WILLIAMS

In 1983, almost three decades after Venturi's American Academy in Rome tenure, Tod Williams became a Fellow at the AAR. Williams began his career working for Richard Meier from 1967 to 1973; he then founded his own firm in 1973 and a partnership with Billie Tsien in 1986. As he describes it, Williams traveled to Rome in 1983, at age 40, for 'a much-needed break' and to gain a fresh perspective on his work. Upon returning from Rome, his first significant project was Feinberg Hall (1986), a 40-person dormitory on the Princeton University campus. In Rome, Williams had often observed and sketched Donato Bramante's (1444–1514) Tempietto di San Pietro in Montorio (c. 1502) when walking to the city below. Formally referencing the central shaft as the Tempietto's organizational idea, Williams constructed Feinberg Hall around a central circulation core. The building was pinned to the land both literally and figuratively. Both

Williams's Feinberg Hall and Bramante's Tempietto are reached by ascending several sets of steps and arriving at a front courtyard, where the buildings are located within tight spaces in between other structures.

The 'building as wall' metaphor that emerges in many of Williams' projects was also derived from his Rome experience. In the Neurosciences Institute (La Jolla, California, 1995), the building is treated as a wall that opens outward: admittedly inspired by the Vatican City, the walls are canted inward, holding the earthwork back. Whether instrumentalized toward containment, inhabitation, or circulation, the building as wall remains a transcendental metaphor in Williams's work, as it makes possible the experience of being inside and outside simultaneously. In that respect, the Pantheon (c. 126 AD), which Williams discusses in the interview below, is another important reference in his work, particularly in the Natatorium at Cranbrook (Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, 1999). In this project, Williams interpreted the Pantheon's oculus as two conceptualized cones; the two oculi are sources of light that register the sun's movement throughout the day.

Williams taught at the School of Architecture of The Cooper Union in New York City from 1974 to 1989, and has since held teaching positions at Rhode Island School of Design, Columbia University, and Harvard University. Additionally, he has held various prestigious academic posts,<sup>5</sup> and designed a number of award-winning projects across the United States.<sup>6</sup>

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM:** Describe your experiences in Rome, and your travels through Rome and elsewhere. Did you take notes of your experiences and your readings of Rome?

**WILLIAMS:** Experiencing Rome was largely 'seeing it' through my feet. I deeply enjoy walking, and the Janiculum Hill became a springboard from which I explored Rome. My work was replaced by my experience of the city. As with so many others, my routine would be to create a loose itinerary of the things I wanted to see, then descend from the academy – using a Blue Guide and an ATAC map<sup>7</sup> – giving myself great latitude, allowing a great deal of improvisation along the way. In this manner, I began to sense the city, the street, and the weight of Rome. The topography was measured intellectually and physically by eyes and feet. The time spent alone gave me an opportunity to reflect on my work. Descending, I would also take a little drawing block, something that I could put in my back pocket. The drawings I made in this block never pretended to be art; nor, however, was my intention that they be quick sketches. They were small commitments. I allowed myself only one drawing per sheet. I would work over the drawings with black 314 pencils, adding soft white pencil, erasing with

5 Eiel Saarinen Chair at University of Michigan (2002); Louis Kahn Chair at Yale University (2003, 2005); Thomas Jefferson Chair at University of Virginia (2004).

6 Notable projects include: the American Folk Art Museum, New York City (2001); Neurosciences Institute, La Jolla, California (1995); Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, Arizona (1996); Williams Natatorium, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan (1999); and Feinberg Hall, Princeton, New Jersey (1986). His wife and partner, Billie Tsien, was also a Resident at the American Academy in Rome in 2000.

7 ATAC is Rome's public transportation agency.

5.2a

*Feinberg Hall, Princeton University,  
Princeton, NJ, Tod Williams, 1986.  
Photograph by Michael Moran.*



5.2b

*Tempietto di San Pietro in  
Montorio, Donato Bramante, c. 1502.  
Author's photograph.*





5.3 Sketch of St Ivo alla Sapienza, Rome, by Tod Williams. Courtesy Tod Williams.

a gummy eraser. I would spend time with my subject and the paper, seeing how far into the subject and into the page I could get. It had as much to do with the piece of paper as with what I was drawing. In this way, I explored the density of the paper and the density of Rome simultaneously. Drawings were of usual suspects: I drew buildings, walls, the foundations of Rome; occasionally, I would also draw frescoes.

At the beginning and the end of every journey, the Pantheon was my touchstone. I liked to approach the Pantheon from the back and rarely from its façade. It was always the smaller streets of Rome that I was most drawn to. Campo dei Fiori was also a part of the ritual, the daily life of Rome, in the fresh produce, pizza bianca, and drinking water from spigots in the Campo. Also, I enjoyed brief visits to the churches to find solace and friendship in frescos.

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM: Which particular layers of Italian and Roman history most fascinated you in your travels and later became instrumental in your work?**

**WILLIAMS:** An obvious example, on reflection, came from visits to San Pietro in Montorio (BRAMANTE, 1502) just below the American Academy. I often passed by as I descended on my daily walks. In 1983, San Pietro in Montorio was not in very good shape. It was often closed, a small building that held a good deal of power in its small size and myth. I drew it a number of times. San Pietro in Montorio was built to honor and mark the position of St Peter's crucifixion. The small central church has a dome, and beneath the floor of the dome an open grate exposes a lower chapel with a hole at its center (now a glass window) through which one can view the earth into which St Peter's cross was thrust. The location of this martyrdom has now been proven to be wrong, but in my journeys the mystery of the church and the story of the building became intertwined. To me, the building felt perfectly and inevitably sited, centered and pinned to the land by its dome and earth. This inspired Feinberg Hall which I felt needed its own inevitable setting.

The Princeton University design guidelines given to us dictated that the building had to have a pitched roof and neo-Gothic reference. After returning from Rome, with my first institutional commission, I now believed the building required weight and density, and it required its own sense of place. So, it became poised on a slope set between older and newer neo-Gothic buildings, and the center of the central stair was designed as a shaft tying sky to earth. I proposed that the bottom of that shaft be plain dirt, believing that would give it a common quality that would root it to its site, removing it from the sentimentality



of the postmodern, neo-Gothic guidelines of Princeton University. I kept this throughout the design process, and I convinced everyone to leave it open, but at the last minute the university wouldn't allow me to just leave the center as plain dirt. So without a better idea, it became concrete. Still, I wanted the building to feel heavy, to have a sense of permanence, and after all I believe it does. The walls are thick, the building has considerable solidity, and it is clad in brick. To further reinforce this sense of weight, I used a tight joint and a withered horizontal joint in dark mortar to draw the brick together. Where Princeton University advocated a lighter, multicolored palette, I was able to convince them of the darker material. The public spaces are all circulation: a center core inside and fire escape on the outside. While these both emphasize the vertical, their very verticality also speaks to the horizontal. The prefabricated interior stair has a toughness that also is without sentiment. I tried to show the pipes and the guts, the most common aspects of the building right in the center. Clearly, the building's inspiration and references are San Pietro in Montorio and the Pantheon, both visited many times on my daily journeys to the heart of Rome.

There had been great interest in analysis of buildings. I was taught at Princeton University to analyze facades from those of Andrea Palladio (1508–80) to Le Corbusier (1887–1965). Whether you were a fan of Venturi's work or not, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* found a home. And, while I have great respect for reading the surface of a Renaissance building, the intellectual construct of a façade doesn't move me. The pre-Renaissance spaces are simpler and more powerful: it is the transition from flat to three dimensions that excited me, the shift that occurred just as artists and architects began to see three dimensions emerge, when materials still were solid, built of stone rather than plaster, when you could see a day's work in fresco, when you could see the person rather than the corporation behind the work. Once something is understood it can be mass-produced. While there are exceptions, I prefer the early threshold condition, an architecture of greater solidity and less gesture.

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM:** How did your travels and your stay in Rome inform your design thinking?

**WILLIAMS:** My life changed. First, being in Rome awakened ambition – I realized I wanted to make buildings that lived and existed longer than my own life. I became impatient with interiors and commercial work. Since my stay in Rome, until our recent work in India, we have done no commercial work. We have pursued only institutional and residential work. I wanted the buildings to be

personal commitments, I wanted them to have grounding, to be serious, and to be well built. The Pantheon still finds itself in our work. It inspired the openings and apertures in the pool at the Cranbrook School's Natatorium (1999). The power of the Pantheon comes from its interior: the universality of its concept enabled it to outlive Roman civilization, to be embraced by the Renaissance, and to be critical of architecture today. It is a building where I feel I am inside and I am outside. It's a living, breathing structure that always feels comfortable. The natural track of the sun describes its interior, but the presence of its exterior facade and low dome are secondary to its interior experience. Our first design for the Phoenix Art Museum (1995) had at the center of its organization a translucent dome that simultaneously reached to the sky and the ground, and it would have convected both warm air as well as cool filtered air into the courtyard.

At the Neurosciences Institute (La Jolla, California, 1995), the battered walls that retain the earth were inspired by the walls of Vatican City and the landscape of Rome. Concrete is now almost always the base material of our work, different from that of Louis Kahn and Tadao Ando; it is the underpinning of our buildings. Fundamental qualities that connect us to human endeavor and to the earth, we feel, must be part of the architectural experience. Buildings are always heavy: I believe there is an emotional quality to buildings that emerges only where lightness is born in contrast to heaviness. Beyond weight and permanence, it is gravitas and commitment that gives a building its life.

**MILOVANOVIĆ-BERTRAM:** You speak clearly of the relationships between weight, mass, and architectural experience in your readings of Rome. Can you speak also of the role of materials and specific spatial conditions in Rome that influenced your work and the design process?

**WILLIAMS:** In Italy, I developed an interest in tight spaces, more from visiting Venice than Rome; spaces where one rubs against a building, spaces with a sense of mystery. I never really experienced tight spaces until Venice, but Venice came only after several months in Rome. Roman spaces are more robust: the robustness of Rome, and the tightness of Venice, an appreciation of corners and of alleys.

In Rome, I was primarily interested in concrete and brick as I understood the Romans made them; and I was also fascinated with porphyry, the dense, dark, purple-red stone Romans brought from Egypt. When I traveled to northern Italy, I became interested in the porphyry they use as cobblestone. It is actually in north Italy where porphyry is more common, but not as dense

or costly as the Egyptian stone. For the Feinberg Hall project, I had a small truckload of stone sent from Italy to use. I convinced the university that the best neo-Gothic buildings at Princeton University campus were made of stone and that we should use it, too, instead of brick. They had local masons build a wall for me, and it was determined that while the material was inexpensive the labor was prohibitive in cost; and so the building was made of brick. In Rome, I also became interested in various other types of stone. I found not only the marble but the plaster casts of sculptors like Antonio Canova (1757–1822). I was thrilled by Gian Lorenzo Bernini's (1598–1680) earliest marble work when he was little more than a child, and of course Michelangelo Buonarroti's early work to his unfinished *Slaves* (c. 1513). I don't think I gave a thought to stone before I went to Rome; stone became very important for me. While today concrete is the base material for nearly all of our work, stone and brick both play important roles.

I believe the American Folk Art Museum (New York, 2001) also had its roots in my experience of Rome. Casting the panels on concrete and allowing the natural cooling process to develop its pattern gave each panel a registration of earth and of time. This was not a direct reading of history, as was the conceptualizing of Feinberg Hall by reflecting on San Pietro in Montorio. In the earlier work, I was slave to the idea of reflection and translation, rather than realizing that what I needed to resolve was the center of a building and the bottom of a stair. Now, 20 years later, intellectualizing historical relationships has been replaced by process, experience and trusting our instincts and senses.

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# 2

## QUESTIONING ORIGINS, SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVES

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**The Mediterranean Hill Town: A Travel Paradigm**

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# The Mediterranean Hill Town: A Travel Paradigm

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*Hermann Schlimme*

In 1951, the 8th Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM)<sup>1</sup> was assembled in Hoddesdon, near London, England, to address the theme The Heart of the City. Even though the conference report (TYRWHITT ET AL. 1951) successfully captured the enthusiasm many delegates had for the Mediterranean piazza, most research papers presented at the conference tended to focus abstractly on the location of new civic centers within the framework of functional zoning (TYRWHITT ET AL. 1951; CURTIS 2000; MUMFORD 2000). In that respect, major attention was given to Le Corbusier's project for the reconstruction of Saint-Dié in France (1945), a town destroyed in 1944 during World War II, which included eight housing structures (Unités d'Habitation) flanking the town's new civic core. The functionalist tabula rasa approach to urban planning, whose instrumentalist abstraction was exemplified by this project, faced strong critique in the form of the discourse of a younger generation of CIAM members, such as Alison Smithson (1928–93), Peter Smithson (1923–2003), Aldo van Eyck (1918–99), Georges Candilis (1913–95) and Giancarlo De Carlo (1919–2005), who in 1953 formed Team 10 (De Carlo joined the team in 1955).<sup>2</sup> Unlike the first generation of CIAM members, who seemed unable to escape the dominant discourses of their era, the younger generation had different approaches to urban design which were influenced directly by their travels around the Mediterranean. All of them had traveled individually to Greece, Spain, Italy, or North Africa to observe the anonymous architecture of coastal and hill towns and to seek inspiration for the architecture culture of western Europe, which they saw as increasingly impoverished by the functionalist thought exemplified by CIAM. Through their travels, they acquired an appreciation of the social spontaneity of the traditional Mediterranean towns and its relation with architecture, a subject that attracted little attention from the older CIAM members.

Although interest in Mediterranean hill towns on the part of Western architects and art historians was a much older phenomenon, dating to at least the early

- 1 The Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (International Congresses of Modern Architecture) was founded in 1928 at the Château de la Sarraz in Switzerland by a group of architects led by Le Corbusier (1887–1965) and Siegfried Giedion (1888–1968), who was also the first general secretary of the Congress. CIAM charged itself with formalizing the architectural and urban principles of the Modern Movement. The group was disbanded in 1959.
- 2 Other core members of the Team 10 were Jaap Bakema, Shadrach Woods, José Coderch, Charles Polonyi, Jerzy Soltan and Stefan Wewerka.

- 3 In 1804, Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781–1841) was already in the process of producing a volume on the ordinary architecture of Mediterranean hill and coastal towns during his first voyage to Italy; his publisher was Unger in Berlin. This information was provided by Susanne Deicher in a lecture held at the Bibliotheca Hertziana, Max Planck Institute for Art History, in Rome, 5 December 2003. For images, see Schinkel (1979), especially p. 73; Schinkel (1994), vol. 1, p. 131 and 145; vol. 2, p. 137 and 189. By the end of the nineteenth century, there was a massive interest in historic urban settlements with their unplanned, slowly developed, complex and varied urban morphology. In his groundbreaking book *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* (1889, first English edition 1965), Camillo Sitte (1843–1903) analyzed historic urban areas of German, Austrian and Italian medieval towns. His empirical effort aimed at discovering the logic behind their ‘beauty’ and ‘harmony’ in order to instrumentalize his discoveries toward an operational theory of urban design that would resolve the rapidly growing challenges of the late nineteenth-century city. Heinz Wetzel (1882–1945), a member of the influential *Stuttgarter Schule* (The Stuttgart School) also traveled with his students to historic hill towns, sketched their urban morphology, and analyzed their relationships to topography (WETZEL 1962).
- 4 The Laboratorio Internazionale di Architettura e Disegno Urbano (International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design) was founded in 1976 by Giancarlo De Carlo, in accordance with the principles of urban design that emerged in the work of Team 10. ILAUD summer courses take place in Urbino, Venice, Siena, and other Italian towns and have frequently included Team 10 members as instructors and lecturers, among them Peter and Alison Smithson, Aldo van Eyck, Herman Hertzberger, and others.
- 5 Rudofsky lived in 1932–34 on Capri, in 1935–36 (with a long break) on Procida, and in 1937–38 in Positano (BOCCO GUARNERI 2003: 18–19).

nineteenth century,<sup>3</sup> it took on a new significance in the 1950s as members of Team 10 conducted on-site studies of vernacular architecture and hill towns and continued with on-site courses in Urbino and Siena offered by the International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design (ILAUD),<sup>4</sup> founded in 1976 by Giancarlo De Carlo. Traveling to the not yet fully modernized parts of Europe became a means of articulating a critique to the modern architectural establishment and its disciplinary canons, and of deriving concrete architectural models, such as that of the hill towns’ vernacular urbanism and habitat typologies, that impacted architectural thinking in the decades following World War II.

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## BERNARD RUDOFSKY: FROM ITALY TO NEW YORK

In his approach to travel as both a means of conducting architectural research and criticizing the modern establishment, the Austrian architect Bernard Rudofsky (1905–88) may be called a predecessor of Team 10. Upon obtaining his architecture degree in Vienna, where he studied with Adolf Loos, Rudofsky embarked on extended travels throughout Germany, Italy and Greece, among other countries (Bocco Guarneri 2003: 15–29). Rudofsky’s interest in vernacular architecture, particularly in the Mediterranean area, was elaborated in his doctoral dissertation, which focused on a comparative analysis of traditional cement constructions of the Cycladic Greek islands and modern concrete structures (RUDOFSKY 1931). Over the following years, Rudofsky lived mostly in Italy,<sup>5</sup> where together with Luigi Cosenza he designed and built Casa Oro in Naples (1934–37) whose structure is reminiscent of the complex, group form of hill and coastal settlements along the Neapolitan coast. Cosenza and Rudofsky designed the Casa Oro in Rudofsky’s studio in Procida, an island in the Gulf of Naples (COMO 2005: 34; GAMBARELLA 1995). The fact that Rudofsky set up his house and studio on one of the many islands in the Gulf of Naples is related to his anti-academic approach to understanding the relationships between urban morphology and topography, and to his deep interest in the practices of everyday life. A realization of the intimate connection between the various aspects of the vernacular (housing, clothing, urban context, food, lifestyle) formed the foundation of Rudofsky’s criticism of modern Western culture, an attitude that was clearly expressed in his 1944 New York exhibition ‘Are Clothes Modern?’ His subsequent exhibition, ‘Architecture without Architects’, was inaugurated at New York City’s Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1964 and was a compendium of Rudofsky’s studies of vernacular architecture. It was a pivotal event that advocated a form of architecture that respected its inhabitants and was created through their spontaneous and



continuous participation (RUDOFISKY 1964). Rudofsky's interest in anonymous architecture not as an aesthetic or typological model but rather as a participatory process of creating human habitats found fruitful continuity in the work of Team 10.

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## THE HILL TOWN AS A MODEL: FROM MEGASTRUCTURE TO CONGLOMERATE BUILDING

The tendency to employ vernacular architecture as a model for town-building was quite common during the 1950 and 1960s throughout the world (BANHAM 1976: 16), and became the basis of various architectural configurations such as 'group form' and the 'megastructure':

A tide of interest in vernacular architectures, culminating in Bernard Rudofsky's *Architecture Without Architects* (1964), had also produced an interest in what Maki contemporaneously described as 'group form' – the repetition and agglomeration of seemingly standardized folk-building elements into settlements of conspicuously clear plan or striking silhouette, epitomized by the unavoidable image of Italian hill towns cited by Maki and practically everyone else in that period.

(BANHAM 1976: 9)

Closely related to the notion of group form was the concept of the megastructure as initially defined by Fumihiko Maki and Ralph Wilcoxon in 1964 and 1968 respectively, which involved building 'a structure of a great size' (BANHAM 1976: 7–11) that could accommodate parts of cities, sometimes even entire cities or urban regions, out of a multitude of interconnected modular units supported by a structural framework that could allow nearly unlimited extension and variety. The aim of such colossal structures was to meet the demands posed by complex social and functional interactions typical of cities in general, and the hill-town formation was seen as an archetype of this urban formation. Interest in the morphological character of megastructures was so dominant at the time that in a 1964 *Architectural Forum* article, Peter Blake compared the Italian hill town Urbino with Archigram's Plug-in City and the Chicago Loop, since all of them supposedly represented the idea of the city as a single structure. Even though hill towns, or megastrutture folcloriche (folk megaforms) as Italian architects colloquially called them (BANHAM 1976: 16), have developed incrementally over centuries of trial-and-error attempts, they were systematically abstracted and converted into algorithms, and as singular yet highly complex entities they became genotypes of

6 The first meeting under the name Team 10 took place in Bagnols-sur-Cèze, France, in 1960. Their last meeting took place in 1981 in Lisbon, Portugal.

7 Information provided to the author by De Carlo in an interview conducted on 9 January 2001.

megastructural ideas in the 1960s. Uprooted from its original locus and abstracted into a model, the hill-town concept thus became a traveling genotype that inspired contemporary structures in widely scattered locations.

In July 1953, at CIAM's 9th congress held in Aix-en-Provence, France, Team 10 held the first informal meeting<sup>6</sup> of its core members, who were united by a common desire to reform CIAM. They realized that CIAM had become heavily dominated by overly hermetic architectural imagery and by an emphasis on the reductionist zoning of modern cities, which effectively reduced cities to mere machines for living and working. By contrast, Team 10 proposed that architecture and urbanism should be seen as vehicles for creating humane, open-ended social structures through which cities would become centers of social interaction, public welfare, and the free exchange of ideas. Prior to formally joining forces in 1960, each of the Team 10 members had traveled independently to Mediterranean hill towns to study vernacular urbanism,<sup>7</sup> often from quite different points of view. The fact that several of the Team 10 meetings were held in hill and coastal towns, which were sometimes quite remote, is hardly accidental: meeting locations included La Sarraz, France, in 1955 (when the meeting lasted 12 days) and again in 1957 (2 days); Dubrovnik, Croatia, in 1956 (11 days); Urbino, Italy, in 1966 (7 days) (FIGURES 6.1 AND 6.2); Spoleto, Italy, in 1976 (5 days); and Bonnieux, France, in 1977 (4 days) (VOLLAARD AND VAN DEN HEUVEL 2006, RISSELADA AND VAN DEN HEUVEL 2005). Whereas De Carlo and Van Eyck were interested in and inspired by small-scale vernacular settlements, the Smithsons and Bakema originally were more interested in the 'megastructural implications' of hill towns.

At the last CIAM Conference in Otterloo, Belgium (1959), which was virtually dominated by Team 10, Peter Smithson introduced his presentation with slides of his journeys to Greek coastal villages. The irregular formal aggregation of Greek villages, according to Smithson, mirrored the social and cultural living patterns of the villagers. During the 1950s he and Alison Smithson had distilled the urban concept of 'cluster city' (SMITHSON AND SMITHSON 1957) from the continuity they perceived between streets and houses in traditional Greek villages and towns. The Smithsons subsequently inflated the 'cluster' concept to a colossal scale in their competition entry for Hauptstadt Berlin (Berlin Capital City) of 1957 (SMITHSON 1962). Similar tendencies are evident in the 1960 town plan for Le Mirail-Toulouse, France (1964–67) by Georges Candilis, Alexis Josic (1921–) and Shadrach Woods (1923–1973).

Alison and Peter Smithson continued to travel through the Mediterranean, and throughout the mid-1970s they made countless trips to Italian hill towns, among them Urbino and Siena, where they frequently lectured at Giancarlo De Carlo's ILAUD summer seminars. They documented these later traveling experiences in their book *Italian*



**6.1**

*Aerial photograph of Urbino, Italy. Photograph by Paolo Mulazzani, 2004.*



**6.2**

*Shadrach Woods, Giancarlo De Carlo and Aldo van Eyck at the Team 10 meeting in Urbino, 1966. Photographic archive of the office of Giancarlo De Carlo, Milan, Italy.*

*Thoughts* (1996), derived from lectures given at the ILAUD beginning in 1976. During their travels, the Smithsons developed the notion of ‘conglomerate building’, by way of which they attempted to modify the inadequacies of earlier attempts to use the hill town as a model devoid of historical time and the process of growth. Namely, unlike their cluster city concept, which described a complex aggregation of units that respected the individuality of the single inhabitants but were configured a priori, the conglomerate building was an open-ended structure intended to integrate user input into the design process itself. This type of structure mimics the incremental development of hill towns over extended periods of time, as was best exemplified in the Smithsons’ Building 6 East of the University of Bath (1982–88). Individual spaces were almost intuitively located within a structure that had a rough, provisional quality, and the building was supposed to reach its ultimate configuration only through user appropriation over long periods of time.

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## THE HILL TOWN AND NEW HABITAT TYPOLOGIES

- 8 The Terrassenhaus typology existed since the beginning of the twentieth century, but came into frequent use after World War II.
- 9 It is not clear whether Lehrman’s 1966 article is based on an earlier trip in the Mediterranean, but his decision to include Rudofsky’s photograph of a Mediterranean hill town suggests that he had not yet visited the area.

Besides employing the hill town as an urban design model, major architectural interest in the 1950s through 1970s focused on using the ‘hill-town experience’ to produce new habitat concepts within the smaller scale of the collective housing typology. Even though such attempts produced harsh simplifications of complex hill-town morphologies, they also led to the development of innovative housing typologies ‘disciplined into Teutonic regularity and repackaged as stepped Terrassenhäuser’ (BANHAM 1976: 16).<sup>8</sup> Projects of this kind soon began emerging across Europe, with some notable examples such as the work of Claus Schmidt, Peter Faller and Hermann Schröder at Stuttgart in the first half of the 1970s.

In 1966, Canadian architect Jonas Lehrman published an influential article in *Architectural Design* (36:2, 80-85) titled ‘Housing: Low-level – High-density’ (FIGURE 6.3)<sup>9</sup> that elaborated the need for low-rise, high-density habitat concepts as an alternative to both suburban detached houses (which occupy vast territories and deplete the environment) and to high-rise apartment blocks (which ‘aesthetically impoverish’ human habitat). Both detached houses and high-rise blocks are cost-effective, but both disregard what Lehrman calls ‘the true scale of the individual’:

The quality of urban housing has been recognized to depend on safety (in terms of the separation of pedestrian and the vehicle), convenience (a full range of suitable dwelling types within any neighborhood), visual interest (buildings and spaces) and a variety of things to do and

places to go to (no neighborhood too remote from areas of employment, shops, public activities, or mass transit).

(LEHRMAN 1966: 80)

Lehrman was a frequent traveler and traveled extensively in the Mediterranean (Italy, Spain, Morocco, Egypt and Turkey).<sup>10</sup> He employed the Mediterranean hill-town type in order to illustrate his theory of low-level, high-density housing, and especially its aspects of ‘visual interest’. Obviously, the Mediterranean hill town, as well as other vernacular forms of architecture, form parts of a more general accumulation of historical experiences that influenced low-rise, high-density housing developments in the decades after World War II. Yet even though local vernacular idioms and cultural heritage played important roles in the development of new housing typologies in specific cultures – such as the significance of the picturesque tradition (HORTON 2000) in England throughout the 1950s and 1960s – the internationally accepted model for innovations in low-rise, high-density housing typologies was the Mediterranean hill town.

Another example of this transposition of the hill-town morphology to a different context was Moshe Safdie’s Habitat, in Montreal, Canada (1967), which the architect

**10** Lehrman’s 1978 travels are documented in the University of Manitoba archives.



**6.3** In his 1966 article in *Architectural Design* titled ‘Housing: Low-level – High-density’, Lehrman published this croquis-like image of the Greek volcanic island of Santorini using a photograph taken by Bernard Rudofsky that was published originally in *Architecture without Architects* (Rudofsky 1964). Image courtesy of Jonas Lehrman (originally published in Lehrman 1966, 80–85).

11 Banham (1976: 111) claimed that Safdie called the Mediterranean cities 'his background'. Safdie himself describes Habitat as 'an entirely modern hill town' (*'una città collinare assolutamente moderna'*) (GOPNICK AND SORKIN 1998: 27).

described as an 'absolutely modern hill town'.<sup>11</sup> Safdie (b. 1938), who was not a member of Team 10, moved as a teenager from Israel to Canada to study, and in 1964 founded his own studio there. Safdie's childhood memories of Mediterranean hill towns followed him to Canada, as is obvious from his comments in a 1971 television interview:

But today, as an architect, I think also of the impact that the image of the city [of Haifa] and its physical form had on me. Really, by circumstance, the city grows up on the mountain. And, you have got the sea on one side and you have got the buildings climbing up with the hills, and then they spread on the ridges of the hill and they penetrate the valleys and the pine forests which are on the mountains. And, so we have got a kind of a city wedged between the sea and the pine trees and the mountains.

(CBC ARCHIVES 1971)

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## LEARNING FROM URBINO: HILL TOWN AS AN OPERA APERTA

12 De Carlo built housing projects for employees of the University of Urbino (1954–55), and designed speculative schemes for Spine Bianche, Matera (1954), Olivetti Canton Vesco, Ivrea (1955), and Case ad Anzano del Parco (1964).

An important figure in the evolution of the hill town model was Giancarlo De Carlo. Born in 1919 in Genova, Italy, De Carlo was raised in Italy (Livorno and Genoa) and lived in Tunisia from 1930 to 1937. In 1939 he began his studies in engineering at the Politecnico di Milano, where he graduated in 1943. The same year, he decided to study architecture and became an active member of the socialist Resistenza movement (Movimento di Unità Proletaria, or MUP). Through this movement he met Giuseppe Pagano, who had collaborated with Rudofsky on the concept of vernacular architecture at the 1936 Triennale exhibition in Milan. In 1948, De Carlo moved to Venice to study architecture, graduating in 1949. In the 1950s, he started his own independent professional practice and curated an exhibition titled 'Spontaneous Architecture' at the Triennale in Milan in 1951. In searching for a distinctive architectural language for his professional practice, De Carlo found inspiration in vernacular idioms and 'spontaneous' folk architecture.

De Carlo's project for the INA-Casa housing development at Baveno, in Northern Italy, developed during the period 1950–53 is a clear expression of such interests (MCKEAN 2004: 26; ZUCCHI 1992: 17–19). The Baveno project consists of complex aggregations of individual apartments within a varied, low-rise spatial structure. Its morphological focus is obviously derived from a keen interest in the vernacular, which also aspires to respect the individuality of the inhabitants within a fairly diverse and complex habitat. De Carlo experimented further with this approach in small residential projects in Urbino, Matera, Ivrea and Anzano del Parco,<sup>12</sup> and in a series of complex, aggregated

village-like holiday housing developments<sup>13</sup> that were designed in a scale similar to that of the hill town rather than subscribing to the ideas of the megaform.

Beginning in 1952, De Carlo's professional activities continuously involved the Italian hill town of Urbino (FIGURE 6.1), where he frequently traveled both for his practice and for research purposes. In 1966, he published the groundbreaking study *Urbino. La Storia di Una Città e il Piano della sua Evoluzione Urbanistica* (Urbino: The History of a City and Plans for its Development) (DE CARLO 1966, 1970), in which he analyzed Urbino's uniquely complex, micro-aggregated urban fabric. Like countless other hill towns, Urbino was gradually modified by its residents over the centuries, and thereby became a model of the intimate connection between social structure, urban fabric and topography. Urbino's fascinating morphological diversity emerged 'naturally' without an imposed, superficial formalism. Unlike architects who traveled to Urbino to admire its spectacularly picturesque appearance, De Carlo was not particularly interested in the town's visual impact. Rather, he attempted to unearth Urbino's genetic code by using detailed building surveys, sociological studies and morphological mapping (surveying the character and position of entrances, landmarks, views, etc.). The knowledge gathered through the study was to be employed toward creating a new urban genotype that would enable De Carlo to apply the perceived open-ended and process-driven development of a housing settlement to his consolidated low-rise, high-density approach. In his 1966 book De Carlo proposed to modernize the town from a structural point of view while respecting its specific topological and morphological character as well as the rationale for its historical growth. Undoubtedly, the uninterrupted historical continuity revealed in Urbino's urban fabric appealed to De Carlo, who, by traveling to and studying this hill town, had discovered his own cultural roots as an Italian architect.

Hill towns did not inspire De Carlo as architectural or planning model; rather, by using Urbino as a paradigm through which to derive a structural algorithm, De Carlo attempted to take the specific character of the location into account. With his student housing in Urbino (1962–66) he created a hill town-like development in 'a spirit which is respectful of the past, modest about the relative importance of the immediate present, and sufficiently open-minded to create buildings that will be given their ultimate form by other men and other needs' (BLAKE 1965). The basic concern of the British urban planner Patrick Geddes (1854–1932) was the dynamics of social change and its relations to built environment. Geddes claimed that urban planning should 'enter in the spirit of our cities, its historical essence and its continuous life' (GEDDES 1915: 4). Having Geddes' comprehensive studies in mind, De Carlo described his open-ended approach to historicity as the 'reading' of a place. This idea can be compared with Umberto Eco's *opera aperta* (open work), a work in which the users' appropriation and contribution is

13 Some of these schemes were built, such as the ones in Riccione (1961–63) and Bordighera (1961–66), while others remained speculative, such as Cesena Torinese (1960) and Classe (1961–64) in Italy.





6.4 View of an internal streetscape at Giancarlo De Carlo's Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti, 1969–1976. Photograph by Mimmo Jodice.

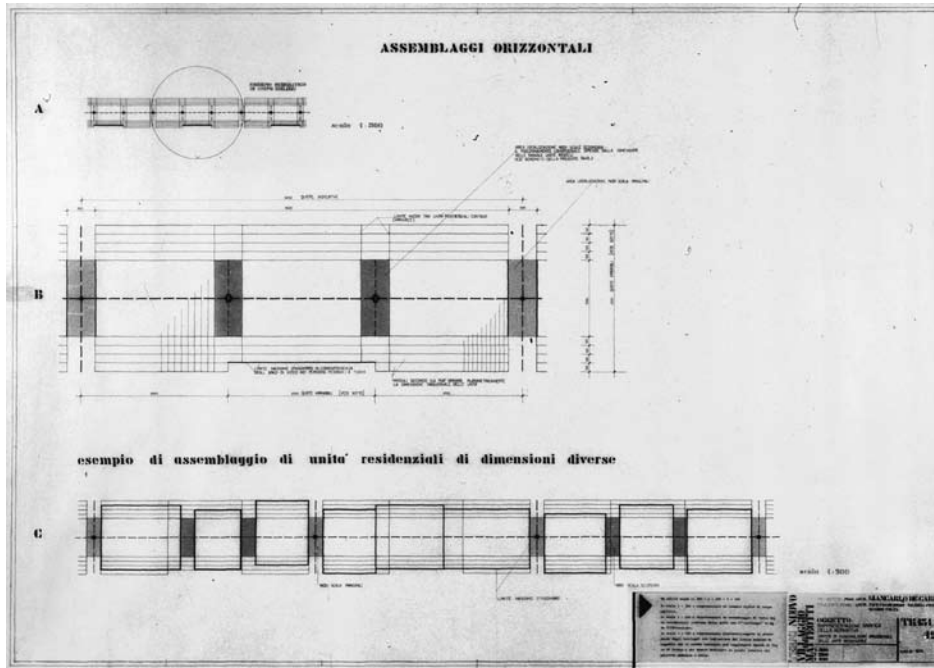
described as vital (ECO 1962, 1989). De Carlo utilized this approach as a methodology in his ILAUD urban design seminars. Participants analyzed the hill towns of Urbino and Siena and developed proposals for their further development. In doing so, they were taught to understand themselves and their architectural work as part of an uninterrupted historical continuity.

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### **DE CARLO'S NUOVO VILLAGGIO MATTEOTTI**

Beginning in 1969, Giancarlo De Carlo designed the steelworkers' housing development Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti in Terni, Italy, a town about 100 km north of Rome





## 6.5

Giancarlo De Carlo's 'project norm' with volume aggregation options, 1974. IUAV Archivio Progetti, Archivio De Carlo 51/443, Venice, Italy.

(FIGURES 6.4 AND 6.5). The housing development, built between 1972 and 1976, was commissioned and strongly supported by Gian Lupo Osti, director of the state-owned Terni Steelworks. The 240 apartments of the Villaggio are organized into an interwoven fabric of two- or three-story-high ribbons (*piastre*). Each ribbon consists of a complex aggregation of apartments that reflect the diverse needs of the inhabitants, each containing social facilities and services and utilizing a strict separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Elevated walkways flank the single ribbons lengthwise and link them by forming bridges over streets and the pedestrian walkways. According to the original design, the village was supposed to have 800 units, but the second and third phases were never built.

The key to understanding the Terni housing project is a six-point plan<sup>14</sup> written by De Carlo in February 1970 that defines the overall character of the housing complex. In this plan, De Carlo outlined the details of his 'time-tested' concept for housing as inspired by vernacular architecture, with complex, low-rise, high-density groupings of individual housing units. The main features were the separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, the integration of public services (kindergarten, school, social center, commercial center, etc.), and plentiful space for both communal and private green areas. De Carlo wrote:

14 Summaries and citations are taken from De Carlo's writings preserved in the Archive of the Terni Steelworks, Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti, f.1, 4. All translations from the Italian, unless otherwise noted, are by the author.

15 A list of housing settlements and articles about housing compiled by De Carlo at the beginning of the Terni design process is found in Cesare De Seta's private archive in Naples. There is also a carbon copy in: Venice, IUAV, AP, Archivio Giancarlo De Carlo, corr. 1, f. 21. The carbon copy is dated in pencil: 18.12.69.

16 Information in this paragraph was provided to the author by De Carlo in an interview conducted on 9 January 2001.

17 IUAV, Archivio Progetti, Archivio Giancarlo De Carlo. Drawings 131/10 to 131/14 (new numeration: 51/441 to 51/445) and Terni, Archivio Comunale, Public Works (Lavori Pubblici), LLPP. 1974.10.1.1, Drawings 131/10 to 131/14. The normativa was intended to serve as a departure point for building the village.

The building typology must be neither fragmented nor a single block. The typological solutions chosen have to offer a clear organization of the environment without limiting the private character of each family unit, even the smallest one ... Pedestrian walkways [have to be] built in a scale proportioned to the individual's psychological needs: spaces that can be immediately perceived, walkways that are both variable and inspiring, the presence of greenery, carefully chosen details.

(FROM A COPY OF DE CARLO'S SIX-POINT PLAN, PRESERVED IN THE ARCHIVE OF THE TERNI STEELWORKS, NUOVO VILLAGGIO MATTEOTTI, F.1, 4.)

Finally, the configuration of the apartments had to vary according to the family structure of future inhabitants, and the organization of interior space had to provide maximum flexibility. De Carlo's six-point plan is clearly a parallel to Jonas Lehrman's 1966 *Architectural Design* article, which De Carlo specifically mentions as compatible with his own general ideas for housing developments.<sup>15</sup>

De Carlo perceived the complex groupings he designed in the Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti as a further development of his studies on hill town morphology and sociology, along the lines of the work done by Team 10.<sup>16</sup> The aim was to aggregate clusters and urban agglomerations from simple elements. Creating sources of visual interest and choosing to build a structure that was neither a block nor fragmented was part of De Carlo's general notion of respecting the individuality of human beings.

Based on his six-point plan and on input he received from the inhabitants, De Carlo developed a building algorithm in 1970–71 that he recorded as a normativa (project guidelines) in 1974.<sup>17</sup> This was not a specific plan for the building but rather a series of open-ended guidelines. The normativa primarily defines the aesthetic rules and the realm of possibilities within which the architecture was to be developed. In one of the drawings (FIGURE 6.5) De Carlo indicated various possible options for grouping the housing units, each made up of six apartments, in order to form the ribbon development. In the drawing, open staircases connect individual units; this was one of De Carlo's favorite themes and the one also requested by the workers. Other plan and section drawings show how different housing units could be developed either within a 60-centimeter or 90-centimeter grid, with each story independent and fully or partly staggered. De Carlo's designs for the apartment units had ample variation: some have a split level, others don't; some have a large kitchen and a small living room or vice versa; still others have either two or three bedrooms. In terms of functional organization, only a few different typologies existed, but in terms of form, almost every apartment is different, totaling some fifty apartment types. Garden terraces of each apartment had to be open, but this was not a decisive factor for determining the morphology since the same effect could also be achieved in rhythmically stepped Terrassenhäuser.

De Carlo thus deliberately and systematically created a tremendous excess of formal diversity, which reflects his respect for the individuality of the inhabitants. As a result, the single apartment modules composing the ribbons are not hermetic, solid forms. The stories overlap and alternate irregularly; garden terraces, kitchens, and living rooms are ‘accidentally composed’ and overlap differently; rooms or terraces form overhangs over the open staircases. The buildings fuse in a seemingly accidental play of volumes, which lessens the elongated, dull effect usually produced by ribbon-shaped building (FIGURE 6.4). The final result is enhanced by the elevated pedestrian walkway system, which enriches the spatial interest of the settlement by introducing a variety of vistas.

De Carlo did not immediately define how the ribbon structure would adapt to the local topography and initially did not take much interest in the dozens of different open staircases connecting the apartment units. These details were not worked out in the first phase of the project, and were thus left to be resolved in a spontaneous manner during the construction process.<sup>18</sup> Such randomness is common to the Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti and to Mediterranean hill towns: both derive their character from a casual juxtaposition of stairways and lanes, and from the informal ways in which these are integrated into the surrounding landscape.

**18** This lack of detail, evidently, caused numerous problems during the construction process. A report from the construction company ITALEDIL concerning these problems is kept in the Archive of the Steelworks in Terni, f.4, 14 and 38.

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## NUOVO VILLAGGIO MATTEOTTI: USER PARTICIPATION DISENTANGLED

In order to properly argue the significance of De Carlo’s project, we must first disentangle it from the established way in which it has been perceived to date. At the time of its construction, Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti was promoted as a key example of user participation in the design process. The idea of participatory design methods, promoted after World War II by the Design Methods Group, Christopher Alexander, Henry Sanoff and others, placed strong emphasis on a methodological and systematic approach to the design process. Under this approach, the work of professional designers was subject to scrutiny and comment by all those who held a stake in the process of conceptualization, design, construction and inhabitation or use. At first sight, the architecture of the Villaggio seems to reveal evidence of this process: fundamentally democratic architecture, as well as the casual individual choices made by residents, are both apparent (FIGURE 6.4). The settlement itself has provoked considerable interest and therefore has been studied extensively.<sup>19</sup> In his seminal article in *Casabella* (DE CARLO

**19** Forty-three newspaper articles were published about the project during its construction. De Carlo himself wrote 27 articles about it, and 55 other authors wrote about it through 2005.

- 20 This article has been republished in virtually unaltered form no less than twelve times in four languages. A preliminary version of the article appeared in 1975 in *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* (DE CARLO 1975), and in 1978 for the Biennale 'Europa–America' (DE CARLO 1978B). Versions of the article were reprinted in 1977 in *Werk–Archithese* (DE CARLO 1977B) and *Cooperare* (CECCHI 1977), and in 1978 in *Deutsche Bauzeitung* (DE CARLO 1978A) and *Architectural Review* (RAMAN 1978). In 1979–88, the article appeared in no less than seven other Italian anthologies.
- 21 Primary sources include audiotapes of meetings between the architect and the inhabitants that took place in April 1970 (preserved in De Carlo's studio in Milan), as well as private recordings by and archives of the sociologist Domenico De Masi and architect Cesare De Seta, who were included in the process, as well as of the Board of Directors of the Terni Steelworks. Such primary sources were studied extensively by the author and verify the validity of De Carlo's claims. Interest in De Carlo has been extensive in recent years: See Samassa (2004a, b); McKean (2004); Guccione et al. (2005).
- 22 De Carlo's suggestion to leave the project is documented on the already cited audiotapes of meetings between the architect and the inhabitants.

1977A)<sup>20</sup>, De Carlo stated that the active participation of the future inhabitants had been essential to designing the settlement. Ever since, the Villaggio has been compared with other key examples of participatory design process, such as Ralph Erskine's Byker Hill in Newcastle, England (1968, 1970–75), and Lucien Kroll's student housing in Louvain, Belgium (1969 onward).

Paradoxically, however, the participation of the future inhabitants was not successful in Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti. The first interaction with the inhabitants took place in April 1970 (two months after De Carlo's design of the six-point plan), and the second stage occurred in the autumn of 1973. In a 1972 interview published in the periodical *Werk* (BROGGI 1972), De Carlo for the first time talked about the difficulties of the project, describing them in a way that is consistent with archival sources recording the architect's communication with the inhabitants.<sup>21</sup> De Carlo's original idea was to communicate with future inhabitants in order to obtain more specific user information. For the participatory part of the design, De Carlo collaborated with the sociologist Domenico De Masi. De Masi and De Carlo had different ideas about how to approach the planning process: De Masi preferred to establish an ongoing collaboration between the architect and the future inhabitants of the settlement, and to begin to conceptualize the project together, whereas De Carlo already had a clear idea of how the project should develop. De Carlo wanted input from the future inhabitants in relation to the organization of individual units, but he also tried to persuade them that his overall idea of the structural framework devised as a low-rise, high-density village was the best solution. After the workers expressed initial doubts regarding the overall scheme, De Carlo suggested that he would leave the project if they didn't agree with him (BROGGI 1972).<sup>22</sup> The workers did, in fact, express a few opinions about how their apartments should be built. These included dividing the apartments into day areas and night areas (useful for shift workers) and the related need to build separate entrances for each apartment, thus avoiding the usual communal staircases. De Carlo indeed saw this information as the user input he was looking for. In that respect it is not a coincidence that the term 'participation' was not used in the *Werk* article (BROGGI 1972), and only in later publications on the subject were these meetings emphasized as aspects of a democratic alliance between users and the architect.

Other facts also prove that the notion of participation was relatively insignificant for the Terni project. The 1973 meeting between De Carlo and the future residents occurred when the building structure was nearly completed, and only slight modifications of individual modular units were still possible. De Carlo organized a display of apartment types and their multiple variations, and the workers were then given the opportunity to choose among these predetermined options, which they did.<sup>23</sup> Even

though the choices left to the inhabitants were not critical and mostly involved interior spaces, De Carlo had created enormous political credit, because until that time, such a choice had only been possible in the private building sector, not in publicly subsidized housing. Thus De Carlo's *normativa*, despite the abbreviated interaction between the architect and the future inhabitants, achieved a significant social impact, which was indeed what the architect intended. However, apart from giving residents the option of making selected changes to the interiors of their apartments, De Carlo always insisted that the outside should not be altered. At his request, a clause was inserted in the condominium contract signed by the inhabitants when they bought the apartments, which even today prohibits any changes.<sup>24</sup> Such it was that De Carlo's *opera aperta*, ironically, became rather fixed. Common spaces, staircases, walkways and other 'public' elements of the village are preserved and cannot be modified, even though modifications made within the individual apartments are actually encouraged in order to adapt the physical envelope to the changing social structure of the households.<sup>25</sup> Even though De Carlo rejected formalism as a design principle, he could not resist limiting the variability of the *opera aperta* to the most desirable formal configuration. Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti was not an architecture of active participation in the sense in which Christopher Alexander, Chris Jones and others had theorized it. However, De Carlo's step-by-step design process, together with the input from future inhabitants, does render the architect as the moderator in an open-ended design process that no longer originates in hermetic, a priori designed forms but in more meaningful configurations that bring topography, social structure, built forms, and the practice of everyday life into more meaningful relationships.

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## CONCLUSION

Bernard Rudofsky considered hill towns 'non-Western' and employed them as vehicles for critiquing Western planning practices after World War II, which at that point were still heavily dominated by CIAM's canonical principles. Other architects employed hill towns as prototypes for new housing typologies: these range from Safdie's housing in Montréal to the 'cluster structure' and 'low-rise, high-density' typologies proposed by the Smithsons, De Carlo and Lehrman, through which architects attempted to move away from the functionalist view of the city and introduce new approaches to configuring the relations between built form and social form.

These latter approaches were heavily influenced by the broader discourse on structuralism that dominated architectural discourses during the 1950s and 1960s. An-

- 23 In November and December 2002, the author conducted a field research in the Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti. The object was the third ribbon of the Villaggio, which contains 48 apartments. The respective occupants of 27 apartments allowed the author to have a look at their apartments and to document ways in which the alternatives prepared by De Carlo or other user-determined changes were effectively carried out after the 1973 display. This was the case in nine of the 27 documented apartments. In five further apartments smaller changes were introduced, while they were still under construction.
- 24 The contract is stored in the Terni Steelworks Archive; see also the letter by De Carlo dated 17 July 1975, Archive of the Steelworks in Terni, f. 5, 20; original carbon copy in IUAV, Archivio Progetti, Archivio Giancarlo De Carlo, corrispondenza 2, f. 110.
- 25 During the above cited field research, the author also documented the changes introduced after completion of the village. Only three of the 27 apartments were not changed at all. But this is not unusual for apartments owned by the inhabitants, as is the case in the Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti. More interesting is another fact: in five of the 27 apartments the option 'three smaller bedrooms instead of two larger bedrooms' was realized. In all of these cases, the number of bedrooms was reduced again as soon as the children ceased to live with their parents.

26 The work of Ferdinand De Saussure (1857–1913) in linguistics and Claude Levi-Strauss (b. 1908) in anthropology led to the idea of the existence of ‘deep structures’, basic, underlying structures and their additive character. According to this idea a set of related components is always organized in a range of variations according to a particular set of rules. Structure was seen as a permanent frame within which the multiplicity of phenomena could be understood. According to Umberto Eco (ECO 1968, 1976), the starting point in a structuralist anthropological analysis of a human settlement would be to list and describe visible phenomena that include the language of a group of humans ( $s^a$ ), the parental relationships existing between them ( $s^b$ ), and the spatial organization of their settlement ( $s^c$ ). The description would reveal analogies between the phenomena  $s^a$ ,  $s^b$ , and  $s^c$  and their underlying code  $s^x$ . A comparable analysis of another group of humans ( $s^{a'}$ ,  $s^{b'}$ ,  $s^{c'}$ ) would reveal the underlying code  $s^y$ , which would obviously be different from the code  $s^x$ . A comparison between codes  $s^x$  and  $s^y$  would show new levels of analogies, which would then be interpreted as different imprints (phenotypes) of yet another underlying code  $s^u$ .

27 De Carlo stated that the idea of structuralism was omnipresent in the 1960s, and that he considered open-endedness its chief strength (interview with the author, 9 January 2001).

thropologists such as Claude Levi-Strauss employed structuralist methods of analysis in an attempt to reveal relationships between the social structures, cultural practices, and built environments of the societies they visited in the non-Western world.<sup>26</sup> Influenced by this school of thought, architects employed structuralism not only as a method of analysis, as the anthropologist did, but also as a mode of designing. Hill towns became travel sites, but also major sources of architectural knowledge for members of Team 10, who saw them as places immune from the rapid changes of modern life and as sites where original fieldwork could be carried out to study the slowly evolving character of human settlements. The innovative residential architecture that emerged from these efforts was dominated by the architects’ claims for open-endedness: the work was intended to reach its ultimate degree of completion only through user appropriation. The Smithsons’ concept of ‘conglomerate building’, the works of Aldo Van Eyck and Herman Hertzberger, and particularly De Carlo’s Terni project are obvious examples of this approach.<sup>27</sup> De Carlo’s research in Urbino was a search for the underlying genetic code of the hill towns, which he could utilize to create new, innovative social and built structures in his later projects. Terni’s *normativa* expressed the deep structures of the hill town, predicating structural relationships between apartment types and their inhabitants’ variable and changing life patterns. Even though De Carlo’s *Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti* was not strictly a model of architecture that invited active user participation, the overall design process did produce more meaningful configurations between topography, social structure, built forms and the practice of everyday life.

Although the majority of the efforts described above did not change the traditional role of the architect as a ‘form-giver’, the structuralist mode of thinking transformed the self-image of the architect into that of a participant in an uninterrupted continuity of place-making, and also to that of a researcher–traveller who unearths contextual knowledge from the building processes of traditional human settlements in order to give meaning to modern life in its many forms and contexts.

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# Roots or Routes?<sup>1</sup>

## *Exploring a New Paradigm for Architectural Historiography Through the Work of Geoffrey Bawa*

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Katharine Bartsch

### ITINERARY

The objective of this chapter is to deconstruct the ‘essentializing’ manner through which the notion of ‘culture’ has been articulated in architectural historiography as a hypothetically homogeneous, distinct to a group, and rooted-to-place entity that ought to be nurtured and preserved by architects’ work. In that respect, architectural historians have much to learn from contemporary anthropologists’ attempts to destabilize such a homogeneous notion of culture. This chapter is specifically inspired by James Clifford who advocates a travel paradigm: cultural *routes*, as a critical alternative to cultural *roots* or bounded concepts of culture (CLIFFORD 1997). The life and work of Geoffrey Bawa (1919–2003) serves as a rich example to illustrate this paradigm shift and to reflect more generally on architecture in the context of encounters.<sup>2</sup> Throughout his life, Bawa was celebrated for creating architecture that was rooted in Sri Lanka. However, this chapter reveals how both the ‘regional culture’ of Sri Lanka and the ‘identity’ of the architect are much more complex than the majority of Bawa’s critics chose to acknowledge. The mobilizing paradigms of travel and encounters enable new insights into architectural production amidst a tangle of *routes*. Architects, not least Bawa, have long been on the move.

In deconstructing the homogenized notions of culture, I will employ Alan Colquhoun’s critique of the concept of ‘regionalism’ and its use in architectural historiography since the late nineteenth century (COLQUHOUN 1997) and argue that regionalism has historically assumed a correlation between fixed cultural codes and geographical regions, a theme that has been especially prominent in representations of non-Western architecture. Within such discourses, regional or vernacular architecture has been

1 I sincerely thank the editors of this volume and Dr Ioanna Theocharopoulou for their many insightful comments during the preparation of this manuscript.

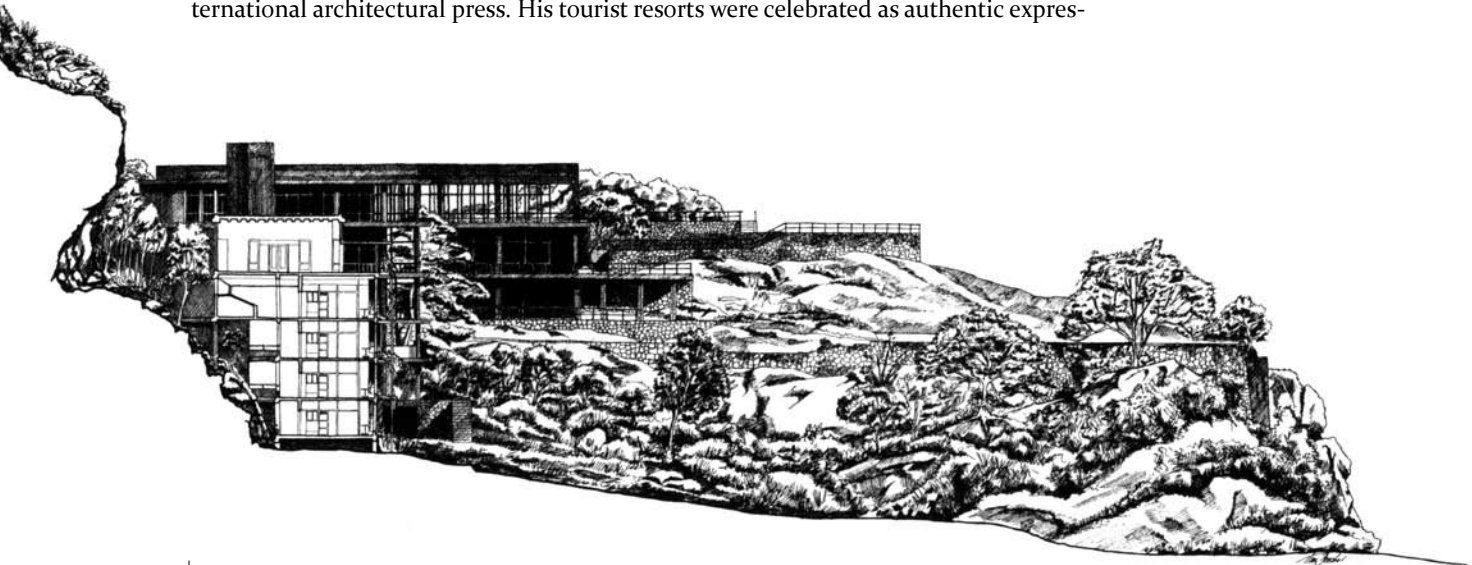
2 Bawa’s works discussed in this chapter derive mainly from architectural historian David Robson’s 2002 monograph on Geoffrey Bawa. Robson’s monograph is the most comprehensive study of Bawa’s work to date. Furthermore, it provides many illustrations of vernacular architecture(s) in Sri Lanka. Bawa’s work is also well represented on the *ArchNet* website <http://www.archnet.org>. I would like to thank David Robson, William O’Reilly (Aga Khan Trust for Culture), Mrs Kanangeswaren (Geoffrey Bawa Trust), Channa Daswatte and Deneth Pieris for their assistance in obtaining images for this chapter.

conventionally understood as an essentialist response to local topography, climate, materials and culture. Following Colquhoun who claimed that ‘it seems no longer possible to envisage an architecture that has the stable, public meanings that it had when it was connected with the soil and with the regions’ (COLQUHOUN 1997: 23), and by taking the contested terrain of Sri Lanka as a case in point, I will attempt to challenge the very assumption of the transcendentalism of the soil–culture relationship and, by extension, will question the perception of architecture as a practice that may embody or preserve such fixed relationships.

### (UN)COUPLING PLACE AND CULTURE

Geoffrey Bawa’s drawings reveal a heightened sensibility for topography and materiality. This sensibility inspired many architects, draftspersons and artists who collaborated with Bawa during his life. To represent the Kandalama Hotel, Dambulla, Sri Lanka (1991–94), Tim Beecher, a young Englishman who worked with Bawa in this period, depicted the building as a fractured plane of the cliff enmeshed in the jungle (FIGURE 7.1). This drawing captures Bawa’s holistic vision for a building, usually conceived *in situ*, and Bawa highlighted the importance of this synergy between architecture and landscape when he commented on his work.

Given this synergy, Bawa was often cast as an exponent of regionalism in the international architectural press. His tourist resorts were celebrated as authentic expres-



7.1 Section–Elevation of the Kandalama Hotel, Dambulla, Sri Lanka, 1991–94. Drawing by Tim Beecher  
© The Lunuganga Trust and David Robson.

- 3 Bawa prepared designs for more than 30 resorts in Sri Lanka, 15 were built. Seven were damaged during the 2004 Tsunami (ROBSON 2005: 5).
- 4 According to Kenneth Frampton, 'critical regionalism' is defined as a cultural resistance to the universalizing forces of technological civilization – as described by philosopher Paul Ricoeur – through varying architectural practices that strive to reconcile the following dipoles: space/place, typology/topography, architectonic/scenographic, artificial/natural, visual/tactile (FRAMPTON 1985: 313–27). This is distinct from the concept of 'critical regionalism', articulated by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre as a method of defamiliarization whereby regional fragments are extracted from their 'natural' context as the principal tactic by which to transcend nostalgic essentialism. The term 'critical regionalism' was introduced in Tzonis and Lefaivre (1981). More recently, this tactic is discussed in Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre (1990), 'Why Critical Regionalism Today?' I am grateful to my colleague Dr Peter Scriver for his clarification of this distinction.
- 5 This award was founded in 1977. I have examined discursive constructions of 'Islamic' culture in a critique of this award in *Re-Thinking Islamic Architecture: A Critique of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture* (UNPUBLISHED, ADELAIDE, 2005).

sions of Sri Lankan culture.<sup>3</sup> Parallels were drawn between his domestic commissions and vernacular architecture in Sri Lanka. He was also hailed as a 'critical regionalist' for reconciling traditional forms and materials with modern planning, technologies and conveniences.<sup>4</sup> For civic and institutional projects, Bawa was celebrated as a national hero, receiving the inaugural Gold Medal of the Sri Lankan Institute of Architects (SLIA, 1982) and Sri Lankan presidential honors in 1985 and 1993. Bawa, described by Malaysian architect Ken Yeang as a hero and guru (ROBSON 2002A: 18), inspired a new generation of South Asian architects to explore their local architectural heritage. He received the prestigious Aga Khan Chairman's Award (2001) that recognizes architecture in developing countries in addition to its explicit focus on Muslim communities.<sup>5</sup> These accolades enhanced Bawa's international profile and his oeuvre has been exhibited worldwide: London and New York (1986), São Paulo, Brazil (1995), Brisbane, Australia (1996) and Frankfurt, Germany (2004).

The synergy Bawa pursued between architecture and landscape is embellished by historians and critics with a cultural dimension. However, Bawa never talked publicly about the relationship between architecture and culture because, as he claimed, 'it is impossible to explain architecture in words' (BAWA 1986: 18). Some scholars hastily attributed the lack of such post-rationalization to Bawa's lack of social vision by which to reform society through architecture (ÇELİK 1991: 49). Çelik's view is a case in point, and was based on her critique of Brian Brace Taylor's 1986 illustrated monograph that showcased Bawa's resorts and homes for elite clients while emphasizing their 'vernacular content' (ROBSON 2002B: 142). However, David Robson's 2002 monograph revealed Bawa's many projects for underprivileged communities, including the Good Shepherd Convent, the German charity Misereor and a Buddhist community in Colombo: communities differentiated by faith, class or caste. This aspect of cultural, social and religious diversity does not emerge in most scholarly work on Bawa; instead, scholars have emphasized an unsubstantiated view of Bawa's buildings as an architecture that materialized the 'essential model' of Sri Lankan culture.

Sri Lanka is strategically located between the Coromandel Coast and the Straits of Malacca. The island, as most places in the world, has long been a site of cultural encounters due to migration, pilgrimage, trade, mission and tourism. From this perspective, fixed relationships between culture(s) and architecture(s) are unlikely. Given this history, Bawa's reticence is unsurprising, prompting questions about the concept of regionalism as it is articulated in architectural historiography. Can concepts of culture and identity be registered on the architectural edifice? Clues to address this question lie in contemporary anthropological scholarship.

## A TRAVEL PARADIGM

In *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (1997), James Clifford advances a tripartite thesis to better understand cultural production and representations of culture, amidst escalating global encounters at the end of the twentieth century. First, Clifford offers the metaphor of cultural roots to characterize the perceived tendency, in previous ethnographic writing, to construct essentialist representations of culture,<sup>6</sup> rather than perceiving it as a social, ideological or intellectual construct. Second, Clifford's alternative metaphor of cultural *routes* is intended to destabilize such representations. Third, cultural *routes* (including travel, migration or diaspora, and the transformative encounters such activities engender) are qualified as a catalyst for assertions of *roots* (of homeland, selfhood or ethnicity); *routes* precede *roots*.

For Colquhoun, the origins of the concept of regionalism are tangled in historical moments of resistance, beginning with emancipation from French imperial hegemony in central Europe during the eighteenth century, and, in time, the universalizing momentum of rationalism and modern technological society.<sup>7</sup> Regionalist positions, then, are predicated on opposition to hegemonizing forces such as the aristocracy, industry, modernity or globalization resulting in familiar binaries: tradition/modernity, local/foreign, agriculture/industry or stasis/progress. According to Colquhoun, regionalists champion the local and the idiosyncratic, positing an 'essentialist model' of society that is rooted in the soil and bound to clearly defined geographical regions. Colquhoun argues that it was seen as the task of the regionalist to preserve this 'essence' in the face of change (COLQUHOUN 1997: 17). The conscious act of differentiation through architecture occurs at the moment when existing modes of building and dwelling are perceived to be threatened with extinction, either through processes of domination by an invading 'other' or through modernization. In addition to romantic, nativist and nationalist sentiments in architectural discourse, the importance and (im)possibility of materializing cultural *roots* in architecture has acquired new significance in the postcolonial context (CURTIS 1987: 356–66; LIM AND BENG 1998: 20–7; BAYDAR-NALBANTOĞLU AND WONG 1997). The spatiality of identity – notions of belonging that are place-bound and hypothetically distinct – generates a new set of oppositions: east/west; periphery/center; colonized/colonizer. Architects from disparate regions, not least, the 'Islamic' world (HOLOD 1983; ŠEVČENKO 1988; FRAMPTON ET AL. 2002), South Asia (LIM AND BENG 1998; MENG 2001), or even Australasia (GOAD AND BINGHAM-HALL 2001), are being grouped into broader categories that stand in the antipode of the 'west'

6 Similarly, sociologist Stuart Hall identifies the shortcomings of this tendency, its deconstruction in different disciplines, and considerations for further debate in 'Who Needs "Identity"?' (HALL AND DU GAY 1996: 1–17).

7 Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre also identify these historical phases of regionalism – described as a 'chameleonic' phenomenon – in architectural historiography (TZONIS AND LEFAIVRE 2001: 4–5).

and applauded for constructing difference that is particular to its place in the world. Parallels can be drawn, then, between ethnographic constructions of culture as ‘other’ and nostalgic creations – in text and practice – of ‘the “idea” of an authentic regional architecture’ (COLQUHOUN 1997: 18).

Clifford’s threefold thesis, then, provides a useful framework to chart the discursive tendency to exoticize ‘regional’ architects such as Bawa and the context within which he practiced, the travel activities that shaped his oeuvre during his lifetime, and the complexities of architectural production in sites that are inextricably linked to regional, national and global networks today, as they were in the past. As one trajectory amidst these *routes*, Bawa’s life and work is emblematic of contemporary architectural practice that is increasingly interconnected, but not, as Clifford argues, homogeneous.

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## WRITING BAWA’S ROOTS

In 1957, at age 38, Bawa joined the Colombo-based British colonial architecture firm of Edwards, Reid and Begg (ERB). After his training as a lawyer at Cambridge and legal practice in London and Colombo, Bawa was dissatisfied with this career choice and had returned to London to complete the Diploma of Architecture at the Architecture Association (AA, 1954–57). Thence, his principal associates included Danish architect Ulrik Plesner (1959–66), Sri-Lankan AA colleague Valentine Gunasekera (1957–68), and Tamil engineer Dr Poolagasundram (1966–90). After 1990, Bawa worked with new associates, notably architect Channa Daswatte (1991–2003). Despite these diverse affiliations, a steady stream of literature described an individual committed to materializing Sri Lankan culture in architecture, contradicting Bawa’s own explanations of his oeuvre.

Bawa’s earliest texts speak of modernism. In 1966, he and Plesner wrote about seven projects in *Architectural Review*, emphasizing the appropriateness of modern materials and modernist principles for tropical buildings (PLESNER AND BAWA 1966A). The projects are a tribute to the modernist tutelage of his AA instructors, including John Killick, Peter Ahrends and Peter Smithson. Bawa’s regard for his training and his British ties was consolidated by his membership to the Royal Institute of British Architects (1957).

Bawa dispensed with references to modernism in his later writings (although he never abandoned modernist principles in practice), focusing instead on the physical attributes of the site and the kinetic experiences of inhabitants. At the second regional

seminar of the Aga Khan Award in Singapore, Bawa stressed experience, sensation, beauty, and the synergy between the building and the landscape as being ‘very close to the essence of good architecture’ (POWELL 1985: 180). This synergy was described by Bawa in a way that did not manifest a cultural essence. Bawa was preoccupied with the choreography of form and space. He highlighted kinetic experience with reference to his scheme for Ruhunu University at Matara (1980–88) (BAWA 1988: 58), comparing students’ familiarity with the sequential movement amongst the buildings to that of a village or a country house. Yet, despite this allusion to collective spatial awareness, Bawa did not make any general claims about group identity reflected in his architecture. Instead, he emphasized ‘the site and the materials of the site’, adding that ‘any other response is bogus’ to him (MENG 2001: 43).

### ***Materializing Genius Loci***

These priorities were acknowledged by his critics (LEWCOCK 1986; RICHARDS 1986; BRAWNE 1995). For example, Ronald Lewcock, architect, conservator and scholar, declared that ‘the cumulative effect of this concern with visual connections is that the best of [Bawa’s] architecture transcends the dichotomy between exterior and interior’ (LEWCOCK 1986: 21). Taylor also highlighted Bawa’s ‘passionate concern for an architecture that is in and of the landscape’ (TAYLOR 1986: 9). Most recently, Robson offered a definitive explanation of Bawa’s attitude to design on the occasion of the 2001 Aga Khan Award. His tribute to Bawa began with Alexander Pope’s advice to Burlington for the design of his Chiswick garden: ‘Consult the Genius of the Place in all; that tells the Waters to rise, or fall’ (ROBSON 2002A: 18), with which Robson also opened Bawa’s monograph (ROBSON 2002B: 12). *Geoffrey Bawa: The Genius of the Place* was also the title of the 2004 exhibition in Frankfurt, curated by Robson, that commemorated Bawa’s career soon after his death. Even though Robson’s reference to Pope implies parallels between Bawa’s intuitive reading of a site and the picturesque naturalism of the eighteenth-century English Landscape School, this evocation of genius loci reasserts an ideology of place-making that permeated the majority of representations of Bawa’s oeuvre.<sup>8</sup>

International interest in Bawa escalated after the completion of the new Parliament Building at Sri-Jayewardenepura-Kotte (1979–82). This coincided with national accolades, a RIBA exhibition in London, Taylor’s monograph, and several articles in the journal *Mimar: Architecture in Development*. In most scholarly and critical descriptions of the Parliament Building, both the leadership and the fast-track schedule of the Japanese firm Mitsui, as well as Bawa’s controversial recommendation to construct a 120-hectare artificial lake conceived after he flew over the site, remain seriously overlooked.

8 With its origins in the arts, including landscape painting and literature, the School is renowned for its preoccupation with naturalism in garden design and the rejection of French formalism. This corresponded to new spiritual and ideological attitudes to nature as well as emergent Whig liberalism. For a rich discussion of this School, see Pevsner (1974), Laird (1999) and Penelope Hobhouse’s article ‘A Natural Revolution: The English Landscape Garden’ (HOBHOUSE 2002: 205–43).

### **Materializing Cultural Identity**

During this period, Bawa's priorities have been overshadowed by architectural critics who privilege narratives of culture and identity. Typically, writing for *Architectural Review* in 2004, Simon Laird stated that Bawa's fundamental aim 'was to communicate the beauty of a tropical landscape and the essence of an ancient culture to a person who might have journeyed halfway around the world to experience them' (LAIRD 2004: 41). Laird does not substantiate his evocation of Sri Lanka's ancient culture or its relationship to architecture. Lewcock, like Laird, compares the masonry of Bentota Beach Hotel to unspecified ancient buildings. The plastered interior walls and windows of the Triton Hotel are compared to colonial domestic buildings (LEWCOCK 1986: 18–19). Lewcock's references to ancient and colonial buildings are problematic because they are never properly historically situated, and thus they obliterate differences amidst ancient and colonial cultures.

It is widely accepted that Indo-Aryans (the Sinhalese) migrated from north-west India in the fifth century BCE. Anthropologist Michael Roberts states that the Sinhalese claim indigeneity 'because they have resided [in Sri Lanka] for twenty-odd centuries' displacing claims by the minority indigenous *Vādda* community (ROBERTS 2005: 8). Buddhism arrived three centuries later coinciding with Tamil (predominantly Hindu) migration from southern India. Sri Lanka's ancient culture is complicated by other spiritual identifications with the island. The sacred mountain of *Sri Pada* (Holy Footprint) is venerated by Muslims as Adam's footprint, marking his fall from Paradise. In Hindu belief it is the footprint of Siva as he danced to create the world. Buddha is believed to have left the print during his third, final journey to the Island. Portuguese Christians attributed it to St Thomas. Sri Lanka's 'ancient' cultures can be traced to other places, raising questions about the possibility of an autochthonous culture rooted in the soil of Sri Lanka.

Hasan Uddin Khan and Brian Brace Taylor, who have written extensively on architecture in developing countries, argue that international tourists expect to experience architecture that materializes the culture of a place (KHAN AND TAYLOR 1987). Commenting on Club Villa Bentota, Taylor further claims that 'perhaps one crucial dimension to the success or failure of hotel buildings is the degree to which there is a "cultural fit" with their physical surroundings' (TAYLOR 1987: 18). Tourists demand an integrated picturesque and cultural experience that is clearly differentiated from their own lives climatically, linguistically, spiritually and architecturally. This demand, for example, underpins the current marketing campaign for the Kandalama Hotel as a base to discover the ancient Buddhist culture of Sri Lanka at the cave temples of



Dambulla, and the world heritage sites of Anuradhapura and Sigiriya rock fortress (ESCAPE TOURISM 2006).

In the case of Club Villa Bentota, Khan and Taylor propose that Bawa's references to vernacular architecture are complemented by a local train traversing the site, offering tourists an opportunity for cultural engagement by bringing 'a touch of reality from the outside world' (KHAN AND TAYLOR 1987: 26). Ironically, this is identified as a shortcoming by hotel reviewer Yasmin Boland (2006). Guest reviews by British tourists (and one Swede) of the Serendib, Beach Hotel and Club Villa, all at Bentota, also demonstrate that tourists' interests are limited to the beauty of the setting, proximity to the beach, cleanliness, food, the servility of the staff and the size of the pool (TRIP ADVISER 2006); tourists, in other words, are customarily content with a scenographic experience of local culture (MACCANNELL 1999). From this perspective, Bawa's resorts cater to the exotic expectations of an international jet set, thus, regional architecture is reduced to 'an object of desire [rather] than one objective fact' (COLQUHOUN 1997: 17).

### **Materializing Local Agency**

Through selective readings of Bawa's work, most of Bawa's critics favor the issue of local agency. This theme has been recast as a quest for identity in emerging postcolonial nations. Architecture emerges as a tactical act to preserve difference in the face of rapid industrial, technological and social-political change. Clifford argues that conscious assertions of cultural difference (whether they are articulated by an ethnographer as 'other' or by a specific group as 'self') should be understood relationally, as an outcome of cultural encounters in a world interconnected (and disrupted) by migration, tourism, warfare or free trade; *routes* exacerbate *roots*.

In the twentieth century, cultures and identities reckon with both local and transnational powers to an unprecedented degree. Indeed, the currency of culture and identity as performative acts can be traced to their articulation of homelands, safe spaces where the traffic across borders can be controlled. Such acts of control, maintaining coherent insides and outsides, are always tactical. Cultural action, the making and remaking of identities, takes place in the contact zones, along the policed and transgressive intercultural frontiers of nations, peoples, locales. Stasis and purity are asserted – creatively and violently – *against* historical forces of movement and contamination.

(CLIFFORD 1997: 7)

In Sri Lanka this phenomenon predates European colonialism or political independence in 1948. Rival claims for 'firstness' and centuries of internecine strife stem

- 9 Michael Roberts discusses such claims in *Firstness: History, Place and Legitimate Claim to Place-As-Homeland in Comparative Focus* (2005).
- 10 Even though Kenneth Frampton has been critical of the genre of tourist resorts vis-à-vis what he considers to be an inauthentic representation of local culture, he does not refer to Bawa's involvement in Sri Lanka's tourist industry.
- 11 Lim and Beng do articulate a dynamic concept of culture in *Contemporary Vernacular* (1998), particularly with reference to the writing of Dell Upton, but their discussion of Bawa's projects is articulated in terms of more conventional concepts of 'tradition' and 'modernity'.

from the differences between Sri Lanka's ancient settlers.<sup>9</sup> In this context, the familiar oppositions articulated in regionalist discourse must be further fragmented into spiritual, racial, ethnic or linguistic differences.

How, then, did Bawa's critics describe his 'tactics'? Kenneth Frampton, in his work on Bawa, chooses to focus on Bawa's civic and housing commissions such as the Parliament Building, the Osmund and Ena de Silva house in Colombo (1960–62) and Lunuganga, Bawa's rural retreat south of Colombo (1948+), rather than on his tourist resorts.<sup>10</sup> Frampton emphasizes the value of preserving local building techniques and materials: Bawa interprets vernacular forms and sustains 'an untouched continuum' (FRAMPTON 2002: 16). *Roots* are privileged, *routes* are sidelined.

Singaporean architect Philip Bay offers a clear exposé of a 'tradition-based paradigm' as it is articulated in South East Asia, and exemplified by Bawa (see also Lim and Beng 1998); not only is vernacular architecture valued for its climatic performance in the tropics, availability of materials or as a means of preserving local craftsmanship and customs, it could also be reinterpreted to materialize local aspirations and expressions of self-identity (BAY 2001: 246).

Singaporean architects William Lim and Tan Hock Beng praise Bawa for 'extending tradition' at Piliyandala Institute for Integrated Education (1978–81). A series of covered walkways trace the contours of a steep site between existing rubber trees linking pavilions for different activities. The materials are simple, comprising white-washed walls, local stone, raised platforms with open roof-spaces, and half-round tiles, a vocabulary of elements that is repeated at Ruhunu University and the Agrarian Research Institute in Colombo (1974–76).<sup>11</sup> Thus, Piliyandala is 'deeply rooted to the culture of Sri Lanka' (LIM AND BENG 1998: 91). The details of this culture and the vernacular precedents are, once again, ambiguous.

Lim and Beng further identify the emulation of vernacular architecture as an appropriate expression of collective national identity (LIM AND BENG 1998: 20). Sri Lankan architect Shanti Jayewardene praises Bawa specifically for his 'singular contribution to the broader processes of national cultural regeneration in Sri Lanka' (JAYEWARDENE 1986: 49). After independence, Roberts identifies 'the upsurge of Sinhala linguistic nationalism, the progressive decline of Ceylonese (multi-ethnic Sri Lankan) nationalism and the sharpening of SL Tamil nationalism' (ROBERTS 2005: 3). This period has witnessed alternating leadership between the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP). In 1978, the new constitution granted primacy to Buddhism, practiced by the Sinhalese ethnic majority – 74 percent (BSCAA 2005).

### ***Materializing the Nation: The Parliament Building***

The commission and construction of the Parliament Building coincided with UNP leadership from 1977 to 1994. The choice of site corresponded to President J. R. Jayewardene's desire to articulate Sinhalese origins. The site represented a brief period of unity (between Jaffna, Kandy and Kotte) in the fourteenth century after Alakesvara declared himself King after quelling rival kingdoms. Alakesvara's origins are well documented and they are not Sinhalese, he was descended from South Indian adventurers who had 'Sinhialized by converting to Buddhism' (ROBSON 2002B: 146).

The Parliament building consists of five pavilions arranged around the main chamber. Each pavilion is crowned by an umbrella roof (FIGURE 7.2). Rupert Scott, a short-term associate of Bawa, identifies the profile as Kandyan, referring to the double-pitched roofs of the Sinhalese who settled in the central highlands in the thirteenth century CE, claiming that it is 'in tune with a climate, topography and a culture upon which it is all too easy to be only an intruder' (SCOTT 1983: 19). James Richards describes Bawa's roofscapes as a manifestation of the essence of Sri Lankan architecture that is shaped by climate (RICHARDS 1986: 46). Viewed in this light, the Parliament building might be seen to project a unified national image, readily identifiable by locals, that gives primacy to Sinhalese culture. Even though similar roof forms are found throughout the island (ROBSON 2002B: 150), they are concentrated in the highlands and the hot humid zone in the island's southwest, not the majority dry zone, thus rendering some



#### **7.2**

*View of Geoffrey Bawa's Parliament Building, 1979–82, Sri Jayewardene Kotte, Sri Lanka © David Robson.*

12 K. De Silva offers a detailed history of Tamil separatism in 'Separatism and Political Violence in Sri Lanka' (DE SILVA 2000: 379–430).

local ethnic groups alienated given ethnic difference on the island and diverse ways of building that respond to climatic variations.

The completion of the building coincided with violent conflict, in July 1983, between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil minorities, half of whom trace their heritage to ancient Tamil settlers and half to migrants of a different ethnic background brought in by British administrators to work on tea and rubber plantations in the nineteenth century. Since then, more than 60,000 civilians have died (MOREAU 2005: 28).<sup>12</sup> Recent studies of ethnicity in Sri Lanka further complicate the prominent dichotomy of Tamil/Sinhala difference. Dharmadasa (1990) identifies threats to the identity of the indigenous Vāddas, 'the only community that would qualify for consideration as "tribals" in Sri Lanka' (DHARMADASA 1990: 163), due to the hegemony of Tamil/Sinhala groups; political journalist Balachandran (2006) explores the complex history of relations between Muslim, Sinhalese and Tamils, a hybrid Arabic-Hindu language and shifting support for Muslim representation and independence; Muthiah (2003) investigates interactions between transitory Indians and Sri Lankans; and, not least, Roberts (with Raheem and Thomé 1989) identifies the position of Dutch/Portuguese burghers 'inbetween' colonized and colonizing cultures for nearly two centuries, as well as the cultural flexibility of the Karave (fisherman), a previously marginalized caste who gained social status by converting to Catholicism, adopting Portuguese names, and by investing in colonial business enterprises (ROBERTS 1982). A stable relationship between place and culture could not be more unlikely.

Considered together, it is difficult to interpret Bawa's incorporation of local materials or building techniques as a material expression of a unified culture. Moreover, these constructs – exotic, ethnic, national or otherwise – are beyond Bawa's stated intentions: 'I do not take regionalism as a creed' (MENG 2001: 43). Thus, the concept of regional/vernacular architecture as part of 'an untouched continuum' is an untenable concept in Sri Lanka.

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## **VERNACULAR ROUTES?**

Further reflection on building types and practices in Sri Lanka confirms the limitations of an isolationist interpretation of vernacular architecture. For Colquhoun, the concept of regionalism 'is based on traditional systems of communication in which climate, geography, craft traditions, and religions are absolutely determining' (COLQUHOUN 1997: 22). However, dwelling and building are shaped by a long history of routes to and from the island since the earliest migrations of Buddhist and Hindu settlers.



7.3

*Courtyard view in the Osmund  
and Ena de Silva House, 1960–62,  
Colombo © Hélène Binet/Aga Khan  
Trust for Culture.*

Portuguese (1505–1656), Dutch (1656–1796) and British (1796–1948) administrators vied for commercial monopoly since the arrival of Arab traders after the seventh century. In an exceptional article for *Architectural Review*, Michael Brawne identifies the resultant architecture as a ‘continuous but interrupted’ vernacular that inspired Bawa (BRAWNE 1978). Clifford’s case for cultural routes characterizes these dynamic relationships:

The new paradigms begin with historical contact, with entanglement at intersecting regional, national and transnational levels. Contact approaches presuppose not socio-cultural wholes subsequently brought into relationship, but rather systems already constituted relationally entering new relations through historical processes of displacement.

(CLIFFORD 1997: 7)

This prompts an alternative reading of vernacular architecture(s) in Sri Lanka which has been linked to Bawa’s oeuvre. The history of encounters within and beyond the island has not determined homogeneous building practices, *rooted* in place. Clifford’s travel paradigm elucidates architecture’s capacity for transformation.

Diverse Sri Lankan building types are documented in *Architecture of an Island* (1998), prepared by Ronald Lewcock, Barbara Sansoni and Laki Senanyake (which is why Lewcock’s representations of the Bentota and Triton Hotels as reviving a vague ancient or colonial tradition respectively are so disappointing). A comparison of just two of Bawa’s projects, with examples documented in *Architecture of an Island*, enables one to deconstruct the singular catalogue of vernacular precedents that characterize representations of Bawa’s work.

The planning and materiality of St Bridget’s School (1963–64) echoes Sinhalese vernacular dwellings typical to the dry zone, evident today in Anuradhapura. Four classrooms are arranged side-by-side and surrounded by a veranda, a configuration repeated in the second storey, while the building is sheltered by a continuous roof. Like the dwellings, the windowless, half-height walls enable cross-ventilation beneath the lofty, open, roof space. The plasticity of the cast-concrete walls is similar to Sinhalese precedent of seamless wall–floor platforms sculpted from mud, while structural steel replaces embedded timber framework.

The Osmund and Ena de Silva House (FIGURE 7.3) contains many features that are evident in Bawa’s domestic buildings and resorts. The introverted plan can be compared to Sri Lanka’s long tradition of courtyard housing as a permutation of ancient Sinhalese dwellings on a low terrace. The half-round tiles are similar to those of a medieval walaawe (manor belonging to a member of the aristocracy). In Figure 7.3, the view to the courtyard reveals these influential features and others. The two storey space

recalls Portuguese precedents with living spaces above ground-level storage areas: the Portuguese introduced shutters for security, privacy and coolness and windows were enlarged. The tapered quasi-Doric columns were popular in British manors, while the built-in seat, open ceilings and clay tiles can be compared to earlier Sinhalese precedents. The view to the altar, across the courtyard, hints at religious differences.

The de Silva House has further similarities with Sinhalese domestic dwellings where living spaces open onto an internal courtyard. However, the courtyard typology does not exemplify a unified tradition. The courtyard houses of the Theravada Buddhists had little spatial hierarchy, while, contrastingly, in Hindu dwellings, the caste system and ritual had a strong impact on orientation and spatial hierarchy. In Muslim homes, emphasis was given to reception and hospitality for men and there was often a separate entrance for women. The courtyard form is consistent: however, formal similarities belie cultural, religious and functional difference. Different materials are used in different topographic and climatic contexts (wet or dry zone). The use of tiles or cadjan (coconut palm) thatch corresponds to elite or humble socio-economic circumstances respectively, and the availability of materials. The courtyard 'type' was modified by Portuguese and Dutch settlers in urban settings who introduced verandas and divided space for 'foreign' masters and 'indigenous' servants. The courtyard tradition clearly exemplifies a tangle of *routes* and reveals the multiplicity of faiths, cultures and ethnicities that architecture can simultaneously accommodate, while not being determined by them through fixed relationships.

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## GEOFFREY BAWA'S ROUTES

The possibility of designs that are essential to Sri Lanka is further complicated by the fact that Bawa was a consummate globetrotter who drew on extensive travel experiences, not least, in the United Kingdom, Italy and the United States, his belated architectural training at the AA, his familiarity with Scandinavian modernism and his considerable, first-hand knowledge of South Asian architecture. To privilege vernacular architecture at the expense of modernism, Italian Baroque or otherwise, is to deny the richness of Bawa's work. Since his article for *Architectural Review*, Bawa's ongoing respect for and incorporation of modernist principles has not received prominent coverage. For example, Michael Brawne remarks on the unusual Miesian forms of the Kandalama Hotel (FIGURE 7.4) compared to 'what a Geoffrey Bawa building ought to look like' (BRAWNE 1995: 70).



| 7.4 Kandalama Hotel, 1991–94, Dambulla, Sri Lanka © Christian Richters/Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

Robson highlights Bawa's diverse – Anglican, German, Muslim, Scottish and Sinhalese – heritage: 'His background gave him an almost chameleon-like quality, enabling him to fit into almost any milieu, and he would be European or Asian when it suited him' (ROBSON 2002B: 261). Bawa's extensive travels provided him with the ability to negotiate different cultures. He cited his appreciation of many sites: medieval Italian hill towns, English estates, Greek, Roman, Mexican and Buddhist ruins, the Alhambra, Ronchamp, Rajasthani forts and the Palace at Padmanabapuram in Kerala (TAYLOR





1986: 16). He considered settling on a farm near Lake Garda in Italy, until his brother persuaded him to return to Sri Lanka, when he purchased Lunuganga.

Bawa made many trips to Italy upon his return to the AA. During this period he was exposed to the AA's tropical school and the work of Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew, work that also inspired the influential, but internationally lesser-known Sri Lankan architect, Minnette da Silva (ROBSON 2002B: 51). At this time, Bawa was also exposed to the modern masters. However, he did not prefer modernism to European classical architecture: 'I went to lectures on the modern movement, on Le Corbusier. I thought it was marvelous, though I didn't find Corb any more interesting than Alberti or Vignola or Palladio.'<sup>13</sup>

Bawa also learnt much from his first colleague, Danish architect Ulrik Plesner. Parallels can be drawn between Bawa's synergy between architecture and landscape and masterpieces of Scandinavian modernism, particularly the work of Reima Pietilä, Alvar Aalto and Aarne Ervis. The illumination of the Bandarawela Chapel (1961–62) recalls Kaija and Heikki Siren's student chapel at Helsinki Technical University, Otaniemi, Finland (1954–57), a tribute to Alvar Aalto and Mies Van De Rohe (QUANTRILL 1995: 122). Orthogonal Scandinavian planning, tempered by topography, persists in Bawa's late resort projects. At Helsinki, Viljo Revell's terrace houses are anchored to a ridge before they fan out to the water's edge. Half a century later, this principle is evident in Bawa's orientation of the Lighthouse Hotel, Galle (1995–97) along the coastline. Given this time lag, it is not possible to label phases of Bawa's career as vernacular or modernist. Moreover, the reconciliation of these poles, advocated in arguments for critical regionalism, suppresses the wealth of references that inform Bawa's oeuvre.

This breadth is demonstrated, not least, at Lunuganga. Like his buildings, it cannot be interpreted as an exclusive response to the site. However, it is surprising that a garden, arguably 'connected with the soil and the regions', not architecture, has inspired Bawa's critics to identify precedents beyond Sri Lanka. Taylor compares Lunuganga to Vicino Orsini's gardens at Bomarzo, Italy (1552+): Bawa's 'Plain of Jars' parodies Orsini's 'Plateau of the Vases' (TAYLOR 1986: 15). Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe describe Lunuganga 'as a metamorphosis of the English School which the designer had experienced, into one strange to Western eyes' (JELICOE AND JELICOE 1996: 381). Pope's devotees created variety and delight through the subtle manipulation of contours. At Lunuganga, Bawa lowered the ridge of Cinnamon Hill to enhance the view of the dagoba, a commemorative relic mound (FIGURE 7.5). Vistas over open expanses of water or grassy fields, serpentine paths and strategically positioned groves of trees or pavilions are evident in gardens created by students of the English Landscape School and at Lunuganga.

### 7.5

*View toward Cinnamon Hill and the dagoba, Lunuganga, 1948* © Hélène Binet/Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

Acknowledging these references, Taylor proposes that ‘oriental and Western traditions were intermingled’ in Bawa’s work (TAYLOR 1986: 14–5). Similarly, Robson proposes:

Bawa used history and tradition in a subliminal way: memories of the family homes of his childhood and the buildings and places he visited in his youth were stored to be tapped into at the right moment. His background reflected the complexities of Sri Lankan society and his life spanned the colonial and post-colonial period, making him uniquely qualified to act as a link between Western and local ways of thinking and doing.

(ROBSON 2002B: 41)

Geoffrey Bawa did not write about these circumstances. He gave priority to the synergy between architecture and landscape, climate and topography, participant experience and the very different needs of his clients. Bawa did not dwell on his personal history, the complex cultural histories of Sri Lanka or identity politics to defend his oeuvre. This is remarkable given that his career coincided with a sustained quest for political independence, the birth of the republic, and ongoing ethnic conflicts that have plagued Sri Lankan history.

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## NEW ROUTES IN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

The present analysis of Bawa’s work in terms of Clifford’s mobilizing travel paradigm highlights the impossibility of materializing culture that is described through the prism of essentialism. Parallels can be drawn between monolithic discursive constructions of Sri Lanka’s ancient culture, prominent in representations of Bawa’s oeuvre, and what Clifford characterizes as cultural *roots*. Clifford’s provocative concept of cultural *routes* has further inspired reflection in this chapter on the disparate activities of travel that have shaped the history of Sri Lanka. A tangle of cultural routes has emerged that displaces essentialist readings of both Bawa’s oeuvre and Sri Lankan architecture as an architecture that is *rooted* in place.

Since Sri Lankan architecture has been shaped by religious, micro-climatic, socio-economic, gender and class differences any reference to Sri Lankan vernacular as a homogeneous entity is highly problematic. Bawa himself showed little interest in exploring ‘vernacular’ architecture until he was prompted by Plesner, a ‘foreigner’, who first traveled to Sri Lanka to explore Buddhism. Plesner documented vernacular building traditions from different historical periods used by different cultural and religious

14 Specific examples include the fifteenth-century Embekke temple near Kandy, a late-eighteenth-century merchant's house at Gintota, and a nineteenth-century country house in Ekneligoda built for a local chieftain.

groups and threatened with extinction, in collaboration with Barbara Sansoni, Laki Senanyake and Ismeth Raheem, acquaintances of Bawa with equally complicated Sri Lankan histories.<sup>14</sup> Even though *Architectural Review* wrongly attributed these research findings to Bawa (PLESNER AND BAWA 1966B: 143–4), Bawa did not actively participate either in the process of documenting or publishing the findings (ROBSON 2002B: 56).

The employment of the paradigm of travel also deconstructs the mythology around Bawa as someone who was 'uniquely qualified to act as a link between Western and local ways of thinking and doing', as Robson proposes. In this chapter, 'Western' and 'local' have been identified as tenuous concepts. Bawa operated amidst a network of talented designers and his trajectories between the 'East' and the 'West' were in no way unique or rare. British architect H. H. Reid had been practising in Colombo since 1927 and although his buildings bear the stamp of British imperialism, Reid maintained interest in vernacular architecture(s). After World War II, Reid worked with Sri Lankan architect Jimmy Nilgiria (trained in Colombo), before the latter employed Bawa and Gunasekera. Bawa and Gunasekera, as well as Minette de Silva, all Sri Lanka-born architects, were educated at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London, United Kingdom. Many of Bawa's staff members were also educated abroad: Amarasinghe, Anjalendran and Perera studied in the United Kingdom, Choksy and Jacobsen (née Chandraratne) in Copenhagen while Bodhinayake studied in Australia. This reading of Bawa's oeuvre through a travel paradigm presents insights into the complex relationships between architecture and the culture(s) of place(s), and attempts to point out new routes in architectural historiography, following trajectories that cross territories and bounded notions of architecture. Recognition of Bawa's travels, those of his colleagues, and the network of encounters they were engaged in, present insights not only into Bawa's work but also into the complexities of architectural production that is inextricably linked to regional, national and global networks, today as they were in the past.

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# The American Travels of European Architects, 1958–1973<sup>1</sup>

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Caroline Maniaque

1 I am grateful for the careful and helpful readings of this article by the editors of this volume, as well as by Tim Benton. Thanks to the Rockefeller Archive Center for the financial support to conduct aspects of this research.

2 This chapter forms part of a wider study of the impact of North American counterculture on French architectural culture, education, and institutions, as developed in my Ph.D. dissertation, *Les architectes français et la contre-culture nord-américaine, 1960–1975* (French Architects and North American Counterculture, 1960–1975) Université de Paris VIII, 2006.

3 All translations from the French are mine, unless otherwise noted.

The journey of discovery has always been a way for intellectuals to test their ideas. In the eighteenth century, aristocrats and artists undertook the perils of the grand tour in order to discover the ‘authentic’ origins of their own culture, but the experience of travel itself – crossing the Alps, meeting people along the way – was often as memorable as was the intended purpose of the trip. If the grand tour was directed at uncovering the past, two centuries later the journey to the United States was seen as a glimpse into the future. This was especially true from 1920 on, as modern European architects became particularly interested in the American use of steel and concrete, materials that held a privileged position in the modernist consciousness (COHEN AND DAMISCH 1993; COHEN 1995).

In this chapter, I will discuss the experience of two European architects in the United States.<sup>2</sup> The first, Austrian architect Hans Hollein (b. 1934), discovered unexpected aspects of ‘authentic’ life and art in the United States, while the second, French architect Marc Vaye (b. 1949), traveled in search of a counterculture for which he had been well prepared by books and journals (MANIAQUE 2002, 2006).

Unsurprisingly, American popular culture had a mixed reception in postwar Europe and was intermingled with anxieties about Europe’s own future.

Ten years ago, we could still look down on the snack bars, the supermarkets, the striptease joints, and the whole of the *acquisitive society*. Now, all of this is more or less in place in Europe. This is not our society but it – or something very like it – may become the society of our children. The United States is a laboratory where forms of life have developed which, whether we like it or not, are a reality.

(DOMENACH 1960: 1221)<sup>3</sup>



Architects considering the trip to North America had to resist a current of suspicion from both the left and right of the political spectrum. However, to many of those who made the trip, these tensions were part of the attraction. Seeking out that which was opposed to traditional European values could appear as a way of confronting the manifest failings of European postwar societies, whether or not the American alternatives seemed to offer positive solutions.

In her book *Questions of Travel* (1996), Caren Kaplan speculates on the effects of displacement, which she contrasts with the idea of home. Questioning different types of travel and the kind of perceptions they stimulate, she notes that ‘the modern era is fascinated by the experience of distance and estrangement, reproducing these notions through articulations of subjectivity and poetics’ (KAPLAN 1996: 1). For Jean Baudrillard, to best understand the United States it was necessary to adopt ‘the principle of treating the United States as a “primitive society” and to go there openly almost as an anthropologist’ (BAUDRILLARD 1992: 29). A necessary assumption was that the perceptive traveler was capable of discerning flaws and contradictions in the land of the ‘other’ that were invisible to the inhabitants themselves. As Baudrillard writes:

I know the deserts, their deserts, better than they do, since they turn their backs on their own space as the Greeks turned their backs on the sea, and I get to know more about the concrete, social life of America from the desert than I ever would from official or intellectual gatherings. (BAUDRILLARD 1988: 63)

This was indeed an example of intellectual poetics emerging from a close observation of North American society. For Baudrillard, the desert had a double meaning, since he also saw in it a way of purging himself of his European cultural roots:

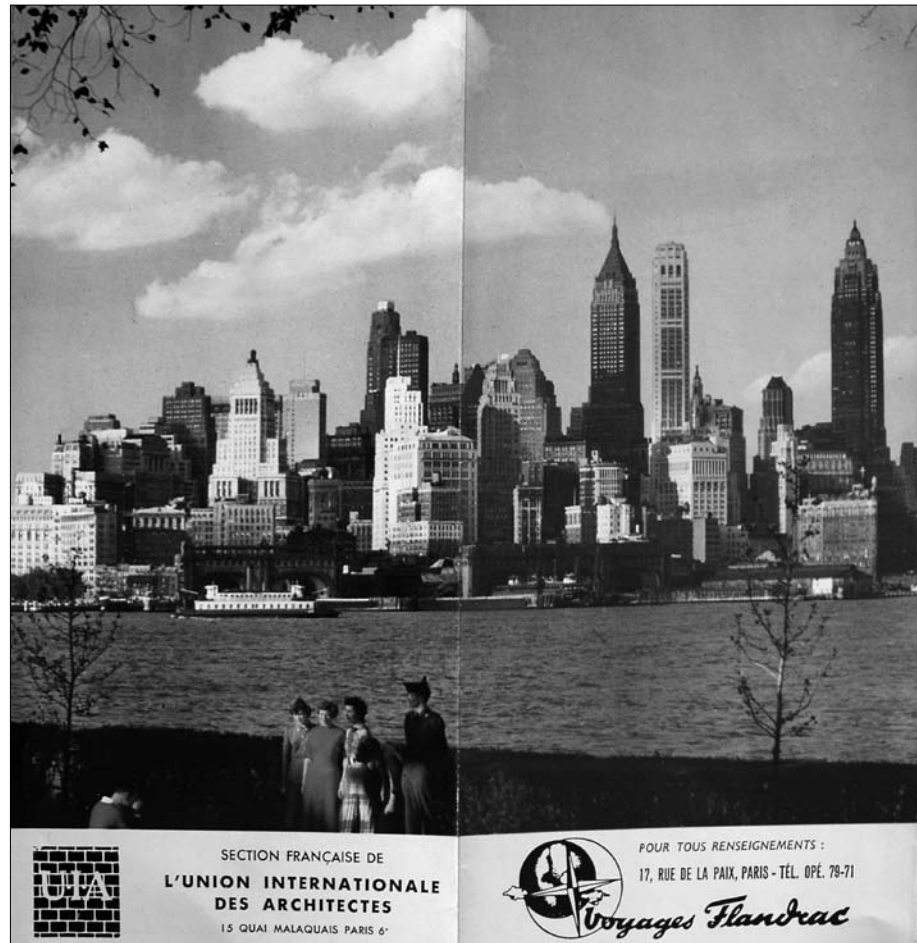
For me, America is also the disappearance of Europe, which makes itself felt by the phenomenon of distance. There is something fascinating and vertiginous in the feeling of loss of the very sources of one’s own culture and in the exploration of the total strangeness of what remains. (BAUDRILLARD 1992: 35)

To an extent, this feeling and exploration was what the average European architect experienced in America, especially when venturing beyond the cosmopolitan cities or university campuses. Most European architects set out for the United States in search of the familiar, supported by networks of personal and professional contacts,<sup>4</sup> only to become fascinated by a previously unknown, ‘authentic’ American culture and a set of values that contrasted with those of either American or European high culture.

4 For example, a succession of French architects introduced each other to the School of Fine Arts at the University of Pennsylvania, attracted by the personality of Louis Kahn but also welcomed by a French national, the engineer–inventor Robert Le Ricolais, who had been on the faculty since the end of the 1950s. Some of them were surprised to find an intellectual atmosphere highly respectful of the classic eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French architectural texts that were by that time out of fashion at the École des Beaux-Arts in the 1960s.

## 8.1

Leaflet for *Voyages Flandrat*, advertising trips to the United States for architects, 1959. Courtesy of Académie d'architecture, Centre d'archives d'architecture du xxe siècle, Institut français d'architecture.



Many architects made valuable discoveries in the United States because they were prepared to look at and learn from the culture they observed. This, it seems to me, is a kind of anthropological gaze that is more genuine than the approach to which Baudrillard referred.

## ENCOURAGING EUROPEAN VISITS TO THE USA

Visits to the United States by Europeans did not occur entirely at random: successive American administrations saw advantages in encouraging potential leaders to visit their country. In the years following V-E Day (8 May 1945), the US government created a number of 'proselytizing' organizations and educational aid programs, such as

the United States Information Agency (USIA) and the Fulbright exchange program, that sought to export high culture abroad, including literature, music, and art. “The “Campaign of Truth” designed by the US government in 1950 to form a psychological counterattack against Soviet propaganda, targeted explicitly public opinion leaders and other “multipliers” with books, brochures, exhibitions, and lectures’ (GIENOW-HECHT 2000: 467). As early as 1958, the journalist Peter Grothe complained that:

America is the greatest advertising country in the world, yet when it comes to the most important advertising campaign of all – that of advertising ourselves and the democratic way of life – we run a poor second to the Communist.

(GIENOW-HECHT 2000: 468)

From the beginning of the 1960s, the US government, well aware of the need to challenge received opinion about the American way of life, took on the task of encouraging European students to travel and study in the United States. As an example of the prevailing mainstream media coverage in France in the late 1960s, *Paris-Match* devoted several articles to the Vietnam War, as well as to the subjects of youth culture, poverty, and conflict in American cities.<sup>5</sup> Traveling through the country by all means of transportation, from hitchhiking to Greyhound bus, was promoted by official US government journals such as *Informations & Documents*, first published in France in 1954:

For the tourist wishing to visit the United States this summer, the best way of making contact with the reality of America is to hit the road – whether by coach, hire car, second hand car, by delivering new cars from the factory gate or again by hitch-hiking. The American highway is a world which Geneviève Mariat [the journalist] will describe from her own experience to the readers of *I&D [Informations & Documents]*. She will guide us from turnpike to interstate, from drive-in to gas station along with truck and car drivers.

(MARIAT 1965: 3)

It is remarkable how the USIA was able to promote traveling in the United States as an adventure of discovery, since travelling across the US was already a well established tradition and quite well known to Europeans. Indeed, Simone de Beauvoir had noted during her trip through the country in 1947 that

the average American spends a great deal of his leisure time on the road; the gas stations, the highways, the hotels, the remote lodging houses, exist for him as well as the tourist, and these things are profoundly American.

(DE BEAUVOIR 1954: 231)

5 See for example Jean-Pierre Cartier, La Californie, *Paris-Match*, 939 : 8 April 1967; Raymond Cartier, Le second front, *Paris-Match*, 988 : 16 March 1968; Jean-Claude Sauer, Universités américaines. La force contre la violence, *Paris-Match*, 1048: 7 June 1969.

6 Founded in 1925 by Edward S. Harkness, his mother Anna M. Harkness, and his wife Mary for the benefit of British citizens only, the Harkness fellowship program was broadened at the end of the 1950s to include citizens of eight European countries: Belgium, Italy, France, Holland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway.

The official American objective was to convince the Europeans that the United States was not simply the producer of an *unkultur*, 'a primitive, vulgar, trashy Massenkultur, whose importation into postwar Europe had to be resisted' (BERGHAHN 2001: XVII), as many Europeans believed. Instead, traveling to the United States was presented as a rich and diverse cultural experience. The Fulbright Program, the William Adams Delano and Chester Holmes Aldrich travel fellowship, the Harvard Arthur-Sachs scholarship, and the Harkness Foundation fellowship promoted these objectives.

Among these programs, the Harkness fellowship valorized travel in particular as a means of understanding American culture.<sup>6</sup> The aims of the Harkness fellowship program were both to introduce European professionals to American higher education and to provide them with the means to discover the diversity of the American landscape and culture. The Harkness program guidelines required that every fellow spend a significant portion of the fellowship on travel, an 'obligation' highly prized by the fellows. In their reports, the fellows often praised their travel experience as an



8.2 Hans Hollein in the United States, 1959. Photograph by Jean-Louis V ret, Fonds V ret DAF/CAP, Centre d'archives d'architecture du xx e si cle, Institut fran ais d'architecture. Courtesy of Centre d'archives d'architecture du xx e si cle.

important educational process and a lasting benefit of the program. These reports provided valuable insight into the experience of European visitors to the United States. One exemplary visitor was Hans Hollein. In the 1950s, prior to becoming chief editor of the Viennese magazine *Bau, Schrift für Architektur und Städtebau* (Building, Journal for Architecture and Urbanism) and achieving renown as an architect, Hollein was a young Viennese architecture student on his way to the United States.

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## HANS HOLLEIN: EXPANDING THE BOUNDARIES OF ARCHITECTURE (1958–1960)

Hollein arrived in the United States with a Harkness fellowship in 1958, at the age of 24, and lived in the country for two years. His experiences left a marked impression on him:

America seems to be full of undiscovered treasures and surprises, and if you go about it with the right spirit, I feel my stay and travels in America can be as exciting and adventurous as Marco Polo's travels to China.

(HOLLEIN 1960A: 1)

Although the counterculture of the 1960s in the United States had not yet fully emerged,<sup>7</sup> Hollein's very extensive travels included many of the sites that would nourish the countercultural imagination a few years later:

I went to see America, I have seen the big cities and the small towns, I have seen the deserts and the mountains and the wide sea and I have seen houses houses houses houses (as outlined in program). Yes I have seen all the famous buildings and I have met all the famous architects but I have also seen Indians riding on the horizon of the great plains and I have seen the girls of 63rd in Chicago, high on tea and full of love, the elevator was rattling above and the bartender having his gun ready behind the counter I have been sitting down in cellars 'digging' poetry and jazz and I have been gambling in Las Vegas with silver dollars enjoying their sounds, American sounds, sounds like Kalamazoo, like Atadascero, Chattanooga and Waunatosa, where else do you find places named like that and right beside another town called, let's say 'Truth or Consequences'. I have been to Coney Island and down in Grand Canyon and, yes, I have been to Vienna, Ga., and to Vienna, Ohio not to forget about Vienna, Wisconsin.

(HOLLEIN 1960B: 3)

<sup>7</sup> The American counterculture as it related to architecture was a movement of young people, typically based in California and the Southwest, who rebelled against traditional architectural education and set out to establish independent communities dedicated to a life style in opposition to American middle-class values. Members experimented with communal living and conducted research into sources of solar and wind energy (Chaitkin 1982: 224–33; Crawford 2000: 248–70).

8 Joseph Esherick (1914–98) was an influential architect and educator who designed several houses and academic buildings in the San Francisco area, including Wurster Hall, home of the College of Environmental Design at the University of California, Berkeley, where he taught for many years. John Brinckerhoff Jackson (1909–96) founded the review *Landscape* in 1951 and taught in the Department of Geography at UC Berkeley; he was influential in Hollein's approach to the shaping of the landscape.

In addition to these adventures, however, Hollein also duly fulfilled the terms of his award, which included the pursuit of professional and academic improvement. Hollein met Ludwig Hilberseimer, one of the pioneering modernists in Berlin in the 1920s, at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. Hilberseimer had become an expert on prefabrication in the United States. It was not surprising, therefore, that Hollein should seek him out, especially given Hollein's interest in US construction methods. Hollein also went to Berkeley, California, where he discovered the Bay Area regional style and met personalities such as the architect Joseph Esherick and the cultural geographer John Brinckerhoff Jackson.<sup>8</sup> During his architectural studies there Hollein experimented with concrete structural systems and took ceramics lessons.

Prior to his departure from Austria, Hollein had been interested above all in American technology; but like many other European visitors, the experience of traveling across the country opened his eyes to a version of American culture that was complex, different, and more captivating than what he had earlier imagined. In his report, Hollein described his visits around the country, from his residences at Chicago and Berkeley to his 50,000 miles of travel, as a means of making an exhaustive encyclopedic slide collection. In his characteristic English, he wrote:

Changes in the program have been mainly made in the direction of augmented attention [sic] on some groups I will name below ... The study of prehistoric (pre-Columbian) architecture of the Southwest has been augmented far beyond the original scope due to initial ignorance and lack of information about this important epoch. The same is true concerning contemporary Indian architecture, pueblos. Both proved to be highly interesting not only from a historical point of view but also in regard to current and future developments in contemporary city planning and architecture. In addition, this is probably the only region and culture in the world where you can see the development of architecture as a continuum, from early pithouses and caves to highly elaborate buildings and settlements, with the social forces involved clearly and almost unspoiled visible ... To the rather well known field of Spanish colonial architecture (in California, Florida and Southern Arizona), the Santa Fe region blends Hispanic with Indian architecture.

(HOLLEIN 1960B: 8)

It is remarkable how Hollein understands his exploration as a search for origins – the roots of architecture independent from the European classical tradition. Arizona and New Mexico had the advantage of combining a number of Native American archaeological sites and living settlements with towns and villages built with construction techniques that were sensitive to the site and climate. For example, adobe houses

of the southwest were made with handcrafted materials and did not require industrially manufactured products. As Hollein wrote to the Harkness administrator, Mr Hammond, in June 1961, 'the pueblos are wonderful. It was a long time since I got so many new ideas as in this stimulating area' (HOLLEIN 1959). It is again the southwestern region that he promoted in his report:

One place where it would be worth to spend a great length of time is among the prehistoric and contemporary pueblos and cliff dwellings of the Southwest Indians ... not only from a historical point of view but even more in connection with present day building. Highly exciting in their plastic and formal appearance, situated in landscape with grandiosity, it is hard to match a visit to them. [This experience] is connected in addition with experiences of Indian life and culture. Looking over those vast deserted plains one gets an idea of space and what it means 'to build'. In a way this is a center of American architecture too.

(HOLLEIN 1960B: 9)

This closely observed attention to the deserts and to the relatively neglected heartland of the southwest contrasts with Baudrillard's metaphysical interpretation of the American desert.

Hollein's enthusiasm for this experience away from the universities and big cities led him to neglect his academic studies somewhat:

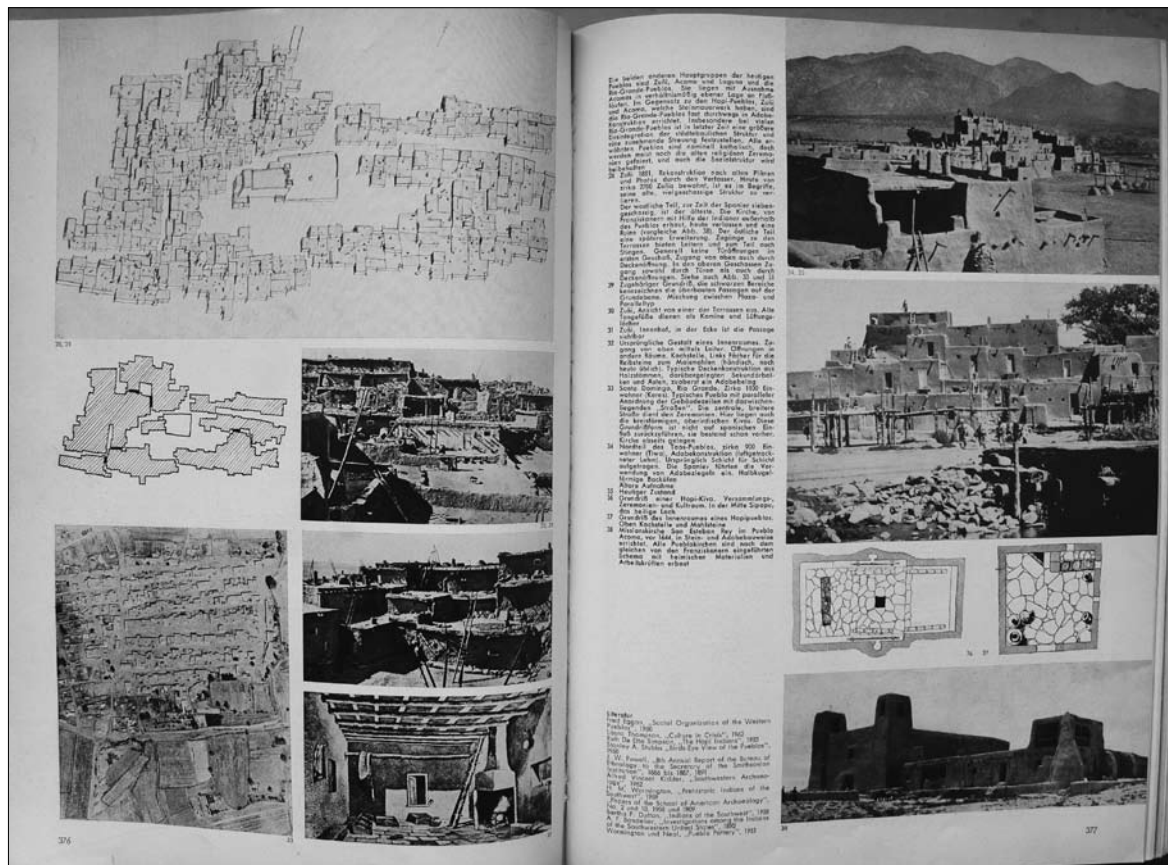
I do not worry too much about the degree because I think that most things I learned and many of the benefits I had from my stay in America are to at least the same degree derived from experiences and contacts outside the school.

(HOLLEIN 1959: 2)

It is worth noting that this conclusion was absolutely in line with what the US was hoping to achieve with the Harkness fellowship. Encouraging selected highly intelligent potential leaders to become enthusiastic about the freedom of spirit, variety, and richness of American culture appeared to be the best safeguard against the threat of communism. And while the historian must be wary of taking at face value reports written by the recipient of a generous travel grant, Hans Hollein seemed astonishingly direct and candid in communicating his experiences. It is clear that he was profoundly moved by the landscape, the 'authentic' culture of the Native Americans, and the richness and breadth of the American experience. In September 1964, he wrote an article titled 'Pueblos' in *Der Aufbau* (Building), describing the structure of the Hopi Indian settlements. A year later he assembled a photo essay under the title 'Background USA'



in Bau, *Schrift für Architektur und Städtebau*. His choice of photographs recorded his impressions of the United States: a room of computers, the Grand Canyon, Hopi Indians on horseback, Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple in Oak Park, Illinois, Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center at Harvard University, portraits of Louis Kahn and Frank Lloyd Wright, Kahn's Richards Laboratory in Philadelphia, the Monadnock Building in Chicago by Burnham and Root, Marilyn Monroe in front of Niagara Falls, clusters of billboards along a freeway outside Las Vegas and a portrait of Mies van der Rohe. His American experience had convinced him that the boundaries of architecture should expand to include pop art, action art, installations, or neon lights and billboards. In 1968, he expressed this in his influential issue of *Bau*, 'Alles ist Architektur' (Everything is Architecture), which marked a significant moment in the pop art movement (LEFAIVRE 2003). The pamphlet he wrote and the photographs he selected, with the two Austrian



8.3 Zuni Pueblo, published in Hans Hollein, 'Pueblos', *Der Aufbau* 9, 1964, 37. Courtesy of Hans Hollein.



artists Oswald Oberhuber and Gustav Peichl, mixed up even further the categories of art, environment, and architecture.

In his journey through the United States, therefore, Hollein shifted his attention from high art to popular culture, from the cities to the deserts and mountains of the southwest, from high to low technology, reversing established perceptions of technological progress in American architecture. Hollein's observations resonate with Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's study of Las Vegas undertaken several years later (VENTURI ET AL. 1972) and presaged a broader zeitgeist that focused on rediscovering anonymous, vernacular and historical architecture. Hollein, Venturi, Scott Brown and others expanded the existing referential systems of architecture, ushering in an era of experimentation that culminated in the postmodernism of the 1980s and 1990s. Hollein's pursuit in the late 1950s stressed the informal and the indigenous, reflecting at least disinterest in what official American culture had to offer. In the politicized environment of the late 1960s, however, architects traveled to the US precisely in pursuit of what was perceived as an opposition to official, mainstream American culture.

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### MARC VAYE: POLITICIZING ARCHITECTURE (1969–1973)

When Marc Vaye, a second-year student in architecture at the École spéciale d'architecture in Paris,<sup>9</sup> landed in America for the first time in July 1969, the American countercultural movement had already been well publicized in mainstream journals and architecture magazines throughout Europe. The 1960s student movement and the Civil Rights movement in the United States, as well as the spread of a more general counterculture, had helped lay the groundwork for the events of May 1968 in France, in which Vaye was a participant. The American underground press and its anti-institutional message had made a big impression on this generation of French architecture students. For those involved in the campaign against France's nuclear strategy, or for those politically motivated to challenge waste in consumer society, the American ecology movement struck a profound chord.

In 1969, Vaye arrived in the US without a Harkness fellowship and with less than 100 dollars in his pocket: he stayed for three months. His road map was Jack Kerouac's famous novel *On the Road* (1957), and his destination was Drop City, a commune founded in 1965 by the artists Gene and JoAnn Bernofsky and Clark Richert, and located in the countryside not far from a small town in Colorado named Trinidad.<sup>10</sup> Vaye was familiar with Drop City through the American magazine *Architectural Forum* and European magazines such as *Architectural Design*, *Domus*, and *L'Architecture*

9 As an architect, Vaye developed a collaborative practice in solar architecture with Frédéric Nicolas that was active until 1980, when interest in this technology declined with the end of the oil crisis. Disappointed with architectural practice, Vaye then focused on traveling and photography. He currently teaches at l'École spéciale d'architecture, Paris. For more on schools of architecture in France in the 1960s, see Violeau 2005: 44–74.

10 For more on Drop City, see Voyd 1969 and Sadler 2006. The commune was active until 1973. The last of the 12 dome structures that characterized Drop City was demolished in 1995 (interview by the author with the present landowner, August 2001). For more on the commune movement in America, see Fairfield 1971 and Hedgepeth 1970.

11 See Trego, C., Drop City: New Life for Junked Cars, *Architectural Forum*, September 1967, 74–75; Le cupole di Drop City (The Domes of Drop City), *Domus* 458 (January 1968): 1; Drop City, Colorado: Coupoles géodésiques pour l'habitat hippie (Drop City: geodesic domes for hippy habitats), *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* 141 (December 1968–January 1969): 82–84.

12 Marc Vaye, interview with the author, Paris, 28 June 2001.

13 Cosanti, the studio and, since 1956, residence of architect Paolo Soleri, located near Phoenix, featured terraced landscaping with experimental earth-formed concrete structures. Students were invited there to cast windbells. The proceeds from the windbells have provided funds for Arcosanti, a self-contained experimental town that Soleri founded in 1970 in central Arizona, 70 miles north of Phoenix. Using a concept he calls 'arcology' (combining the words 'architecture' and 'ecology'), Soleri designed the town to demonstrate ways in which urban conditions could be improved while minimizing the destructive impact on the earth.

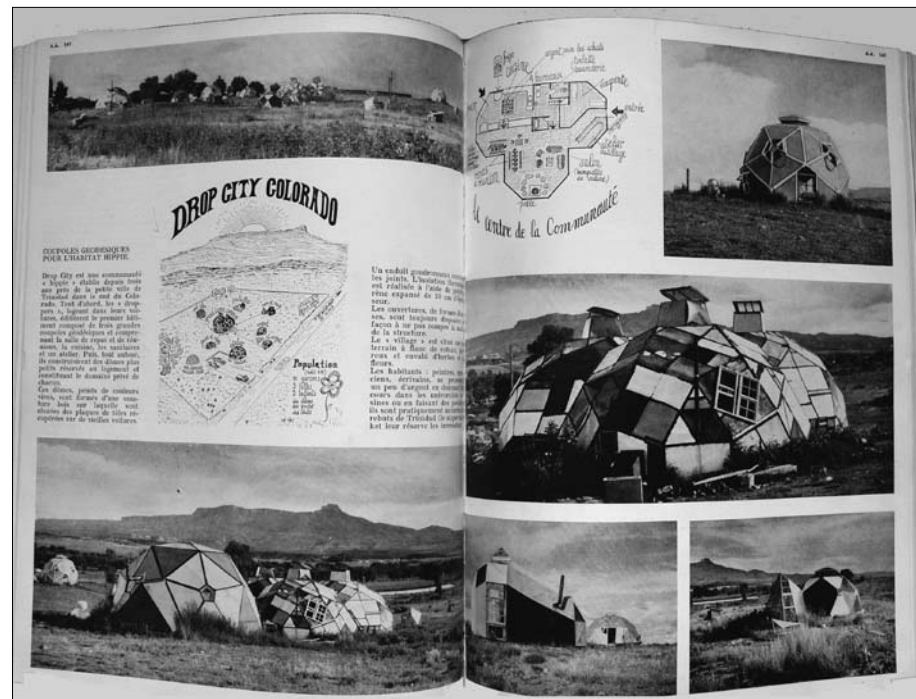
14 Ant Farm was a group of architect-artists who performed from 1968 to 1978 at West Coast university campuses. See Caroline Maniaque, 'Searching for Energy', in Lewallen, C. (ed.) (2004), *Ant Farm*, 1968–78, pp. 14–21 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).

*d'aujourd'hui*.<sup>11</sup> Drop City was described by a close observer, Lloyd Kahn, as the 'first American hippie dome community ... made out of acid visions, idealism and chopped-out car top dome panels' (KAHN 1973: 118). The geometric design principles of Richard Buckminster Fuller (1895–1983) had been transformed into a countercultural language by the use of bricolage and the reuse of waste materials. By 1966, Drop City featured several geodesic domes and their variants the 'Zomes', more correctly described as rhombic dodecahedra (SADLER 2006: 6).

What impressed Marc Vaye about Drop City, apart from the fact that it represented the height of countercultural communitarianism with a reputation for conviviality, was that 'nothing was fixed, nothing was formalized, and anything was possible'.<sup>12</sup> Vaye studied the structural principles of the domes he saw there, and from Drop City he made a full tour of counterculture sites in the American West: the commune of Libre in the Huerfano Valley in South Colorado (a commune founded in 1966 by former Drop City dwellers seeking a quiet place to live), Paolo Soleri's Arcosanti near Phoenix, Arizona, where Vaye spent two weeks casting bells,<sup>13</sup> the houseboat community at Sausalito, near San Francisco, and a warehouse on Gate Five Road in Sausalito, where he stayed a few nights with the members of the experimental art collective

#### 8.4

Spread from Pierre Lacombe, 'Drop City, Colorado: Coupoles géodésiques pour l'habitat hippie', *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* 141, December 1968–January 1969. Collection of the author.





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8.5 Cover of Steve Baer's Dome Cookbook, 1968, self-published, Corrales, New Mexico. Collection of the author.

- 15 The *Whole Earth Catalog* (WEC) was the brainchild of Stewart Brand and published from 1968 to 1972 by the Portola Institute at Menlo Park, California. WEC was based on both a network of experts who found, analyzed, and shared the tools and ideas of the counterculture, and an original forum for interactive participation in which readers submitted their point of view on products or publications. From the end of the 1960s, this publication was surely one of the first manifestations of a dispersed community connected by a network. WEC was published twice a year and included a Supplement, which was published between the regular editions and contained letters, reader feedback, and so on. The last of the original WEC series was published in 1971 and titled *The Last Whole Earth Catalog* (MANIAQUE 2002).
- 16 A hand-drawn publication by Steve Baer, indicating methods of building domes.
- 17 Vaye interview, 28 June 2001.
- 18 The French underground magazine *Actuel*, edited by Bizot, covered cultural issues and featured as many stories on jazz, pop music, and lifestyles as on architecture, but it was widely read by French architects. In the March 1972 issue, titled 'Les villes brûleront' (The Cities Will Burn), *Actuel* devoted long articles to the commune of Libre (in Colorado), to the construction of domes, and to other experiments such as the work of the Italian group Superstudio. (The issue followed on the heels of information published three months earlier by *Architectural Design*, in December 1971.)
- 19 Jean-Paul Jungmann, interview with the author, Paris, 15 October 2002.

Ant Farm – Chip Lord, Doug Michaels and Curtis Schreier.<sup>14</sup> He returned to France with Stewart Brand's *Whole Earth Catalog* (1968)<sup>15</sup> and Steve Baer's *Dome Cookbook* (1968),<sup>16</sup> in which aspects of the Drop City project were published, as well as Lloyd Kahn's *Domebook 1* (1970) and *Domebook 2* (1971) – publications that contained detailed information on geodesic design for domes and their complex variables in edges and joints.

Vaye and other European visitors noted political as well as cultural differences between Europe and the United States. Vaye observed with surprise that 'whereas in Europe, there were strong divisions between the Hippies and the political left, in America these were united by libertarian and liberal opposition to the state.'<sup>17</sup> For the French journalist Jean-François Bizot, editor of the magazine *Actuel*<sup>18</sup> this attitude was politically naïve:

There were five hundred thousand hippies in 1968. They are against capitalism but their analysis goes no further than that. They lump together Cuba, the People's Republic of China, North Korea, Algeria and Guinea: the revolution has yet to take place.

(BIZOT 1971: 2–3)

As an architect Vaye was astonished by the way Americans were prepared to work with their own hands to achieve their goals, even though he knew this was an aspect of the counterculture that would not travel well to Europe. As Vaye's thesis advisor, the French theorist Jean-Paul Jungmann, said:

In the USA, this seemed possible, but not in France. Over there they actually built things, but these experiences were not for us. We were not as pragmatic as they were. They built polyhedrals; we made drawings but did not build.<sup>19</sup>

Jungmann's statement supports the notion that the tradition of the pioneer and the frontier predispose Americans to build prototypes with their own hands, whereas the academic traditions of metropolitan Europe looked to intellectual speculation and theory.

On his second trip to America, in 1972, Vaye met Steve Baer, who was fascinated with energy-efficient climate-control systems and polyhedral structures. Baer helped to build domes at Drop City in the spring of 1966, and in 1971–72 he constructed a Zome house for himself and his wife Holly at Corrales, a few miles from Albuquerque, New Mexico. This building impressed Vaye:

Steve Baer's house is made of a basement of earth and a geodesic covering made of an aluminium sandwich – so it's both high and low technology. We were excited by the idea that something which was ecological in principle didn't have to be against technology. I had thought that technology was criminal in itself.<sup>20</sup>

Baer's house became very well known in France. When he was invited to lecture there a few years later, he was astonished to see his house described and analyzed in such detail.<sup>21</sup>

Vaye became interested in experimental solar architecture and returned to the US in the summer of 1973 to pursue this research in Colorado and New Mexico.<sup>22</sup> As a result of this trip, in 1974 Vaye produced the book *La face cachée du soleil* (The Hidden Face of the Sun) in association with two young colleagues, architect Frédéric Nicolas and the engineer Jean-Pierre Traisnel, both of whom were motivated to fight the construction of nuclear power plants. The three authors wrote under the pseudonym Bricolo Lézardeur.<sup>23</sup> The book, which had a print run of 50,000 copies and became a best-selling architecture title, was based on Vaye's Masters thesis<sup>24</sup> and presented information about solar energy in the housing industry. It was conceived as a 'self-build' and 'do-it-yourself' title, and the authors believed in what they called 'the re-appropriation of technology' and the possibility of 'acquiring theoretical and practical knowledge quite different from that of conventional architecture' (BRICOLO LÉZARDEUR 1974: 2). Bricolo Lézardeur declared:

The whole gamut of practical tools (techniques, machines, materials, etc.) and theories worked out by specialists, in relation to the dominant means of production of space, is unable to meet the new needs derived from a new will, that of the collective appropriation of space. Certain machines, materials and techniques, in certain circumstances, may be 'diverted' and appropriated in new ways, without losing sight of the limits of such usage.

(BRICOLO LÉZARDEUR 1974: 2)

It is important to point out that the educational environment of the *Unités pédagogiques d'architecture* (architectural teaching units), where Vaye completed his thesis, was influenced in part by the American counterculture movement. Following the student uprising of 1968 in France, higher education in the country was thrown into crisis. The closing of the École des Beaux-Arts as a result of the students' occupation led to the opening of the Unités pédagogiques d'architecture the following fall. Many young academics who taught at these institutions had visited the United States and provided a new set of architectural principles to their students. One product of the reform of

20 Vaye interview, 28 June 2001.

21 Steve Baer, interview with the author, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 22 August 2001.

22 Vaye interview, 28 June 2001.

23 Although difficult to translate, the name is a combination of *bricolage* (do-it-yourself assembly) and *lézarde* (lizard), which alludes to the idea of lazing around in the sun and of cracks and fissures in walls.

24 Vaye's thesis was supervised by Jean-Paul Jungmann at Unité Pédagogique 6 (UP6). Jungmann is one of the protagonists of the group Utopie with Jean Baudrillard, Hubert Tonka, Antoine Stinco, Isabelle Auriscote, Catherine Cot and Jean Aubert, and had been teaching at UP6 since 1971. See Violeau 1999.

25 So powerful was American cartoons' hold on the imagination of the political left in France that the American artist R. (Rob) Crumb moved in 1993 to France, where his cartoons appeared in many of the underground and leftist journals, and where he was able to earn his living.

26 Quoted in Devil, N. (1974), *Oreja* (Paris: La Marge-Kesselring), np.

French architectural schools was the spread of the free press as a model for communication. Jungmann had established a printing press modeled on those of American underground magazines, whose purpose was to freely distribute avant-garde and political statements relevant to architecture and urbanism.

The influence of the American counterculture on Vaye's book is manifest in two different forms. First, *La face cachée du soleil* used specific American examples to provide readers with information on current ecological tools and techniques that could be used to counteract the damage caused by industrialization. Using wind and sun to generate electricity, treating sewage directly and saving water could all be seen as means of reducing dependence on nuclear and carbon sources of energy. More subtly, perhaps, the book's use of American cartoon characters such as Snoopy, Little Nemo, and Rob Crumb's Mr Natural<sup>25</sup> to explain the latest alternative energy systems indicates the influence of American popular culture on the European alternative movement. The fact that these specifically American imports – so-called soft technology, popular magazines, and the counterculture – were linked together in people's minds is characteristic of this period. As the prominent 1960s American activist Jerry Rubin said, 'We have to make politics as easy to understand as the lyrics of rock and roll'.<sup>26</sup> By the time Vaye returned to the US at the beginning of the 1970s, architecture itself as a category was under attack in France. American popular culture became a desirable means by which leftist groups made their revolutionary message accessible to the public. Unlike Hans Hollein, who was concerned with broader architectural questions that had an impact on the history of architecture in the second half of the twentieth century, Mark Vaye and his peers developed a non-mainstream approach which – even though it was not meant to directly determine the future of architecture – allied itself with environmental politics and the perception of architecture as a political praxis.

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## CONFLICTING ATTITUDES TOWARD THE AMERICAN COUNTERCULTURE

Travel to the United States by Europeans was not the only means of transmitting American ideas and experiences during the 1960s and 1970s. The discourses of the American counterculture were well diffused in Europe through a range of publications – fanzines, catalogues, cookbooks, construction manuals – and a global distribution network of alternative bookstores and mail order. These exchanges drew attention to previously unexplored architectural aspects of the United States that were far removed from the mainstream focus on contemporary modernism:



This is what Utopia is made of: wooden houses in Bolinas, domes made of salvaged automobile panels at Placitas, solar houses in Albuquerque, a boat city at Sausalito, a village of domes at Woodstock, a communal farm at San Cristobal; these images of young America are both contradictory and similar. How stimulating these adventures seemed: free use of space, a creative imagination working with an adaptive and regulative functionalism, a practical approach to handmade construction, the use of soft technology, etc. In short, [these are examples of] the destruction of the consumer society and a reconstruction of space.

(GOUTMANN AND GUYNET 1975: 24)<sup>27</sup>

Instead of dominating and materialistic, Americans would be seen as principled, spontaneous, and free, prepared to abandon the benefits of affluent society to live off its surplus waste. The American virtues of liberty, self-determination and a rebellious and anarchic spirit could now be seen as admirable, exemplified by certain autonomous individuals who could build and put together their own homes with their own hands. Even if most European architects did not build domes themselves or establish communes, these ideas gained currency and were profoundly influential, inspiring educational reforms and alternative ecology policies. Just as modernism in its heroic period had constituted a means of attacking capitalism through Marxist dialectics – for example, in the work of the architects Hannes Meyer and Karel Teige in Germany and Czechoslovakia at the end of the 1920s – now it seemed that the counterculture might better perform this role. If in the late 1960s the ecology movement and solar architecture belonged securely to the political left – which viewed these tools as weapons with which to attack not only nuclear power stations but the whole policy of waste and consumption on which capitalism depended – they soon became more widespread and mainstream. When the price of oil soared in 1973, for example, the French government was forced to think about conserving energy and turned to alternative experiments, accepting the lessons of the generation of 1968, regardless of its sources.

Did this new appreciation of American culture satisfy the American government, in light of the broader environment of the Cold War era? The following incident suggests that European interest in the American counterculture was not always welcomed by the American authorities, despite their advocacy of exploratory travel.

In 1971, Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano won a major international architecture competition to design a new cultural center in Paris, the Centre Georges Pompidou, named after the French president, which would include the Musée d'art moderne. In addition to this important commission, the French government began to invest heavily in acquisitions designed to make the French museum a world-class center of modern art, a direct reaction to the emerging dominance of New York as a global art

27 Bolinas is a small town north of San Francisco where Lloyd Kahn edited *Shelter*, a book on hand-built homes that became influential to the architecture counterculture. First published in 1973 in Bolinas by Kahn, *Shelter* reached a mass audience not only in the United States but also in Europe. It was reprinted and translated into French, German, and Spanish, and sold 185,000 copies (KAHN 1973). A French edition, titled *Habitats*, was made available in 1977 (Kahn and Gac 1977). Placitas is small town near Albuquerque, New Mexico, where engineer Steve Baer helped to build domes and Zomes. Sausalito is a community of houseboats near San Francisco where a number of leading figures of the counterculture movement lived and worked. In contrast to Goutmann and Guynet's conclusions, for Jean Baudrillard every expression of the counterculture and of ecological awareness only served the interest of capitalism in absorbing protest. See Baudrillard J., *The French Statement*, in Banham, R. (ed.) (1974), *The Aspen Papers: Twenty Years of Design Theory from the International Design Conference in Aspen* (New York: Praeger).

- 28 'Architectures Marginales aux Etats-Unis', Musée des Arts Décoratifs, November 1975–January 1976. J. Dethier and D. Elalouf, *Architectures marginales aux Etats-Unis* (Paris: CCI-Centre Pompidou, 1975).
- 29 François Barré, interview with the author, Paris, 18 July 2005.
- 30 See Leusse M. (1975), Les barbouzes culturelles de l'ambassade US, *Le Quotidien de Paris*, 24 November, 6; L'affaire de la rue du Dragon, *Le Monde*, 29 November 1975; Michel J. (1975), L'architecture Arche de Noë, *Le Monde*, 4 December, 21; Gibson M. (1975), Art Exhibition That Was 'Too Good' to Keep, *International Herald Tribune*, 9 December, 16.

center (GUIBAULT 1983). The exhibition chosen to prepare the public for this 'relaunch' of French advocacy for the modern was titled 'Architectures Marginales aux Etats-Unis' (Marginal Architecture in the United States) and opened in 1975, a little more than a year before the opening of the Pompidou Center. The exhibition was a joint effort between the Centre de Création Industrielle (Center for Industrial Design [CCI], part of the Musée des Arts décoratifs) and the American Cultural Center, where the exhibition was held. The American Cultural Center, located in the rue du Dragon in Paris, was supported by the American government. The exhibition displayed experiments with North American communal living in areas far from the cities, research into renewable sources of energy, do-it-yourself architecture, and the use of recycled building materials (DETHIER AND ELALOUF 1975).<sup>28</sup> It presented anonymous buildings instead of celebrating architectural stardom. It engaged with the practices of inhabitants in their daily lives instead of promoting architectural rationalism; it advocated simplicity instead of sophistication. It celebrated the United States not for its dominant technology or official culture but for the countercultural gestures of its rebellious youth. In other words, this was an aspect of 'Americanization' that was bound, as it turned out, to embarrass rather than to please the American government.

At the opening of the exhibition at the American Cultural Center, the American ambassador was shocked by images of naked American youth living in the wilderness and by the subversive texts of Herbert Marcuse, the anarchist Murray Bockchin, and the American radicals Jerry Rubin and Alan Ginsberg. To the American ambassador this was not an appropriate way of representing the land of the free. François Barré, then in charge of the CCI, was adamant that there was no intention on the part of the organizers to denigrate the United States:

We believed that presenting this exhibition in the American Cultural Center was extremely positive. Being there was to demonstrate friendship for a great people with a lively culture ... I considered that Marcuse was a man with a lively mind and a universal political view point which he had honed by observing the United States ... To my mind at least there was no anti Americanism. There was a fascination with the United States and a love of New York.<sup>29</sup>

Whatever the intention, the result was a diplomatic brouhaha. A representative of the Central Intelligence Agency insisted on changes, which the director of the Pompidou Center, Robert Bordaz, refused to implement. The exhibition was closed at the American Cultural Center but immediately reopened with fanfare at the French-directed Musée des arts décoratifs.<sup>30</sup> During the next four years, the exhibition traveled throughout France and Europe and was presented at the international HABITAT



Forum in Vancouver, Canada, in June 1976. Consisting of 400 items on 55 panels, the show was presented in 20 cities in 1976 alone, and the local press provided significant coverage.<sup>31</sup> Jean-Marc Reiser, the French cartoonist and advocate of solar architecture, described the significance of the exhibition in the French satiric weekly newspaper *Charlie-Hebdo*:

Don't imagine that the people who built these houses were all like hippies. There were all sorts of peculiar people ... And it was because of guys like that, characters capable of building such fantastic shacks that all sorts of people who think of themselves as being on the left preferred the American way of life to that of the Soviets ... For some of us, the existence of this exhibition at the American Cultural Centre led us to hope that USIS (United States Information Services) had begun to show signs of intelligence in its strategy. But apparently, no, it was an accident.  
(REISER 1975: N. P.)

As an epilogue to the story, the American Cultural Center was closed the following year, the director was fired, and the American cultural attaché was moved to a new diplomatic post in Belgrade, then the capital of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the apparently marginal countercultural movement played a significant role in confirming the French bipolar attitude toward the United States, one that simultaneously reflected fascination and rejection.

The proud independence of the right wing French government's position mirrored the position of the political left, for whom the United States represented political, economic, and cultural imperialism. At the same time, American films, cartoons, and popular music were penetrating French popular culture, much to the horror of the French establishment. In this context, it was fortuitous that the United States could be seen as exporting marginality. Admirers and critics alike could have their prejudices confirmed.

American attempts to win the Cold War in the hearts and minds of European architects seem to have depended on the assumption that it was enough to bring intelligent and curious observers into close contact with the richness and variety of American culture for the values of democracy to become self-evident. Paradoxically, it was precisely European sympathy for the freedom of expression, anarchy and imagination of the American counterculture that revealed the limitations of official American tolerance. But it was also this sympathy for the counterculture that mitigated the generally hostile view of the United States by leftist groups and intellectuals. To this extent, the strategy of USIS and the Harkness Foundation may have been astute.

31 Traveling exhibition folder, Paris, Archives, Pompidou Center, Folder 94033/072.

32 Jean Dethier, the curator of the exhibition, sees a direct relationship between these events (interview with the author, Paris, 10 July 2002).

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# Mobile Architects, Static Ideas: Santiago Calatrava in Athens<sup>1</sup>

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*Jilly Traganou*

The commission for the design of the major landmark of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, the Athens Olympic Sports Complex (AOSC), was awarded to the Spanish-born architect Santiago Calatrava. The selection of Calatrava and the debates that surrounded his designs offer insights into the relationships between public architecture, national identity, global culture, and architects' mobility – and subsequent 'foreignness' – in the contemporary world. This chapter focuses on the representation of Calatrava's design in the popular media, assessing whether the involvement of a global architect in the design of a project of major national significance indicated a shift in contemporary Greece's ideas of nationhood and public culture.

Calatrava's work in Athens had ideological implications similar to those identified by Arne Martin Klausen in his examination of the 1994 Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer: Calatrava's design was simultaneously representational of the ideal nation and normative, modeling 'socio-cultural reality in a way that may imply change' (KLAUSEN 1995: 5). On the one hand, the AOSC represented a proposal of a new Hellenism in the twenty-first century; on the other, it functioned as a model for the Europeanization of the country, and especially its capital city, Athens. Two gestures of Calatrava's project are ideologically revealing: the design of the stadium's roof, which affects the Athenian skyline at both the formal and symbolic level, and the design of the Olympic park, which was meant to function as an open, green, public space in the city. These two features of the Athletic Complex initiated a conversation with the city's glorious past, at the same time that they announced Athens as a European city.

Commissions to foreign architects to design buildings of national significance are not new in Greece. After the Greek nation-state was established in the 1830s with the help of European powers that supported Greece's independence from the Ottoman rule, several important buildings and urban plans were designed by architects from

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Slobodan Ćurčić, Shannon Mattern, Merrill Schleier, Ioanna Theocharopoulou and Annabel Wharton for their constructive feedback on different versions of this chapter. Part of the research for this chapter was undertaken during my residence as a Visiting Research Fellow in the Program in Hellenic Studies at Princeton University in Fall 2004. A shorter version of this chapter was presented at the 2006 Society of Architectural Historians Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. All translations from the Greek are mine, unless otherwise noted.



9.1 Athens Olympic Stadium, 2004. © Erieta Attali.

- 2 Examples are the University of Athens (1849), the Academy of Athens (1887), and the National Library (1892), designed by the Danish brothers Theophil and Christian Hansen, as well as the 1833 first plan for the new city of Athens by the German-trained architects Stamatis Kleanthes and Eduard Schaubert. See Bastea (1999: 156–61; 69–87).
- 3 Although neoclassicism was offered to the modern Greek State as a nostalgic revival of Hellenism, the scale, cost, decoration and connection with the urban bourgeoisie and foreign hegemonies of most of these buildings were heavily criticized by various nineteenth- and twentieth-century intellectuals, such as the poet Kostis Palamas or later on architect Aris Konstantinidis.

Europe.<sup>2</sup> These architects facilitated an overall imperialist project that was part of a ‘global design’ enterprise pertinent in modern Europe’s ‘civilizing mission’ in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (MIGNOLO 2000: 725). Most of these buildings used the language of neoclassicism as a means of articulating a modern European – but also soon to become ‘international’ – identity that carried strong, even though nonexclusive, relations with ancient Greek architecture. With these architectural edifices, modern Greece was helped to fulfill its double yearning for acceptance in the family of modern European nations, on the one hand, and identification with its classical past, on the other (BASTEA 1999: 1).<sup>3</sup> Yet commissions to foreign architects in the period of nation-state establishment are not unique to Greece. Numerous important twentieth-century architectural works are associated with the establishment or strengthening of nation-states and decolonization, such as the planning and building of Chandigarh, the capital of Punjab in India, in 1950–65 by Le Corbusier, and the National Parliament of Bangladesh by Louis Kahn in 1962–74. Buildings of national significance designed by non-nationals have become a norm in the contemporary architectural world, especially due to the numerous international competitions. The Scottish parliament (2004), for example, was designed by Spanish architects Enric Miralles; the Reichstag (1999), the German Parliament in Berlin by British architect Norman Foster; the New Acropolis Museum in Athens (2008) by Swiss architect Bernard Tschumi (in collabora-

tion with the local architectural office of Michalis Fotiadis); and, most recently, the Beijing Olympic Stadium (2008) by Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron. It is no coincidence that most of the above are renowned architects that may be characterized as 'global'. The broader geopolitical framework of 'planetary consciousness' in contemporary times, according to Mignolo, is characterized by the predominance of neoliberalism as an 'emergent civilizational project' (MIGNOLO 2000: 725). What role do global architects play, however, in local cultural politics? How do they respond to crucial questions of identity and the often-ardent debates about it in the local contexts? Can they be considered as instrumental in providing nations with opportunities for self-reflection as they face various types of 'otherness',<sup>4</sup> and in affording citizens with agency as they are urged to define their cultural identities? Or do their projects fully comply with the ideology of the transnational market and neoliberalism?

Calatrava's commission to design the AOSC was inseparable from local endeavors to articulate a new identity for contemporary Greece. Hosting the modern Olympic Games provides nations with opportunities for global visibility, and the case of Athens was no exception, especially considering Greece's sense of patrimony over the games: they originated in ancient Greece.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the modern Olympics make it imperative for a host-nation to reinstate, reconfigure, or, often, 'brand' its identity. The organizers of Athens 2004 saw the Olympics as an opportunity to promote a 'new Greece' that would be quite different from the country's outdated image as a nation fluctuating between antiquity and folklore.<sup>6</sup> In 1997 in her speech during the Athens bid for the 2004 Olympic Games, Gianna Daskalaki-Angelopoulou, the soon to become head of the Athens Olympic Committee (ATHOC), talked about the difference from the previous unsuccessful Athens bid for the 1996 Olympics:

Our desire and heritage alone would not guarantee our election to host the games. After that (bid for 1996 Olympic Games), we Athenians looked at Athens with a more critical eye to see our city through the eyes of the international community.<sup>7</sup>

The introduction of 'otherness' inherent in the idea of 'New Greece', depended on two main constituencies: the first consisted of Greeks who had lived in Europe or the United States and who intended to introduce 'international' models to Greece; the most prominent Gianna Daskalaki-Angelopoulou, who had been living in London since 1990. The second group consisted of non-Greek specialists who offered primarily technological know-how, or other types of expertise, as was the case of Calatrava.

In rhetoric if not in design, Calatrava's work was fully embedded within the cultural politics in Greece, especially as they were formulated during the critical period

- 4 This is an argument also reflected in Gerald Delanty and Paul R. Jones work. In discussing the new German parliament in Berlin designed by British architect Norman Foster, they stated that 'the very fact that Foster is a British architect is also significant, and can be seen as a further move away from making the project too particularistic, too rooted in a particular national code' (DELANTY AND JONES 2002: 458).
- 5 The ancient Olympic Games were staged in Olympia, a sacred site in Peloponnes with the participation of athletes from Greek city-states. According to ancient tradition, the first games were held in 776 BC (the year recorded lists of victors began). The Games were abolished in 393 AD by the Christian Roman Emperor Theodosius, who regarded them as a pagan festival incompatible with Christianity. The Games were revived in the nineteenth century by initiatives from the French aristocrat Pierre de Coubertin, and the first modern Olympic Games took place in Athens in 1896. I am indebted to Nassos Papalexandrou for his help in clarifying the above mentioned historical data.
- 6 The head of the Athens 2004 organizing committee, Gianna Daskalaki-Angelopoulou, presented the Athens 2004 Games as a celebration of the idea of 'new Greece' in her speech at the opening ceremony on 13 August 2004.
- 7 Excerpt from Gianna Daskalaki-Angelopoulou's speech during the Athens' bid for hosting the 2004 Olympic Games, that took place in the 106th IOC Session held in Lausanne on September 5, 1997. Material examined at the International Olympic Committee Archive in Lausanne.

of Olympic preparations. Various references, from the particular to the universal, were employed to justify Calatrava's design in the face of the demands of various sectors of contemporary Greek public life concerning what constitutes national 'selfhood'.

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## THE RHETORIC OF HELLENISM

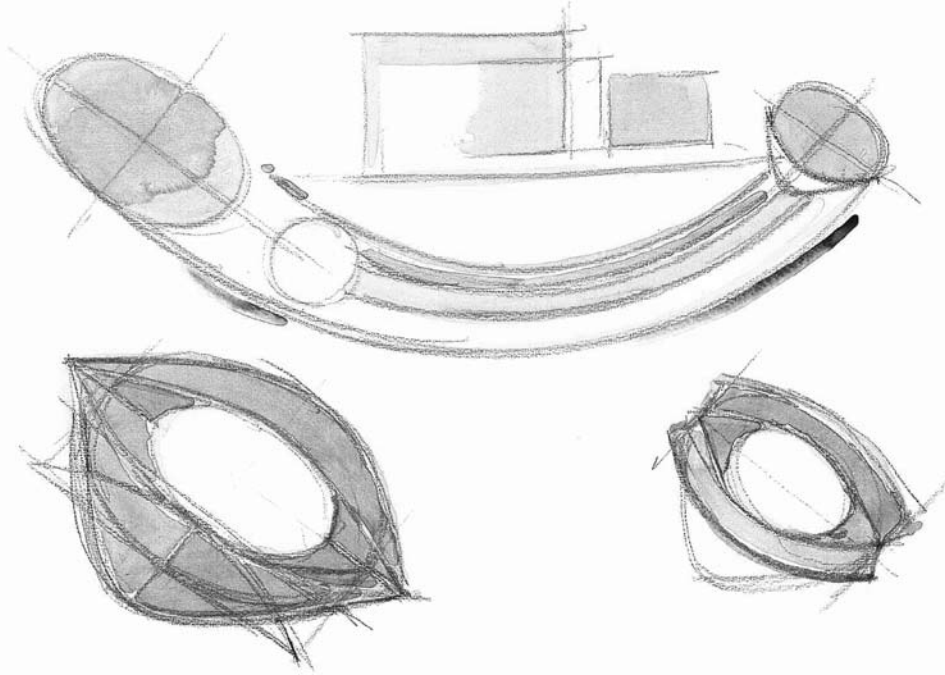
- 8 The delay can be attributed to unsuccessful attempts to privatize the venue, which were finally given up in 2000, when it was decided that the construction process would be undertaken by the State.
- 9 Other athletic facilities designed by Calatrava are the Calabria Soccer Stadium (1991), the Jahn Olympic Sports Complex in Berlin (1992) which was part of the city's bid to host the 2000 Olympic Games, the World Cup Stadium in Marseille (1995), and the Olympic Stadium for the Stockholm bid for 2004 Olympic Games.
- 10 According to the journalist Tasos Telloglou the absence of a design contest was against the European Council Directive 92/50 relating to the coordination of procedures for the award of public service contracts. The Greek government asked for an exemption on the grounds that this was an 'artistic work': this was accepted by the European committee (TELLOGLOU 2004: 124).
- 11 The roof covers 95 percent of the stadium's 75,000 seats. Each 'leaf' covering is supported by a curved truss structure consisting of two arches: an upper arch tube and a lower torsion tube, each of them approximately 3 meters (10 feet) in diameter with a wall thickness of up to 90mm (0.35 inch). These two giant upper parabolic arches span 304 meters (1000 feet) at a height of 72 meters (236 feet). Each of the 'bent leaves' is connected by transversal girders to the torsion tubes and supported at the opposite end by cables anchored to the upper arch. The two arches are connected with cables and meet in the middle to form the central oval, giving the structure the required rigidity and stability.

In Fall 2001, four years after Athens successfully won the bid to host the next summer Olympic Games, the Greek Ministry of Culture in collaboration with ATHOC appointed Santiago Calatrava to undertake the 'aesthetic unification' of the existing Athletic Complex.<sup>8</sup> The Complex was originally built between 1980 and 1990 on the initiative of Greece's President Constantine Karamanlis in anticipation that the centennial 1996 Olympic Games would be held in Athens (outbid, finally, by Atlanta). Over that ten-year period the project was realized in piecemeal fashion, and thus 'aesthetic unification' was considered necessary for it to function as the major site of the 2004 Olympic Games. The commission was awarded in the absence of an architectural competition or any other process of public consultation. Although Calatrava had great experience in designing athletic facilities<sup>9</sup> and belonged to an elite group of globally mobile architects, the absence of a competition for a public building led to protests by the Architects Association in Greece.<sup>10</sup>

The Greek public had become acquainted with Calatrava a few months before the commission. In March 2001, a major exhibition of Calatrava's work was held at the Athens National Gallery. It was received in celebratory fashion by the Greek media. Calatrava, 'a global citizen', a 'genuine Renaissance artist', was characterized as an architect who was using contemporary languages without being 'uncritically global' (MARAGKOU 2001). Given the publicity that surrounded Calatrava's debut in Greece, therefore, it is no surprise that the announcement of his involvement in the Olympics was in this early stage welcomed by the general public, beyond the Greek architects' objections.

Calatrava's proposal for the AOSC, like his previous work, was dominated by curvilinear shapes in both the organization of its plan and its architectural morphology. Calatrava sees the shape of the arch, which was used in all his proposed structures, as analogous to the trajectory of the javelin or the leap of a long jumper (ATHENS 2004 2002), embodying the Olympic slogan *citius, altius, fortius* (faster, higher, stronger). The 'signature' structure of the project was the roof of the Olympic Stadium: two bent 'leaves' covered with acrylic cladding tinted in blue and supported by two gigantic double parabolic arches, painted in white.<sup>11</sup> The same construction principles were echoed in the design of the Velodrome, albeit smaller in scale, while different types of arches were





## 9.2

*Santiago Calatrava's sketch of the layout of the Athens Olympic Sports Complex. Courtesy of Santiago Calatrava's New York-based office.*

also the characteristic of the Agora, a curvilinear promenade at the entrance of the Complex.

The form of the arch was proposed 'with the hope that the athletes will be able to decode it', as the architect stated in an interview (APOSTOLAKIS 2001). As in previous projects, Calatrava once again appears to draw 'dramatic significance from the body's acrobatic action' in his search for what Alexander Tzonis has called 'a morphology of movement' (TZONIS 1999: 12). With a sophisticated configuration of the structural members, in most of his athletic facilities Calatrava has produced an architecture that is expressive of the athletic *agon* (an ancient Greek word meaning contest) (TZONIS 2005: 78–9). Thus it is not surprising that the first metaphors that Calatrava used to communicate the robustness of his project to the public were related to athleticism.

The use of athletic metaphors, however, did not prove sufficiently convincing to the public. Calatrava faced increasing concern over how his architecture fitted within the Greek context. In response, he stated that the project would 'connect contemporary architectural approaches with the ancient Greek heritage' and expressed his utmost respect for the Acropolis:

12 It is important to note that the Olympic bid did not include the restoration of the Olympic Stadium. The total cost of construction of the Olympic complex was 260,000,000 Euros (US\$320,000,000), out of which the cost of the Olympic stadium roof alone was 130,000,000 Euros (US\$190,000,000) instead of the initially projected cost of 25,000,000 Euros (US\$38,500,000 / 8,500,000,000 drachmas). The architect's fee was 12,000,000 Euros (US\$18,500,000).

Visiting a monument like the Acropolis is like going straight to the source ... What you feel in the Acropolis is something magical for me ... Approaching the source is like you are discovering a treasure.

(LALAS 2001)

This connection with antiquity was elaborated by the architect in later interviews. References to Greek heritage multiplied in the last two years of the project's construction (2002–04). They were a compensatory response to an ever-increasing budget<sup>12</sup> and massive delays due to problems with construction bids, in a period in which ATHOC received a great deal of negative criticism from both domestic and foreign audiences. This skepticism regarding not only the Olympic organizers' but also the architect's ability to fulfill their commission urged Calatrava and his spokesmen to sharpen their rhetorical tools. Thus, even though his design belongs to what might be identified as – paraphrasing Greek architectural historian Eleni Fessa-Emmanouil (2001) – a neo-internationalist or urban, Western approach already familiar in modern Greece, Calatrava assumed a post-romantic rhetoric, without, however, adopting any such architectural forms. Thus it is not a coincidence that Calatrava gradually switched from employing the athletic metaphor, a register of 'type', to using Greek heritage, a register of 'context', as the referential framework of his architecture. Even though the Calatrava roof, the 'jewel in the crown' of the Athens Olympics, represented the city's first attempt to tone down the towering presence of its stereotype par excellence, the Acropolis, it was once again that renowned ancient landmark, together with Byzantine architecture, that appeared to be the inspirations for Calatrava's work:

At the Acropolis, there is the entrance of Propylaea and after you enter you face Parthenon on one side and Erechtheum on the other ... The Velodrome could play the role of the Erechtheum and the Olympic Stadium of the Parthenon, the official entry the role of the Propylaea, and the 'Olympic monument' the role of Athena's statue; not as architectural styles, but in regards to the spatial layout ...

I visited Thessaloniki and Istanbul and I realized with my own eyes that Greece has not only classical architecture, where the columns prevail, but also an astonishing tradition of dome and arch structures, within the frame of Byzantine architecture. Consequently, I wanted on the one hand to create something unique and, on the other, something in accordance with the Greek heritage.

(FOSKOLOS 2004)

If addressed to an architectural audience, the above references would be hard to sustain. The argument that relates the AOSC with the Acropolis is not particularly valid from an architectural standpoint, as any building complex may have a right and a left side that resemble and balance each other without necessarily being analogous to the layout of the Acropolis. Certainly, the architect's methods of unifying the site, a difficult task indeed considering the heterogeneity and unplanned condition that Calatrava inherited, are not here revealed to the audience. The architect's explanations – or at least what was conveyed by various 'cultural intermediaries', journalists and critics – did not provide enough information (for instance, about issues of architectural composition, scale, proportion, human perspective) to equip a lay audience with a deeper understanding of architectural thinking and to allow them to comprehend architecture as a unified ensemble rather than as an assemblage of singular edifices. With regard to the second reference, pointing to the elaboration of the arch in Byzantine architecture is not a distortion of architectural history, but here Calatrava intentionally conceals from his Greek audience the historical fact known by any architecture student that the architecture of the dome and arch was actually a Roman invention and not a Byzantine one. Calatrava knew that this was not what the Greek audience wished to hear, and did not initiate a discussion that would explain the differences between the concrete arches of the Romans, the brick ones of the Byzantines and their relation with his work. After all, most of his architecture, whether in Europe or elsewhere, has relied on arched structures without its being justified as deriving from Byzantine architecture; on the contrary, the work of the Italian architect and engineer Pier Luigi Nervi has been frequently mentioned as his inspiration.

The need to provide the public with such references is typical of nations that pride themselves on romantic myths of purity and uniqueness. Kenzo Tange's National Gymnasium for the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, for example, was characterized as 'a national shrine ... a modern equivalent of Ise' (DREW 1979: 172), Japan's sacred shrine, whose status is analogous to that of the Parthenon. The way in which the choice of color for Calatrava's roof was explained to the public is also indicative of such intentions. Calatrava announced initially that the roof glass would be tinted blue, resembling the blue of the Greek sky and sea that is much celebrated in tourist posters and national literature (TZANAVARA 2002). References to regional topography are common in architecture: one is reminded of Frei Otto's Olympic Park (*Olympiapark*) designed for Munich's 1972 Games, in which a mountain-like roof of 'arch and saddle shapes' encapsulated the 'Olympic Games in the Green' of a Bavarian countryside (GORDON 1983: 124). However, in his later interviews, Calatrava pushed his argument even further, interpreting his choice of blue and white as a direct reference to the Greek flag, and providing his work with rather nationalistic undertones (FOSKOLOS 2004).

13 The two arches that were carrying the roof were built in a distance from their actual location and then skidded over the stadium on specially constructed rails, covering distances of 71 and 64 meters each (232 and 209 feet), an operation of major technical difficulty.

Calatrava's dual references to the ancient and the Byzantine architecture bring to the fore the juxtaposition of Hellenism (alluding to Greece's ancient past, centered in fifth century BC Athens and epitomized by the Acropolis) and romiosini (alluding to Greece's Byzantine past, centered in Constantinople and epitomized by Hagia Sophia); Athens and Constantinople being two cardinal landmarks whose relation has been convoluted in Greece's history (TZIOVAS 1989: 31–53). According to anthropologist Michael Herzfeld, romiosini is associated with the history of the Greeks as part of the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires expressing an 'ideology of intimacy', and is the antipode of Hellenism (the idealization of ancient Greeks by Western Europeans – a view adopted by the Greeks during the establishment of the Greek State in 1830). The roguish character of romiosini goes against the edenic perfections of Hellenism and incorporates the 'polluted', imperfect, anti-European elements of modern Greece (HERZFELD 1987: 48–9). In reviews of the Athens Olympics during their period of preparation both traditions are selectively referenced depending on the circumstances: when modern Greeks accomplished their goals, the reviewers invoked the glories of Hellenism. When modern Greeks failed, they were reviewed as fatally divorced from the grandeur of their ancestry and thus bore the features of romiosini: unreliability and general looseness. The ready-to-fail roof of the Olympic Stadium that became the target of several accusations about Greece's inability to fulfill its Olympian task in the period 2002–04 (TRAGANOOU 2008: 189–92) was reminiscent to the Greeks of their difficulty in overcoming the character of romiosini.

The completion of the Olympic Stadium's roof, just a few days before the beginning of the Games, was met with national and international praise. Representing a Herculean effort on both a technical<sup>13</sup> and symbolic level, the roof enjoyed a degree of publicity that rivaled no other Olympic work of the Athens 2004. Emerging as an idealized version of 'new Greece,' the twin arches of the Olympic Stadium erected against the 'Attica sky' (a sublime and repeatedly celebrated entity within the mythological universe of Greek modernism) promised to overcome all shadows of romiosini.

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## THE RHETORIC OF MEDITERRANEANISM

A large segment of the Greek public seemed reassured by such references to Greece's past.<sup>14</sup> Few questioned the similarities between the architect's work in Greece and the rest of his buildings throughout the world,<sup>15</sup> yet comparisons would easily reveal little relation between the architect's rhetorical explanations and his architectural language, or at least, that his designs are 'conveniently polysemic', to use a phrase that Shannon Mattern employs in her studies of various international architects' rhetoric (MATTERN

14 Calatrava also claimed that the shape of the seat of Hegesos depicted in the ancient funerary Stele of Hegesos was a reference for his design for the Katehaki Bridge in Athens. (N. F. 2001)

2007: 70).<sup>16</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that international architectural critics such as Deyan Sudjic (2004) see nothing particularly ‘Greek’ in the design of the stadium roof, noting instead the usual motifs in Calatrava’s work: ‘Like everything Calatrava does, (the Olympic Stadium) has a vaguely organic form that seems to derive from some obscure insect species.’ Criticizing Calatrava for an overall egotistical quest for sensation, Sudjic sees no traces of Greek antiquities or Byzantine arched structures, but rather the architect’s usual ‘New Age approach that uses the hidden order of natural geometry from plants and crystals to animal bones to make economical and logical structures’.

Even though architecture critics could easily dismiss Calatrava’s Greek-centered rhetoric, it is worth investigating how his argument functioned within the overall cultural politics of Greece. Calatrava’s references to Greek architecture and topography may be confronted with the concept of aesthetic nationalism. This concept, established in early twentieth-century Greece, called for a distinct Greek form that would stay uncontaminated by Western influences. Aesthetic nationalism is related to the duty to ‘build the homeland’ after recognizing the unique signs of its topos. Thus creating art and creating a homeland were seen as almost inseparable actions, a view that denounced arts derived from references removed from one’s ‘natural environment’ (LEONTIS 1995: 85–6) and consequently excluded the involvement of the ‘foreign-other’. In the 1930s, a group of Greek intellectuals<sup>17</sup> elaborated this approach, promoting the notion of ‘moderation’, which in its architectural interpretation would mean small-scale, anti-monumental structures as the only appropriate approach within the context of the Greek landscape, and especially Attica, the peninsula where Athens is located. This region is characterized by a rather rocky landscape with mild vegetation and structures of modest scale, which, according to these intellectuals, should be maintained as such. Along the same lines, greenery (fashionable at the time and since as a northern European import) and large-scale structures should be avoided. Architectural scale has been

15 A journalist pointed to resemblances between Calatrava’s pedestrian bridge at Katehaki Street and a bridge in Dubai, questioning whether the architect actually deserves a fee for this work (K.T. 2004).

16 Shannon Mattern discusses cases of ‘convenient polysemy’ in library designs by architects Moshi Safdie, Cesar Pelli, Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer and Michael Graves, that used ‘signature elements that lend themselves to customized justifications in different contexts’ (MATTERN 2007: 70).

17 Members of the Greek 1930s Generation included poets Yorgos Seferis and Odysseas Elytis, architect Koulis Panayiotakos and Nikolaos Mitsakis, and artists Yannis Tsarouchis, Yannis Moralis and Nikos Chatzikiyiakos-Giikas, among others.



18 According to Annabel Wharton, 'some Greeks regarded the Athens Hilton as an obvious locus of the overprivileged alien ... not as an autochthonous piece of architecture'. Vincent Scully was also vitriolic about the hotel being destructive of a previously holy site (WHARTON 2001: 66–7).

19 Calatrava designed the Communication Tower in the area of Montjuïc for the Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games.

a particularly sensitive matter, and, in general, large buildings, such as the Arsakeion (Athens, 1846) (designed by Lysandros Kaftantzoglou), the Hilton Hotel<sup>18</sup> (Athens, 1963) (designed by the Greek architects Emmanouil Vourekas, Prokopios Vassiliadis, Spyros Staikos and Antonis Georgiadis, but belonging to an American company), and recently, Calatrava's roof, were criticized by Greek, and sometimes foreign intellectuals, as barbarian and alien. Along these lines, the film director Nikos Koundouros wrote about Calatrava's roof:

Whatever happens around us is not ours. The forged Olympic Games are not ours either. Calatrava and the monster he planted in Attica land are alien. And the other monster that wanders in our sky is also alien.

(KOUNDOUROS 2004)

For many, the scale and expenditure of the work echoed Greece's obedience to international prescriptions:

Nowadays, all public works ... obey the rule of gigantization, constructing various ziggurats with the help of high-technology and postmodern aesthetics. This is the building of globalization that aims at ... monumentalizing the unmatched magnitude of money.

(ALEFANTIS 2004)

These voices were not marginal in Greek public life, and, sometimes even inadvertently, resonated with a broader climate of increasing xenophobia that might be attributed to the growing influx of legal and illegal immigrants in Greece since the early 1990s. How, then, does the Olympic project by a foreigner, a non-native, one with a 'Spanish stamp', as a Greek journalist described Calatrava's work (SYRIGOS 2004), fit into a framework that is skeptical of foreign involvement?

It is no coincidence that Calatrava was presented to the Greek public as a 'Mediterranean', and his previous work for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics<sup>19</sup> – the city that, as ATHOC often said, served as a model for Athens' renewal – was stressed. The emphasis on Calatrava's Mediterranean identity, and consequently his presentation as someone with an understanding of the Greek mentality, established a secondary layer of discourse that emphasized affiliations with the broader geographical region in which Greece belongs. Despite Greece's antagonism with Spain for tourism, Greeks accustomed to the belief that geography determines certain cultural characteristics consider themselves as carrying a Mediterranean temperament which unites them with other countries of the Mediterranean basin, such as Spain. Comments by Greek journalist Christos Michailidis suggest the Greeks' desire to view Calatrava as their 'soul mate', an

### 9.3

*Athenian landscape. Photograph by Nikos Kazeros, 2004.*

individual with an ethos and a temperament akin to those of the Greeks: ‘He has a winning, very childish smile ... He immediately wins you over and is one of those types you would gladly go watch a football match with’ (MICHALIDIS 2001). Even Calatrava himself declared, after the work was completed:

Yes, there was a prejudice that the Greeks couldn’t get this done ... my attitude was that they’re fellow Mediterraneans, so there wouldn’t be a real problem. So I told everyone we’d finish in time.

(HOPE 2004: 8)

The element of Mediterraneanism was, according to Calatrava, the third aspect embedded in his Olympic project, after the ancient Greek and the Byzantine:

There is also a third, more general tradition at work, the Mediterranean. You see it in the landscaping, the light and color (with the reliance on white, blue, and ocher), the use of materials such as ceramic tile.

(AIARCHITECT 2004)

This regional affinity, emphasized and celebrated by cultural intermediaries, had made the public acceptance of Calatrava certain.

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## THE RHETORIC OF EUROPEANIZATION

If Calatrava’s design of the Complex’s structures was enveloped in notions of particularity, his design of the Olympic park pointed toward Greece’s intended Europeanization. Europeanization was embodied by the project and justified the choice of Calatrava not simply as Spanish or Mediterranean but as European. Calatrava envisioned the 100-hectare (240 acres) of the Olympic park as a green public space, open to residents and visitors to Athens, an ‘oasis’ from the density and pollution of the rest of the city. The park was equipped with a few symbolic structures,<sup>20</sup> and in its initial plan was meant to include a large number of plants (2,500 new large trees, 8,500 smaller trees, and 160,000 bushes). As the architect explained:

According to one saying, ‘a man who plants a tree is a man who has hope’. We plan thousands of trees and bushes and this is a mark. We are doing it because we hope that this space will continue to entertain the citizens, and Athens thus will become more beautiful.

(FOSKOLOS 2004)

**20** The major structures in the park are the Wall of the Nations and the Agora, two steel, white-painted structures. The Wall of the Nations is a monumental, 261 meters long (856 feet) and 20 meters tall (65 feet) kinetic sculpture that consists of 960 vertical movable bars, connected by mechanical joints and performing a continuous movement reminiscent to that of a wave. The Agora is a 480-meter-long (1574 feet), semi-open curving promenade formed by two vaulted, open-air arcades that run along the northern edge of the site. It is composed of 99 arches of unequal height (from 18.65 to 21.65 meters – 61 to 71 feet). It is used as an entry point into the complex and is intended as a major pedestrian pathway and a reception space for outdoor events.

The plants selected for the park were mostly indigenous, such as cypresses, olive trees, oaks, oleander, thyme and wild rose bushes. Water used in artificial ponds and fountains was intended to create a microclimate that would moderate the intense heat of the summer months. In addition to the intent to create a new micro-climate, Calatrava also aspired to nurture new public attitudes in the city:

In my opinion AOSC is a tool in Athens, a space for education and creation. And at the same time it is a constant forum. It brings to the city a space of dialogue, which is very important not only for the Maroussi district and the [wealthy] northern suburbs of Athens.

(NTALIANI 2004)

Nevertheless, the park seems doomed to failure. During my visits in the summers of 2005 and 2006, it was underutilized; visitors and greenery were sparse. The number of plants planted is less than that stipulated in the initial plan and most of them have withered. The absence of shade from vegetation or structures made walking in the park during a hot summer day unbearable.

A park is a welcome addition to a city. Where it is close to a transportation network, as is the Athens Olympic park, it is easily accessible to populations throughout the city. Besides the issues of maintenance, a major concern is the type of population that the park will attract, but also that it will stand for as a 'site of representation' where 'power relationships' are being established (KILIAN 1997: 117). For Calatrava himself, the park is symbolic of 'universalism' and 'multiculturalism' two ideals that he wished to remain as a legacy in Athens even after the Olympics ended. In an interview given to a major Greek newspaper, Calatrava stated:

Athens chose to show a work almost experimental, avant-garde and modern ... and through this choice ... the element of multiculturalism and universalism emerged, which is one of the most attractive elements of architecture. What I like very much is that this work has been made by Greeks, Italians, Spanish, Chinese, Poles.

(NTALIANI 2004)

These objectives are inseparable from the political climate of pre-Olympic Greece and the demographic changes that the country has been experiencing since early 1990s. Calatrava's commission was a part of an overall political scheme intended to foster Greece's Europeanization, a recurring and unresolved process since its establishment as a nation-state in the 1830s, that was also at stake with the first modern Olympics of 1896 (BASTEA 1999: 204–12). Europeanization is a disputed notion today in most Euro-



pean countries. The contemporary discussion of European identity is dominated on the one hand by the belief in European universality and on the other by ethnocentric conceptions. In most of these discourses, Europe is typically equated with a notion of civilization that tends to be highly ignorant of the many ethnic and secular cultures that now exist in it (DELANTY AND JONES 2002: 455).<sup>21</sup>

Europeanization signifies for Greece a move both toward the West (a means of expelling its Eastern side, *romiosini*) and toward its own roots in ancient Greece, (embracing the ideals of Hellenism, for which Greece is considered the cradle of European civilization). Europeanization was an obvious goal of the administration of Prime Minister Costas Simitis, whose party, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), held power during the largest part of the Olympic preparations, until March 2004. The Simitis' administration spearheaded the successful inclusion of Greece in the European Monetary Union, or Eurozone, in 2001, and led persistent attempts to modernize the state. In a climate that demonized globalization as a threat to the essence of Greekness, Europeanization became a desirable goal, especially among those who wished to see Greece as a modernized country in terms of its economic policy and public culture.

If, in economic terms, Greece's policy towards Europeanization has been quite clear, from a cultural perspective it has diverse interpretations. In architectural and urban terms, Europeanization tends to mean 'soft' modernization, in other words, a combination of cosmetic and 'light' infrastructural projects, such as increasing greenery in the city, making downtown areas more pedestrian-friendly, adding new cultural venues and enlarging the subway and other transportation systems. These efforts combine rationalism and beautification with a dash of olive tree and Penteli marble, all intended to counterbalance the disorder of the typical Greek city and convert downtown areas into more livable civil environments. This strategy appears different from 'hard' aspects of modernization, such as gentrification and destruction of existing modes of life in favor of commodification and development, which are the usual effects of neoliberal policies applied to regional planning. However, in the case of Athens, soft Olympic modernization was accompanied by hard modernization strategies that radically altered the geography of Attica. The metropolitan region was expanded to the eastern part of Attica by the development of new, automobile-based infrastructure and a new airport, and led to the radical conversion of the former rural area of Mesogeia into suburbs, bringing with it new sites of commercialization and real estate changes. As Ntina Vaiou wrote in 2002, turning the public's attention to asymmetries in the design of the Olympic works:

21 As Delanty and Jones summarize, there are two approaches to Europeanization today. The first is a non-essentialist approach (Habermas, Gadamer, Derrida) that claims the need to abandon cultural reference points as inappropriate to the context of a multicultural, polynational Europe. The second (Anthony Smith, John Pocock, Claus Offe) claims the impossibility of European identity to rival that of a nation due to the absence of a shared language, a functioning civic order and strong cultural ties (DELANTY AND JONES 2002: 455).

22 According to a report by the Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM) in partnership with the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) and other organizations, 140 Roma residing in a settlement adjacent to the main Olympic Complex were forcibly evicted and several other Roma communities threatened with forced eviction in the Greater Athens area during the preparations for the Olympic Games, many of which were not provided with adequate compensation, reparation or resettlement (GREEK HELSINKI MONITOR 2006). Ironically, in the post-Olympic era, one of the major areas of the Olympics in the district Faliron has been appropriated by Roma populations who converted it into a temporary settlement (TA NEA 2007).

The official discussion and designs [of the Olympics] are happening in the absence of those who live and work in the broader area of the Greek capital, despite claims of 'life improvement', a term that hides manipulations concerning areas of the city with specific types of social belonging, profiles and scopes. But in the capital, besides the eastern and northern suburbs, there exist also the western neighborhoods.

(VAIOU 2002)

Such comments remind us that Greek society is indeed far from being singular and homogeneous, and references to the 'common good' can not embrace all citizens. It is not only that certain neighborhoods of the city were neglected in favor of wealthy ones, but also that areas of undesirable populations, such as Roma, were cleared for the construction of the Olympics, including the area surrounding the Olympic Stadium.<sup>22</sup> Olympic operations of cities with as diverse reputations as those of 1936 Berlin, 1968 New Mexico, 1988 Seoul, 1992 Barcelona and 2008 Beijing have prompted authorities to launch crusades that cleared slums and removed undesirables from public view (DAVIS 2006: 104–06).

It would not be an exaggeration to claim that Calatrava's work, as one may say of most global marketers, perfectly suited and even embodied the two faces of Greece's double-sided Europeanization: on the one hand, a rational framework that did not expel but rather accepted particularity, albeit in a tamed, unthreatening manner; and on the other a disguise for a deeper modernization that disrupted and altered the region's overall geography. The 'aesthetic unification' of a disordered site, the high technology used in Calatrava's buildings, the very idea of the park (a feature that is uncommon in Greek urban history) are only the external registers of a more pervasive form of modernization introduced to Athens by the Olympics. In this way, the Olympic park did not depart from the established practices of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century European and American urban parks, whose primary purpose was to discipline the public by introducing normative practices that brought together social and moral lessons within an essentially entertaining format (CRANZ 1982: 236; MITRAŠINOVIĆ 2006: 240). On the other hand, the choice of indigenous vegetation and the referential framework of Greek architectural heritage, both hinting at monoculturalism, were elements of particularity embedded within the overall framework of modernization so that the project could be labeled 'Greek'.

Calatrava's mention of multiculturalism is at least contradictory, if not misleading, within the aspirations of European universalism. If multiculturalism is based on the principle of equality among different cultures, European universalism cannot but consider Europe as a cultural and economic power superior to the rest of the world.

In his various statements, Calatrava seemed to be content with the inclusion of many nationalities in the construction of the Olympic works, although not all of these nations were on equal standing. The special 10 cm (0.35 inch)-thick steel plate used in the Olympic Stadium roof was made in Germany; its 3 meter (10 feet) in diameter tubular members were manufactured in Italy<sup>23</sup> prior to final welding in Athens; construction supervision was undertaken by various Greek contractors and subcontractors; and the actual laborers were legal and illegal immigrants of various ethnicities, mainly from the Middle East and the Balkans. This ‘multiculturalism’ implies certain geopolitical hierarchies, remaining an unresolved issue in contemporary identity politics in both Greece and Europe.

In the post-Olympic era of today, the aesthetically unified sports complex looks more like a lethargic institutional space such as an Expo than like a park or a forum. Its function requires a superstructure, one provided either by the state or by other corporate bodies. It is a space loaded with symbolic meanings (neo-Hellenism, Europeanization, universalism), but also a place that resists public access. Despite Calatrava’s message of multiculturalism, this space does not signify an ‘open-city’, a city with ‘porous borders’ that, unlike the closed nation-state, welcomes ‘otherness’ (DERRIDA 2001: 17). Within this overall scheme, the otherness that is truly welcomed by new Athens is mainly that of the European, the ‘ideal other’ of the contemporary Greek, who is gloriously personified by Calatrava, the European architect par excellence.

Since the Athens 2004 Olympic projects are, and will be, paid primarily by tax revenues for a long time to come,<sup>24</sup> the public should have been included in the process of decision-making. Indeed, one established perception of Europeanization today is based on the idea of ‘multi-level governance’, according to which ‘decision making competencies are shared by actors at different levels rather than monopolized by state executives’<sup>25</sup> (MARKS, HOOGHE, AND BLANK 1996: 346). A number of urbanists in Greece, such as Anny Vryhea, Ntina Vaiou and Nikos Belavilas have repeatedly claimed that the making of public architecture should be accountable to the Greek public, engaging citizens in a meaningful dialogue to encourage their participation in the decision-making process, and thus increasing their understanding of architecture’s public function.

Despite the vigorous debate that took place in the Greek media during the Olympic preparations, lack of citizens’ participation was evident in the way that Olympic works were conducted. Even though the Olympic works affected the living space of four million people (or even more if one takes into account Olympic works in areas beyond Attica), the largest sectors of this population were treated primarily as observers rather than as participants.<sup>26</sup> The Greek Ministry of Culture undertook decisions in a nontransparent manner, by appointing an architect in the absence of an

23 The manufacturing was undertaken by the company Costruzioni Cimolai Armando S.P.A, subcontractor of Greek construction company Aktor.

24 As 72 percent of the cost of the Olympic Complex was paid by the Ministry of Culture and only the rest by the Athens 2004 organizers, taxpayers have been major contributors to the construction cost.

25 According to P.C. Ioakimidis, ‘Europeanization works towards the direction of weakening the relative power, role, control and autonomy of the central state institutions, while at the same time strengthening the power and autonomy of the subnational units, actors and society as a whole’ (Ioakimidis 2001: 75).

26 For a discussion on various tropes of citizens' participation in the decision-making of public architectural projects see Mattern (2007).

architectural competition, by mystifying his qualities and presenting them as beyond critic-ism, and by allowing construction companies to control the process leading to delays that jeopardized the very completion of the works. When criticism came from both local and foreign media, the organizers and the architect, assisted by various cultural intermediaries, engaged in a discourse that utilized a nationalist or even propagandistic rhetoric.

As a result, the project was conveyed to the public largely devoid of all its tangible qualities (architectonics, cost, labor) and appeared merely as a symbol of what the average Greek citizen was led to anticipate for the post-Olympic era: a 'new Greece', true to its historic heritage, that would prove to the international audience its capacity to fulfill grand works – an image that would increase the country's prestige, attract more tourism and financial investments, and finally lead to higher wages and a better life. A great majority of the public was thus convinced that supporting this project meant supporting the economic and political health of the nation and ensuring its promising future. Ultimately, questions surrounding the project operated at this symbolic level, distracting attention from specific architectural choices. If the means of achieving such national goals involved the employment of a 'global' architect, utilizing, in parallel, the 'multicultural' 'surplus' of labor that was available in Greece through the massive displacement of populations in recent years (examined by Tzirtzilaki's and Vyzoviti's chapters in this book), this did not seem incompatible with Greece's ethno-nationalism, neither did it lead to its reconsideration.

From an economic perspective, it is always difficult to know which sectors of the host nation benefited from the Olympic Games. Cost evaluations in the post-Olympic era in Greece indicated that the major portion of Olympic revenue was received by Greek construction companies and subcontractors (HARONTAKIS 2004), which played a primary role in the progress of Olympic preparations that fluctuated from catastrophic to victorious. Ironically, construction companies received much less criticism than Calatrava or the Olympic organizers, and remained largely invisible in the debates that surrounded the slow progress of the works in the general media.

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## FOREIGNNESS AS CONDUCTIVE TO REFLEXIVITY: A MISSED CHANCE

In presenting the Olympic Athletic Complex to the Greek audience, Calatrava's and most of his intermediaries' greatest effort was to convey the idea that the complex was loyal to the architectural heritage of Greece. The project appeared as a means of

refashioning parochial images of Greece, and reimagining Athens by juxtaposing a new monument to the Acropolis. Besides addressing the Athenians' relation with their 'ideal-selves', Calatrava's invitation to Athens also mobilized processes of identification with 'ideal-others': Calatrava the Spanish architect suggested Athens' identification with the Barcelona model, in which the Olympics became a successful means of urban renewal, and stressed both cities' common Mediterranean character. Calatrava the European architect also incarnated Athenians' aspirations for Europeanization, a desire that was in accordance with the broader policies of the Greek government. Last but not least, Calatrava the global architect responded to Athens' need to accommodate its increasing multicultural character – a result of massive ethnic mobilization from the Middle East and the Balkans – by accepting a division of labor that assigns these migrant populations to a newly configured, globally operating working class. Each of these references however had its role in satisfying or addressing various stakeholders of the Olympic works: socialist and neoliberal politicians, local and international construction companies, taxpayers and patriotic citizens, global visitors and potential investors, as well as economic immigrants and civil society advocates.

Calatrava's project missed two important opportunities: first, to play a role in reconfiguring Greek identity in light of the significant demographic changes that Greece has been experiencing in the last 20 years; and, second, to help introduce a more pluralistic trope of Europeanization, in terms of a more inclusive and participatory decision-making process in the development of public works. Even though the choice of a foreign architect to design the 2004 Olympic complex could have initiated a conversation about what a 'reflexively constituted type of national identity' Greece might assume today (DELANTY AND JONES 2002: 458), the overall ethnocentric framework within which the Athens 2004 Olympics operated (and which we encounter throughout Europe today) unavoidably reduced the discussion into an interpretation of architecture as a cultural representation of essentialist and normative values: Greekness on the one hand, and Europeanization on the other. Thus, even though the project apparently satisfied both Hellenists and Europeanists, it failed to cultivate a broader consciousness that could establish architecture's capacity as a means of empowering public life, but also to play a constructive role in the reconfiguration of national identity in Greece, in light of a multitude of internal and external others that hold or claim membership in Greece today.

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# Evolving Tourist Topographies: The Case of Hue, Vietnam

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Kelly Shannon

This chapter will look at the production of postcolonial urban space in Hue, Vietnam, from two different perspectives: the diachronic perspective will frame the discussion of issues surrounding Hue's urbanization from the colonial period to the present day, focusing on its engagement in the world's fastest-growing economic sector, tourism: and the synchronic perspective will elaborate on the travelling, research-motivated gaze of a foreign urban scholar in order to reveal the often contested, layered realities of the city and its metropolitan territory. The second perspective is developed from the author's extensive fieldwork conducted between 1999 and 2004, and is employed towards 'ground-truthing'<sup>1</sup> of the tensions in Hue's process of urban development: it endeavors to understand complex issues challenging the city's development, in order to propose an alternative urbanism which offers possible scenarios for developing the city, its landscape and tourism economy hand in hand.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout its history, Hue has been traveled to, mapped, chronicled and described. The city, located at the near midpoint of Vietnam's coast along the South China Sea (FIGURE 10.1), is one of the few Vietnamese cities that has both sides of its riverbank urbanized. The city's morphology opposes an emblematic royal, oriental city across the meandering Huong Giang river (Perfume River) with a colonial, occidental city, on the plains in the shadow of the rugged Truong Song (Annamite Cordillera) mountain range. Few places can boast an urban history like that of Hue, with its transformation from the last royal capital of Vietnam, to a colonial administrative center, to a site of fierce anti-French revolution and a devastating fire in 1947, to an unimaginable arena for urban combat during the American-Vietnamese War, to the processes of deurbanization during socialism, and most recently to a form of free-market speculation as Vietnam adapts to the vagaries of so-called 'socialist capitalism'. The cumulative effect of all these historical layers on Hue's urbanization has been tremendous (NGUYEN

- 1 'Ground-truth' is a term used in cartography and refers to information that is collected on specific location. It is often used to calibrate findings of remote sensing, and aids in the interpretation and analysis of what is being sensed. The terms are used here to denote the process of data collection during fieldwork and its interpretation to map-making (PICKLES 1995).
- 2 A large part of this chapter is based on the author's doctorate titled *Rhetorics and Realities – Addressing Landscape Urbanism – Three Cities in Vietnam*, defended in May 2004 at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium.

3 In feudal Vietnam, Mandarins (functionaries appointed by the Emperor) were responsible for coordinating agricultural communities and imposing royal codes upon the peasantry. During France's near-century sojourn in Vietnam, the economic prerogatives to exploit natural resources and open up new markets for domestically manufactured goods led to the initiation of Vietnam's transition from an agricultural backwater towards a more internationally linked, market-driven society. The Geneva Conference of 1954 split Vietnam at the 17th parallel with each region having a distinct economic structure, reflecting the competing ideologies in the Cold War. The north, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), gradually built-up a socialist economy; the south, Republic of Vietnam (RVN), adopted a modified capitalist system. Upon the country's reunification in 1975, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) followed a much more vigorous road to socialism, even though the entire country was ravaged by war, industrial and commercial activity was at a standstill, agricultural areas in the south were largely abandoned and there was huge unemployment. Private land owners were expropriated without compensation. In 1978, Vietnam joined CMEA (Council of Mutual Economic Assistance) and the entire country fell squarely in the orbit of the USSR. The classic communist discourse of the structural imbalance between 'consumer towns' and the 'producing' rural areas was found in Vietnam (at least until 1986). However, unlike in certain other socialist states, there was not a wholesale refusal of cities as such; the objective was rather to urbanize the countryside, and to achieve a rational and balanced population distribution among the different provinces.



10.1 Geographic location of Hue, Thua Thien Hue province, Vietnam. Interpretative cartography by the author, 2004.

AND MATHÉY 1990; NGUYEN 1984; THRIFT AND FORBES 1986; WRIGHT 1991; DUIKER 1995; HOÀNG 1997; SARDESAI 1998; PHAN 2002; BLADERSTONE AND LOGAN 2003), as extreme world-view ideologies, political and economic models,<sup>3</sup> and radical narratives have been tested, spatialized and materialized in this city.

The biography of the city remains dependent upon the agents and purposes of mapping; however, despite the historical chronicling, there is no doubt that Hue is currently situated as one of the country's leading tourist magnets and an essential component of a system of tourist routes that connect imperial and sacred sites across South-east Asia and Vietnam. Since UNESCO listed Hue as a World Heritage site in 1993,<sup>4</sup> the focus of foreign investments has been on the imperial as well as on French colonial-era buildings and monuments. Tourist developments in Vietnam represent significant economic potential, as well as a means for integrating the country into the global economy, and thus, tourism has been high on the national economic agenda since the late 1980s. Within such trends, Vietnam in general, and Hue in particular, have been represented through a narrative replete with ancient mystery, 'colonial charm', and war relics.

Nostalgia – a commodity manufactured for sale to tourists – has been utilized to mediate memory and rewrite history, as the country’s past has been recolonized by the apparatus of global tourist economy (ASKEW AND LOGAN 1994; KENNEDY AND WILLIAMS 2001; LONG 2003; NORINDR 1996). Within such an essentially economic scheme, Hue (and other ‘heritage’ sites) attracts the so-called ‘heritage tourism’, which has proved problematic in the shaping of contemporary Vietnamese identity. Namely, the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam vehemently denounces both the colonial period, as one of ‘unmitigated exploitation’, as well as the pre-colonial feudal Nguyen regime.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the Communist Party’s biased and inadequate reading of the built heritage tends towards turning it into Disneyfied museum-like environments offered to global tourists in place of ‘authentic’ cultural experiences. These issues are not new to Hue: they are an essential part of its urban history, as they are of Vietnam and Indochina in general.<sup>6</sup>

## SIMULTANEOUS EXOTICIZING AND CIVILIZING OF VIETNAM: A DIACHRONIC READING

‘Indochine’ is an elaborate fiction, a modern phantasmatic assemblage invented during the heyday of French colonial hegemony in Southeast Asia. It is a myth that has never existed and yet endures in our collective imaginary as a discursive construction that supported financial and political ambitions, and as a particularly fecund lieu de mémoire (site of memory) heavily charged with symbolic significance, Indochina continues today to arouse powerful desires. Its luminous aura sustains memories of erotic fantasies and perpetuates exotic adventures of a bygone era, while appealing to the French nostalgia for grandeur.

(NORINDR 1996: 1)

Hue is said to be imbued with magical attraction, and from its earliest days, both the royal city and the surrounding landscape attracted artists, writers and travelers. As home of the last imperial Nguyen dynasty (1802–1945), the morphology of the sacred city was a representation of cosmological beliefs and adhered to the practice of geomancy (*thay phap* in Vietnamese). Modeled on Peking under the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), Hue developed as a series of southeastern-oriented, nested citadels (culminating in a Forbidden Purple City) in the elbow-bend on the Northern bank of the Perfume River. Southwest of the citadel, clustered around the Perfume River, a cult landscape was generated, with a temple, a pagoda and a royal mausoleum as sites of worship. Hue’s relation to the landscape was carefully orchestrated and was highlighted during imperial processions of pomp and ceremony (HOÀNG 1997; BAO DAI AND LAFOND

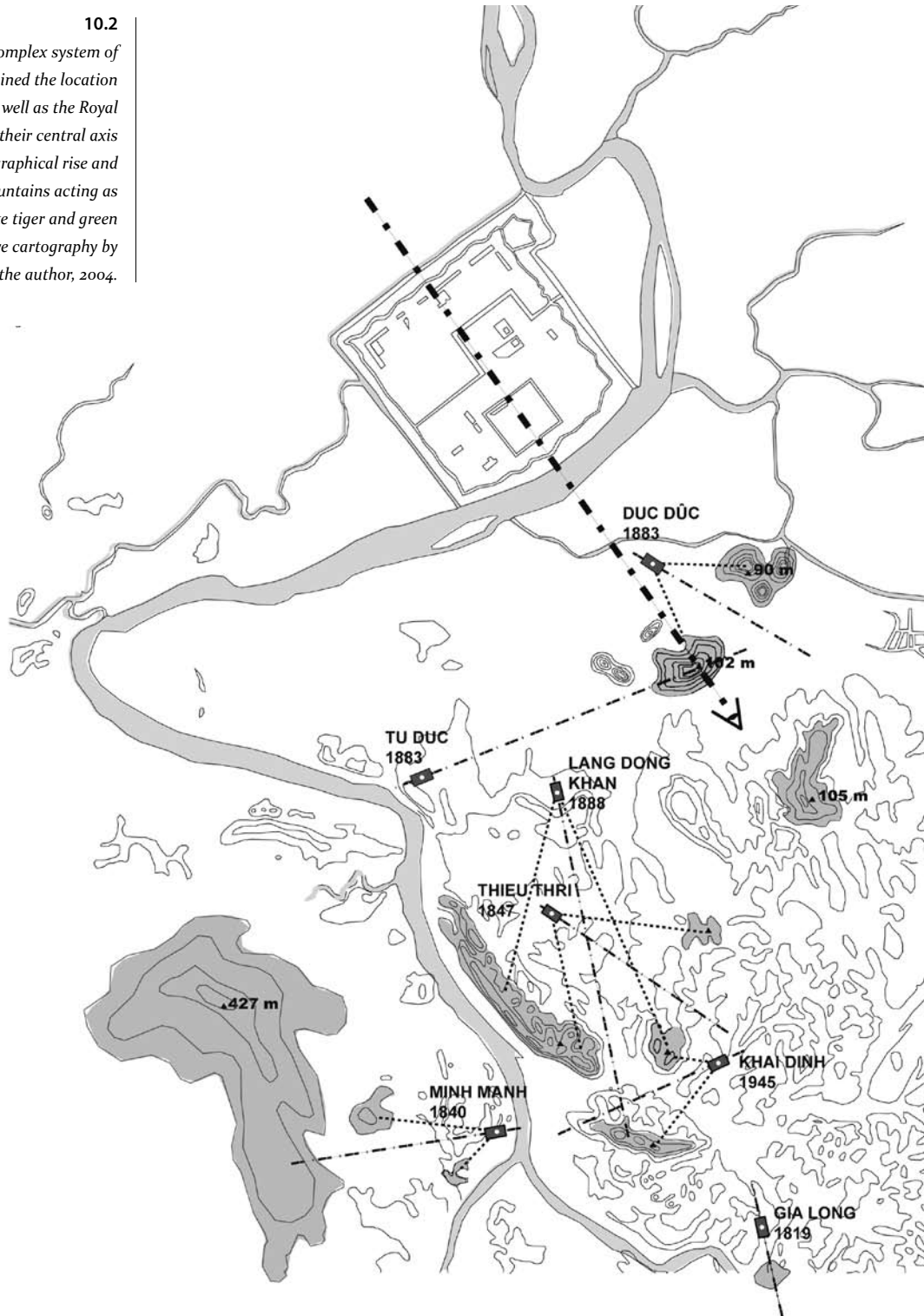
4 In 1993, UNESCO inscribed the vestige complex of ‘Hue Ancient Capital’ on the World Cultural Heritage list. The World Heritage site is identified as: the cultural landscape along the Perfume River; the imperial monuments (totaling approximately 50) on both sides of the river, including the Imperial city on the left bank and the imperial mausoleums in the right bank; and the urban blocks and garden houses within the palace-city. The UNESCO ‘protection and valuation’ map (approved by the Ministry of Construction in July 1993) marks a perimeter in the broader context of the landscape wherein it is deemed existing a balanced dialogue between nature and architecture.

5 For the Communist Party of Vietnam, Hue’s ‘heritage’ was largely ignored whereas the imperial city represented the Nguyen regime as ‘crass feudalists who sold out the country to the French and then became craven puppets of the colonial administration’ (DAVID MARR, AS CITED IN LONG 2003: 538) and the colonial city a build reminder of the era of ‘unmitigated exploitation’.

6 The French slowly assembled their colony in Vietnam over a 30-year period. In 1862, the first areas of the Mekong Delta were ceded to the French and by 1867, all of Cochinchina (Nam Bo), South Vietnam, became a colony. In 1883, the other regions of the country were established as direct and indirect protectorates, and respectively Tonkin (Bac Bo), the Northern part of Vietnam and Annam (Trung Bo), in the center. These were joined by the separate kingdoms of Cambodia and Laos, to together make up the Indochinese Federation (1893). The French left Vietnam in 1954, following their defeat by the Viet Minh in the First Indochina War.

10.2

*Feng Shui, a complex system of geomancy determined the location of Hue Citadel as well as the Royal Mausoleums with their central axis aligned with the topographical rise and with two other mountains acting as the sentinels (a white tiger and green dragon). Interpretative cartography by the author, 2004.*



1995; PHAN 2002) (FIGURE 10.2). Also indigenous forms of cultural events rooted simultaneously in the rural landscape and the city were a part of Hue's early urbanity.<sup>7</sup>

During colonization and France's near century-long occupation of Vietnam (1862–1954), foreign ideologies of repression and control<sup>8</sup> altered both urban and rural landscapes, and hence the 'cosmic' balance within Hue was compromised. France's 'la mission civilisatrice' (civilizing mission) was the veil under which exploitation of Vietnam's rich natural resources was pursued. The symbolic relationship between the urban structure and the surrounding landscape was replaced by military and commercial pragmatism: waterways became corridors for efficiently moving people and goods, whereas fortifications were strategically built to protect vital transport venues and networks. As early as 1886, the French Service Hydrographique La Marine carefully charted the waterway from the city of Hue to the South China Sea, while other French maps of the period highlighted the strategic, infrastructural and instrumental implications of the landscape in relation to the efficiency of military operations. At the same time, colonial space was viewed as a laboratory, 'champs d'expérience' (experimental terrains) (WRIGHT 1991: 12), and the south bank of the Perfume River was developed as a 'golden triangle':<sup>9</sup> a colonial cityscape with distinct political and administrative precincts, industrial areas, housing quarters and commercial districts, containing strategies of racial segregation (MARR 1971; WRIGHT 1991; DUIKER 1995; NORINDR 1996).

Exploitation of natural resources and civilizing mission did not mean however that the value of the ancient city was dismissed, and tourism was an integral part of the colonial enterprise. While the French developed their 'ville moderne' (modern city), they regarded 'ville indigène' (indigenous city) as 'Versailles Annamite'<sup>10</sup> (LE BRUSQ 1999: 125). Thus in topographic descriptions, sites were marked either in terms of military importance or as picturesque (RABINOW 1989: 148). At the national scale, Indochina's Governor General Paul Doumer (1897–1902), who was often credited for making Vietnam France's 'richest colony' (WRIGHT 1991: 182), created an ambitious infrastructure network by upgrading the 2,100 kilometer-long Mandarin Way (today known as Highway 1A) and the building of two major railway lines (one from Haiphong to Hanoi, up the Red River Valley into the Chinese town of Yunnan Fou; and the 1,600 kilometer-long le Trans-Indochinois, which paralleled the Mandarin Road, connecting Hanoi and Saigon and extending to Mytho in the Mekong delta). The importance of the railway, which was primarily utilized for tourism, was expressed in the accompanying string of train stations across the open countryside which adorned even the smallest villages, commonly with a hotel of majestic proportions attached to the train station, both designed following the Beaux-Arts principles. Hue's own station (1901) was the terminus of the southeastern end of the city's grand riverfront boulevard. As Lily Chi argues, access and continuity between cities and archaeological sites were key principles in

- 7 The contemporary attempts of tourist industry to frame Hue as a 'city of festivals' is rooted in such ancient traditions: the cosmological ordering of the urban structure (the citadel area) and the sacred landscape (tombs) is particular to Hue, and is the primary assets for the region's heritage- and culture-framed tourism. Today, Hue and its surrounding villages host a series of festivals, many of which cater to international tourists. Since 2000, the 'Festival Hue' has been held every year for nine consecutive days in June. Festival Hue has several objectives, including: offering diversified cultural activities; mobilizing the participation of local people, especially poor people, in tourism service such as lodging and eating facilities, souvenir selling, transport provision and tour guide services under the coordination of the municipality; preserving and revitalizing folk festivals and cultural events for more tourist attractions and intangible heritage preservation; renovating and developing traditional handicrafts and craft villages such as bronze-casting, embroidery, conical-hat making, weaving and knitting. Festival Hue receives technical and financial assistance from the Central Government of Vietnam and with the support and cooperation of France (TRAN 2002). In addition, local folk festivals are being revived, thereby marking an attempt to preserve local cultural assets while creating tourist attractions.
- 8 In 1922, Ernest Hébrard was appointed the first director of urbanism for Indochina. Hébrard introduced land-use zoning in order to override the individualistic economic interests that heretofore determined growth patterns. According to Gwendolyn Wright, Hébrard by no means ignored economic development, his intentions were to control it by 'civilizing' the effect it had in urban settings (WRIGHT 1991: 209–10). In the major cities of Indochina, and at new industrial installations, he envisioned vast arenas for productivity. According to his plans, cities were now planned with five spatially distinct areas: an administrative center, residential districts, recreational space, commercial districts and industrial sectors.



9 Hue's 'golden triangle' refers to colonial city which developed with three main avenues parallel to the river, their perpendiculars, and a dominant bisecting diagonal boulevard. Under the guidance of Ernest Hébrard (see also note 8 above), districts in the colonial city were designed in a Haussmann-inspired plan of broad, radiating, tree-lined axial boulevards with green spaces and vistas. Contrary to the Mandarin town where the façade on the street side is never the noble one, the French city externalized urban functions and introduced another approach to centrality by the development of squares, the creation of crossroads, and the creation of urban perspectives in which the facades of important buildings become references for future constructions (LAIDET 2000: 22). It appears that the urbanists of colonial Hue understood and respected the *feng shui* of the citadel, thereby allowing their urbanist contribution to somewhat escape, what Gwendolyn Wright has labeled, the French period in Vietnam – 'la folie des grandeurs' (WRIGHT 1991: 162). The geometry of the French city did not cancel out nor contradict the important axes of the ancient city, but instead enhanced them by way of its triangulated composition. Along the river itself, most of the French buildings were set back from the broad, tree-lined boulevard Jules Ferry (today Le Loi) which paralleled the river. In 1936, Desmarests (chief civil engineer of Annam) planned and rebuilt the parks on both sides of the Perfume River which respected all view-corridors and other important axes (PHAN 2002: 337).

10 As Annam was the colonial name for the central region of Vietnam (see note 6), Versailles Annamite refers to the 'Versailles of Vietnam', the city of royal palaces and beautiful landscapes.

11 Governor General Albert Sarraut is credited for bringing tourism into mainstream colonial policy. He created the Office Central du Tourisme within the Direction des Services Economiques and a new agency in the Conseil Supérieur des Colonies – the Section de la Propagande et du Tourisme Colonial. By the mid-1920s, a network of public and private tourist organizations had

the transformation of a foreign terrain into a visible, colonized domain; organizing tourism was thus 'a constructional endeavour integral with the physical development of colonial Indochina in the Twentieth Century' (CHI 2004) (FIGURE 10.3). Albert Sarraut, Governor General from 1911 to 1914 and 1917 to 1919,<sup>11</sup> who is credited for bringing tourism into mainstream colonial policy, wrote:

Tourism organization in the colonies [is a] necessity [not only for] economic development [but also] for publicizing the vast territories placed under French authority that are currently unknown to foreigners as much as to the French themselves. A superior national interest demands that we make known to the world the civilizing and pacifying action of France; a domestic interest demands that our colonies are visited, because the tourist of today can become the colonist of tomorrow.

(AS TRANSLATED AND QUOTED IN CHI 2004)

In France and across Europe, carefully constructed strategies of representation materialized in books, magazines articles, posters, postcards and exhibitions reiterated a narrative of colonial ambitions and accomplishments, via enchanting tales of the delights of travel and life abroad, as well as of endless opportunities to develop profit from untouched natural resources. Models of the imperial city and pagoda acted as showpieces at the 1899 Universal Exposition in Paris, while at the 1931 Colonial Exposition a full-fledged staging of the 'idea of Indochina' was introduced (NORINDR 1996: 15). The popular literature, postcards and tourist maps of the time reveal the ways in which the above events have instituted the colonial indigenous city as a romanticized, exotic tourist magnet:

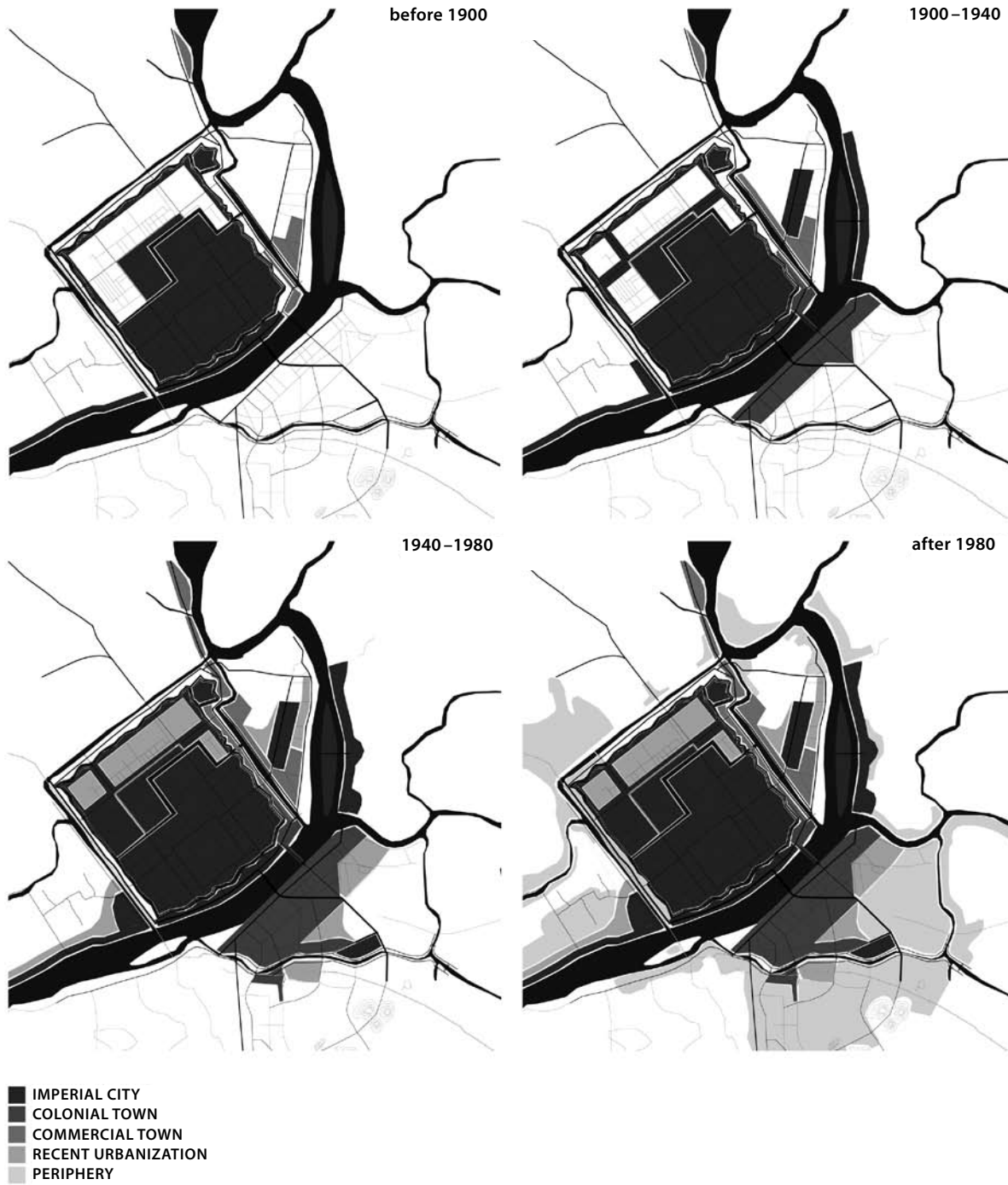
Conquest, progress and civilization are not completely irreconcilable ... Hue, delicate and fragile watercolour grows pale and fades away already. It will soon disappear in the civilization whirlpool. Hurry up then, as long as it still has some of its formal signs marking the throbbing centres of the vanished empires.

(LE BRUSQ 1999: 125)

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## FROM THE 'AMERICAN WAR' TO *DOI MOI*: RUBBLE, MONUMENTS AND TOURIST PLANS

Hue remained a center of fascination and attraction for decades until the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. As France withdrew from a divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel,<sup>12</sup> Hue continued to develop under the tutelage of the West due to an



10.3 The evolution of the urban region of Hue, early 1900s through 1980s. Interpretative cartography by the author, 2004.

developed in direct communication with this state apparatus to promote traveling to the colonies (CHI 2004).

- 12 The Geneva Conference of 1954 divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel with each region having a distinct economic structure, reflecting the competing ideologies of the Cold War. The north, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), gradually built-up a socialist economy; the south, Republic of Vietnam (RVN), adopted a modified capitalist system. The subsequent processes of urbanization were as divergent as were the ideological and economic models. Hue was located very close to the geographical divide, just south of the 17th parallel and therefore part of south Vietnam (RVN).
- 13 Although Vietnam's *doi moi* is popularly likened to the Soviet Union's Perestroika (meaning 'restructuring'), it is actually a reform program of renovation. According to Duiker, in the years following the end of the Second Indochina War, Hanoi became one of the most orthodox practitioners of the Stalinist approach to nation-building, with its emphasis on socialist industrialization (DUIKER 1995). Even after the Party leaders decided to embark on the road to reform at the Sixth National Congress in December 1986, the new program was not nearly as much a departure from past practice as was the case in China or even in the Soviet Union. It is equally clear that, for some members of the senior leadership, the ultimate goal of building a fully socialist society has by no means been abandoned (DUIKER 1995: 159).

increasing American presence. Travel and tourism came to a virtual standstill as the country was embroiled in war and economic hardship. In 1968, during the infamous Tet Offensive of what the Vietnamese call 'the American War' (1964–73), Hue suffered immense damage: the imperial city was reduced to rubble and the French side of the city was also significantly destroyed.

From 1975 to 1990, the reunified Socialist Republic of Vietnam fell within the Soviet bloc's orbit and urbanism in Hue followed the urban models set by the Soviets for the international communist world. The city was victim of the massive de-urbanization program of the south when Hue's population was reduced by over 20 percent (THRIFT AND FORBES 1986: 139). Meanwhile, Soviet-styled urban strategies restructured Vietnamese urban landscape by monumentalizing the modern. Vietnamese urbanism adhered to the slogan 'pragmatism, economy, solidity and artistic appearance' as well as to the Vietnamese Communist Party's guiding principles ('modern, cultured, dignified and simple') for the design of monuments and public buildings (LOGAN 2000: 198–200). The Vietnamese and Soviets drastically altered the area's character by reinvesting in Hue's modernization, extensions of its urban infrastructure, and the development of the southern part of its colonial quarter. Despite the fact that the State supported, to a limited degree, the development of a national tourist market, most Vietnamese were without disposable income to spend on travel.

As communism began its collapse around the globe in the 1980s, Vietnam progressively abandoned its hard-line political and economical stance. At the Sixth National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam in December 1986, the Party adopted *doi moi*:<sup>13</sup> the planning system and management of state enterprises was decentralized, government bureaucracy was reduced in size, subsidies were eliminated for key commodities, and prices of all commodities were tied to the forces of the marketplace. Besides, increased attention was placed on the promotion of agriculture and the production of consumer goods and other export commodities, all at the expense of heavy industry. Vietnam had in fact adopted the free-market, capitalist model of economic development while simultaneously retaining Communist Party in power. In its wake, the 'cradle to grave' security of the socialist project has given way to footloose capitalism and rampant real estate speculation: cities as sites of production were rapidly transformed into cities as sites of consumption.

Since *doi moi*, Hue's economy has grown comparatively fast as the impact of both national and global changes in politics and economy has substantially transformed the allocation of land for development, and tourism has become a major force in Vietnam's development.<sup>14</sup> In both the Socio-Economic Master Plan of the Thua Thien Hue Province and in the General Plan for Urban Development of Hue, one of the



primary motivations for urban development is tourism. These plans dovetail into the VNAT's national Master Plan for tourism, approved by the Government in 1996: Hue is one of seven areas in the three identified nuclei of national tourism and convalescence areas. Hue's 'Ancient Capital' inscription on the World Cultural Heritage list is seen as an incredible opportunity for the city to restore its glorious heritage, resulting in increased tourism, subsequent direct foreign investments, and also new jobs primarily in the service industry. Heritage is viewed as a driver of the local economy. The province has since registered an average annual GDP growth of over 9 percent, and both tourism and agricultural sectors, unlike the one of industry, have grown substantially (VNA 2005). As the number of visitors is increasing, tourism accounts for a higher percent of the GDP, and is expected to reach between 35 and 40 percent by 2020.<sup>15</sup> Currently, the province is further developing its service sector and also making improvements in its transportation infrastructure to better reach the remote areas and make sites of historical and natural interest more accessible to the tourist, in order to diversify its tourist offer by including eco-tourism, beach tourism and outdoor sports-oriented holidays.

## POSTCOLONIAL TOPOGRAPHIES

The 18-hole golf course in the Lang Co beach resort area that opened in 2003, south of Hue on the South China Sea, has no doubt placed Hue on the global map for dedicated golf audiences as golf courses begin playing an increasingly important role in both global tourist flows as well as in the life of the Asian metropolis (KOOLHAAS 2000: 320). Beach resorts are planned for Canh Duong and Thuan An, and spas have been developed including the Thuy Tien Lake resort and the Tan My Medical Minerals Water Resort. The number of domestic and international visitors to the Bach Ma National Park, in the southern area of the province, is dramatically increasing while a growing number of independent entrepreneurs in Hue are developing small- and medium-size tourist services – from hotels to travel agencies and to restaurants – and challenging the economic sector once entirely run by the State. In the early 1990s, as Kennedy and Williams have recognized, Vietnam began to script its tourism route:

The construction of Vietnam chosen by the international tourist industry has been of a nation of colonial pleasures, of elephant rides, 1930s Citroens, and afternoon drinks in the shade of the veranda. Evoking the days before the troubles began, the narrative creates a memory in the imagination of a Vietnam wherein there was not hostile resistance to external control, and where today there is neither conflict nor animosity toward former enemies. This Vietnam offers

**14** According to the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT), the country had nearly three million foreign visitors in 2004 (20 percent increase from 2003) with a significant number of tourists coming from China, followed by those from the United States of America, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. The number of domestic tourists is also on the rise, as levels of disposable income became higher and travel within the country became easier. In early 2005, the national airline carrier, Vietnam Airlines, abolished the dual-tariff structure (whereby Vietnamese nationals travelled at a small fraction of the price foreigners commonly paid); this and similar events point at current trends aimed at adopting global economic standards and policies, as Vietnam tries to be competitive on a global scene. Source: Vietnamese National Administration of Tourism (VNAT), <http://www.vietnamtourism.com>, accessed on 1 June 2005.

**15** The province has since registered an average annual GDP growth of over 9 percent as compared with nearly 3 percent between 1976 and 1989. Between 1990 and 2005, the constellations in the province have changed significantly: while industrial construction declined from 36 percent of the province's total GDP in 1990 to nearly twenty percent in 2005, both tourism and agricultural sectors have grown from 36 to 44 percent and from 20 to over 40 percent respectively (VNA 2005). In 1990, the Thua Thien Hue province received 20,000 domestic tourists and 10,000 international tourists; by 1999, the figures had jumped to 250,000 and 156,000 respectively. In the period between 1991 and 1995, tourism accounted for 6–10 percent of the GDP; by 2020, this number is projected to reach between 35 and 40 percent. (Source: Thua Thien Hue Tourism, official site of the Thua Thien Hue province <http://www.huevietnam.com> accessed on 1 June 2005.) In 1990, Hue recorded 19,193 tourists, whereas in 2004 it had 260,000 tourists that generated over US\$23 million (VND368 billion) in posted earnings (LIEU 2005).

to travellers its Asian exoticism and its mystique, as well as a muted and angerless history. With this particular narrative, the tourist industry provides a vision of a sweet past that corresponds to Lowenthal's notion of nostalgia: 'not so much the past itself as its supposed aspirations, less the memory of what actually was than what was once thought possible'.

(KENNEDY AND WILLIAMS 2001: 136–7)

The development of Vietnamese tourist industry must also be seen as the result of a concerted official effort launched in the late 1980s; nostalgia, as a commodity manufactured for sale to tourists, has de facto rewritten Vietnamese history, as Vietnam has been re-presented through a narrative replete with ancient mystery and colonial charm. In the process, the country's wars have been turned into tourist attractions, and

since the profit must come from those who lost the war, aspects of the story must be muted and key roles recast to make the story more palatable ... The power of Vietnamese resistance to colonialism and its oppression is erased from public memory and substituted with docile submission ... Vietnam's past is selectively reconstructed to appeal to Westerners or, perhaps more accurately, to marketers' ideas of Westerners and their interests. When social value is conferred through the selection and development of tourism sites, alternative constructions of the past are devalued, and the political nature of the tourist enterprise is exposed. In this sense, the 'new Vietnam' offered by tour operators is particularly un-Vietnamese, emphasizing colonial extravagance, GIs' parties and a manicured golf course.

(KENNEDY AND WILLIAMS 2001: 145, 158, 160)

In-between visits to the traditional tourist sites – such are religious and archaeological sites, museums, palaces and temples – the tour nowadays also accommodates visits to war sites, which have become an integral part of the tourist industry, and of the tourist pilgrimage displaced from the tragic historical context (NORINDR 1996: 157): tourists nowadays visit the war room in the Presidential Palace and the Vietcong command bunker. The surreal juxtapositions of tourist sites, together with the fabricated narrative that attempts to frame them together, present significant domestic problems in the shaping of contemporary national and cultural identities (LONG 2003), particularly vis-à-vis globalization. According to Colin Long, Hue's World Heritage status since 1993 – that has, as mentioned earlier, reduced the cultural heritage to manifestations of the nation's feudal past together with French colonial buildings and monuments – has simultaneously depoliticized the past by assigning specific heritage sites to world heritage as opposed to those of the present socialist Vietnam. Nevertheless, the ideological baggage accompanying the definition of 'heritage' in Hue has been too great

to be ignored. Although Vietnam, in general, and Hue, in particular, are still in the embryonic stages of tourism development, they are already struggling to preserve its rich cultural heritage. The entire issue of tourism based on conservation of patrimony and heritage raises the contentious issue of the local in the face of global forces and the concept of cultural authenticity. Mark Askew and William Logan, in the introduction to their book *Cultural Identity and Urban Change in Southeast Asia* (1994), admit that the appeal to so-called 'tradition' must recognize that there are serious problems with establishing the authenticity of the 'traditional' (ASKEW AND LOGAN 1994: I-VIII). Although authenticity and pastiche are clearly opposed in the West, in East Asia differences are largely blurred. For Hue, the paradox of UNESCO's recognition is that only fragments of the imperial urban patrimony remain, particularly in case of the citadel (70 percent of which was either destroyed or has severely deteriorated). War and naturalization of the monuments (where tropical vegetation has colonized structures that were not maintained for decades) have eroded the physical structures, while, at the same time, the monumentalization of nature continues through the establishment of new sacred sites (for burial sites and clan houses).

Even though Vietnam claims to have learned lessons from the negative impacts of tourism in other Southeast Asian countries, and has therefore embarked on a 'socialist tourism-development strategy' that took into account the non-economic aspects of development, there still exists a strong difference between rhetoric and reality: as James Elliot has observed, 'in practice, only economic effectiveness has been given emphasis [while] other principles, like public interest or public service, have only been given half-hearted commitment as against the highest priority given to economic growth' (ELLIOT 1997: 238). With time, the fate of Vietnamese tourism may follow that of other countries throughout Southeast Asia, eloquently described by Don Townsend in an investigation of Denpasar, Bali wherein the difficulties of maintaining the 'sacred landscape' in the face of the profanity of globalism leads to an eventual triumph of the profane (TOWNSEND 1994). The space that opened up between the economic pragmatism of the newfound private sector (and its speculations) and the inefficiency of the government apparatus that continues to follow Soviet-inspired centrally-controlled master planning<sup>16</sup> is particularly fragile, as it is obvious from the blanketing of the territory with golf courses, spas and resort complexes. The translation of idealized socio-economic projections into land-use plans, without acknowledging ground realities (both topographic and socio-economic) in good part controlled by the private sector due to corruption creates a complex web of relationships between modernization, spatial economy and urban development, and tourism. For Hue, without doubt, there are obvious economic gains to be succeeded from the development of tourism, while at

16 This is taking place in Hanoi's National Institute of Urban and Rural Planning that still controls land use and attempts to 'design' the spatial future of cities and their expanding peripheries.

17 As John Urry writes: 'The tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experiences. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken to be in some sense out of the ordinary. The viewing of such tourist sights often involves different forms of social patterning, with a much greater sensitivity to visual elements of landscape or townscape than in normally found in everyday life' (URRY 1990: 137).

the same time, as pointed out by Nguyen Van Hue, there are a series of practical problems that the city encounters, including:

unsympathetic construction of restaurants and hotels, prostitution, commercialization of traditional performing arts, such as court music, inappropriate siting and construction of infrastructure (for example, a car park serving Minh Mang's tomb caused the crumbling of the river bank), environmental destruction (for example, trees cut down to build shops near Minh Mang's tomb) and unrealistic expectations of locals of the benefits of tourism.

(LONG 2003: 555)

As John Urry suggested, focuses on the extraordinary and heavy reliance upon, and catering to, the development of the 'tourist gaze'<sup>17</sup> is not only economically questionable, but perhaps also counterproductive. Tourism as a strategy for economic development raises the contentious question, as posed by Urry himself:

... development for whom? Many of the facilities that result from tourism (airports, golf courses, luxury hotels and so on) will be of little benefit to the mass of the indigenous population. Likewise much indigenous wealth that is generated will be highly unequally distributed and so most of the population of developing countries will gain little benefit. This does of course depend on patterns of local ownership. Finally, much employment generated in tourist-related services is relatively low-skilled and may well reproduce the servile character of the previous colonial regime.

(URRY 1990: 64–5)

The ongoing debates over the undesirable impacts of mass tourism in the developing world have focused on the negative impacts on the environment, the way in which tourism corrupts and bastardizes local cultures, and the so-called 'profit leak' or the manner in which potential economic benefits are largely unfulfilled as result of the first world ownership of the global tourist industry (MOWORTH AND MUNT 1998: 11). An emerging consensus around these questions is that global mass-tourism is undeniably unsustainable. Across the globe, the role of tourism in shaping, managing and representing landscape – both real and imagined – is drastically increasing. If spatio-economic policies and urban developments are conceived hand in hand with tourism-driven developments, comprehensive spatial systems catering to various simultaneous users can be conceived that would qualitatively build upon the existing potentials of specific locations. Analogically, as Kennedy and Williams have observed:

the tourism industry may provide the Vietnamese yet another opportunity for resistance to appropriation, both by individuals who disregard the tourist narrative as pragmatic disingenuity and by officials who press the tourist industry to revise its narratives.

(KENNEDY AND WILLIAMS 2001: 160)

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## FOCUSING ON THE *LOCI*: A SYNCHRONIC READING

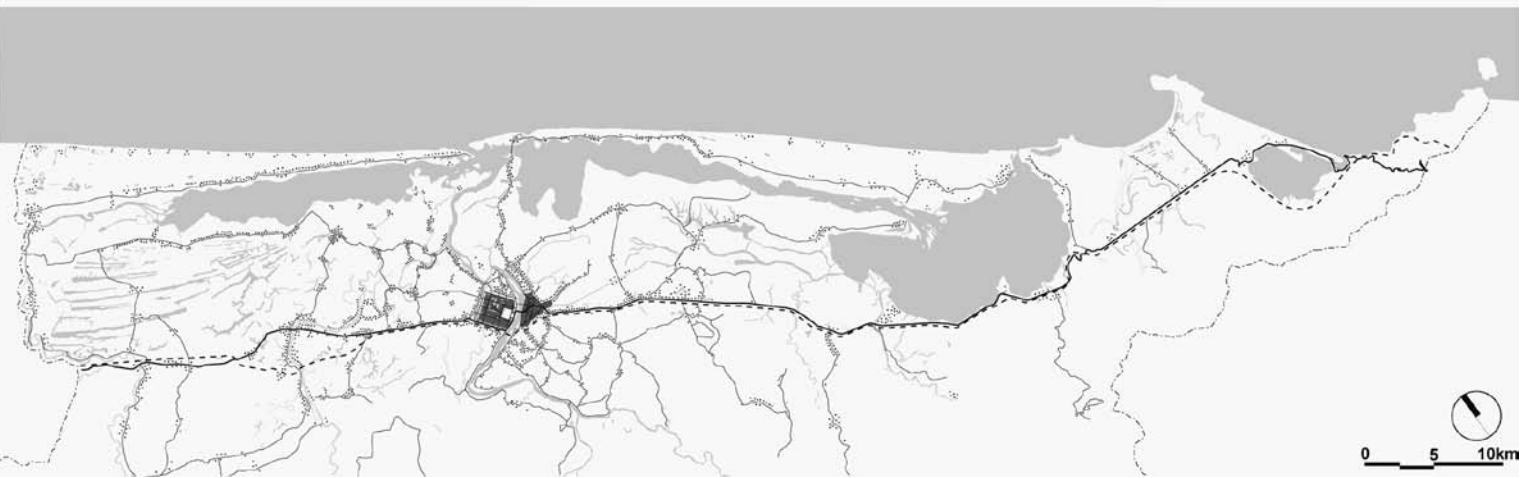
Having recognized the counter-productivity of global tourism and its neglect for the everyday urbanism of the locals, the second part of this chapter will adopt a projective, 'descriptive urbanist' take,<sup>18</sup> aimed at revealing a 'critical-realist' perspective<sup>19</sup> on the hidden potential of Hue. In it, traveling and map-making are highly operative because, when combined, they enable a simultaneous development of reading, interpretation and the urbanist's imaginary through the construction of interpretative maps.

A careful reading of Hue's topography and cultural landscape reveals that there remains a potential to build upon the richness of the city and its landscape: the region's geographic and topographical character has inherent qualities which create unique potentials for tourism, modernization and urban development. In the present master plan, for both the province and the city, the larger setting – where the indigenous culture merges with the images of mountains, rivers, lagoons and the sea – is not explicitly recognized. Within the 20-kilometer radius, Hue encompasses an entire range of ecological systems laterally spanning from the mountains, across the plains, to the freshwater lagoons and ending in the sea. Transversally, a network of rivers unites the diverse landscape systems. The Perfume River connects the mountains to the sea, an imperial city to a colonial city, the world of the sacred to the world of economics, the everyday life of local inhabitants to the playgrounds of tourists. Nonetheless, it is precisely such a holistic and systematic framing of its resources that renders Hue exceptional.

At the same time, water is the region's greatest potential asset and also the greatest threat. The liquid landscape of the Thua Thien Hue province includes a 120 kilometer-long coastline, a dense network of rivers, as well as Vietnam's largest freshwater lagoon. Economically, water in the region is the base for rice production, extensive fish farming, mineral water production and medical treatment (hot water springs and spas). Besides, white sandy beaches along the South China Sea are attracting more and more national and international tourists from April to September. Despite the incredible opportunities afforded by water in the region, rivers are also responsible for devastating lowland paddy, wrecking havoc on settlements, and taking lives through an

**18** As Michiel Dehaene writes, 'the descriptive urbanist takes it to be his task, not to construct parallel worlds, but to circumscribe holes in the world of conventional representation and to document these as momentos of an uncharted territory which has long been effected by the map. He embraces these cavities as forgotten opportunities, little islands of otherness within excessively mapped territories of sameness ... He or she excavates small fragmentary projects from the big territory of sameness. These patiently constructed fragments of otherness never culminate in a new whole, nor do they reflect, like the romantic fragment, a whole other world. The descriptive urbanist's constructions are not markers of identity but of difference' (DEHAENE 2002: 325–6).

**19** Critical realism is a philosophical view of science and/or theory which asserts that our knowledge of the world refers to the-way-things-really-are, but in a partial fashion which will necessarily be revised as that knowledge develops (for reference, see the work of Americans Roy Wood Sellars, George Santayana, and Arthur Lovejoy and in relation to a broader movement the work of Bertrand Russell and C. D. Broad, as well as contemporary British philosopher Ram Roy Braskar).

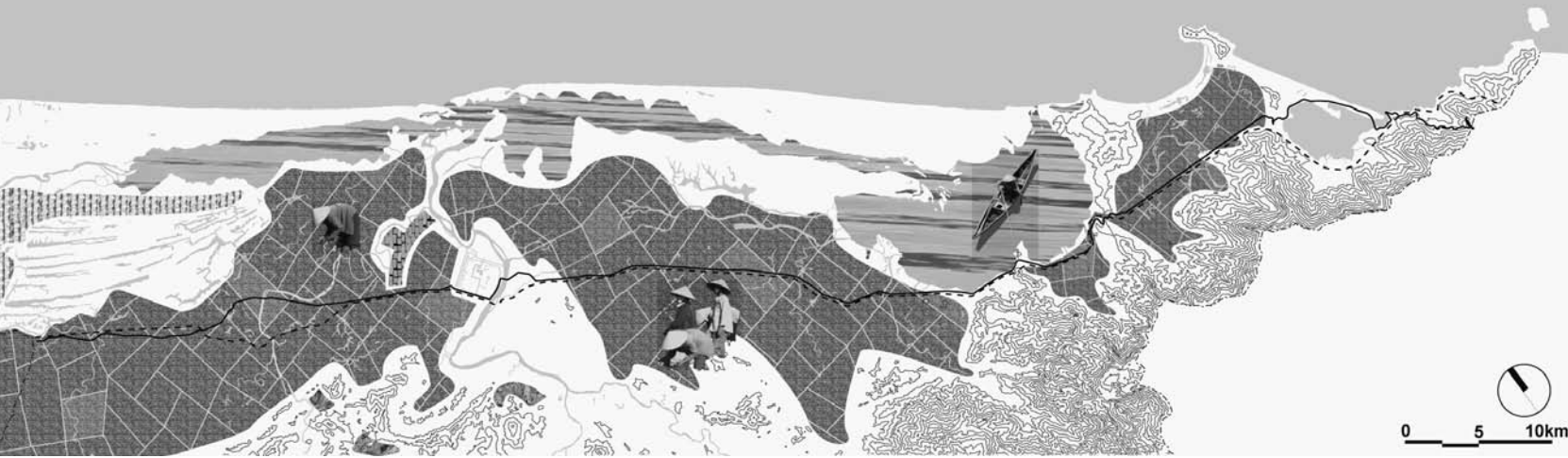


**10.4** Hue infrastructure and settlements: national highway A1, railroad, and the ribbon-sprawl urbanization present along waterways and roads. Interpretive cartography by the author, 2004.

increasing frequency and severity of seasonal floods. Urban development, as sanctioned in the city's approved master plan (valid until 2020) will continue to exacerbate floods as lowlands are filled for building sites; the entire hydraulic system and larger eco systems are disrupted. Moreover, the man-made waterways in and around the citadel have deteriorated and in many cases have become stagnant bodies of water in need of restoration. The city has high annual rainfalls (average 3,000 mm/year) and approximately 160 days of rain per year. In October 1999, Hue suffered its worst flood in 40 years and there was significant loss of life and property damage. A series of concrete embankments are being constructed in the areas where erosion is at its worst, but such engineering feats threaten Hue's particularity of a unique land-to-water relationship.

Understanding and strengthening sustainable processes of urbanization – which would primarily follow existing water and road infrastructure – could be further exploited as opposed to, or in addition to, the current practice of covering large territories with monofunctional programming (FIGURE 10.4). The underutilized railroad could be reactivated to become a vital element in the public transport system, serving locals and





**10.5** Hue's urban agriculture and water-based production, with rice and vegetable cultivation widespread within the city itself. Interpretive cartography by the author, 2004.

visitors alike. At the same time, high costs of construction render the process of building infrastructure slow, particularly in view of severely limited resources. The Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, in addition to a host of bilateral cooperation projects, are presently pursuing the development of new highway systems, bridges and tunnels throughout the country. Alternatively, infrastructure development which works to improve the existing road and water networks, and strategically accents the existing hierarchy of systems across the territory, would increase accessibility and diversify tourism and travel in the area; such developments would also increase possibilities for sustainable economic development and improve living conditions in the under-urbanized territories.

Hue and its surroundings are extremely productive in agro- and aqua-culture terms (FIGURE 10.5). In Hue, developing sustainable transportation along the waterways could also improve living conditions of the sampanier communities,<sup>20</sup> which the authorities seem to be anxious to remove. Mobile, water-based living could indeed be encouraged, and a network of infrastructural piers to cater to the needs of tourists

**20** Sampaniers are people living on river boats and making their living from water-related activities.

along the Perfume River by day, could facilitate sampaniers' practices by night. Fishing, fish farming and bamboo curing occur not only in the lagoons, but also in the network of waterways surrounding the city. For instance, Vietnamese spinach and lotus are cultivated in the inner city canals, particularly in the citadel's Royal Canal. In Hue itself, informal cultivation of urban land is widespread: the broad expanse atop the walls of the citadel, and the area immediately outside the Forbidden City, have temporarily been appropriated by urban farmers. Likewise, rice is cultivated at a large scale around Hue. However, in the recently approved master plan, land allocation for urban food producers is excluded. These areas are slated to become formal gardens and waterfront promenades with hard surfaces, playing areas and picturesque parks. There is no reason why public programs, for residents and visitors, cannot be combined with urban agriculture, water storage and nature conservation. Hue's open space could be reconfigured in an economically and socially intelligent manner to facilitate both private and public interests.

Finally, Hue and its surrounding territory is specifically marked though a series of sacred landscapes for ancestor worship (the more famous ones being the tombs for royal emperors, but also including the vast cemeteries and clan-houses for ordinary Vietnamese). Contemporary planning and urbanism does not take these sites into consideration during the process of land-use planning: they should be areas that are protected as part of Hue's heritage.

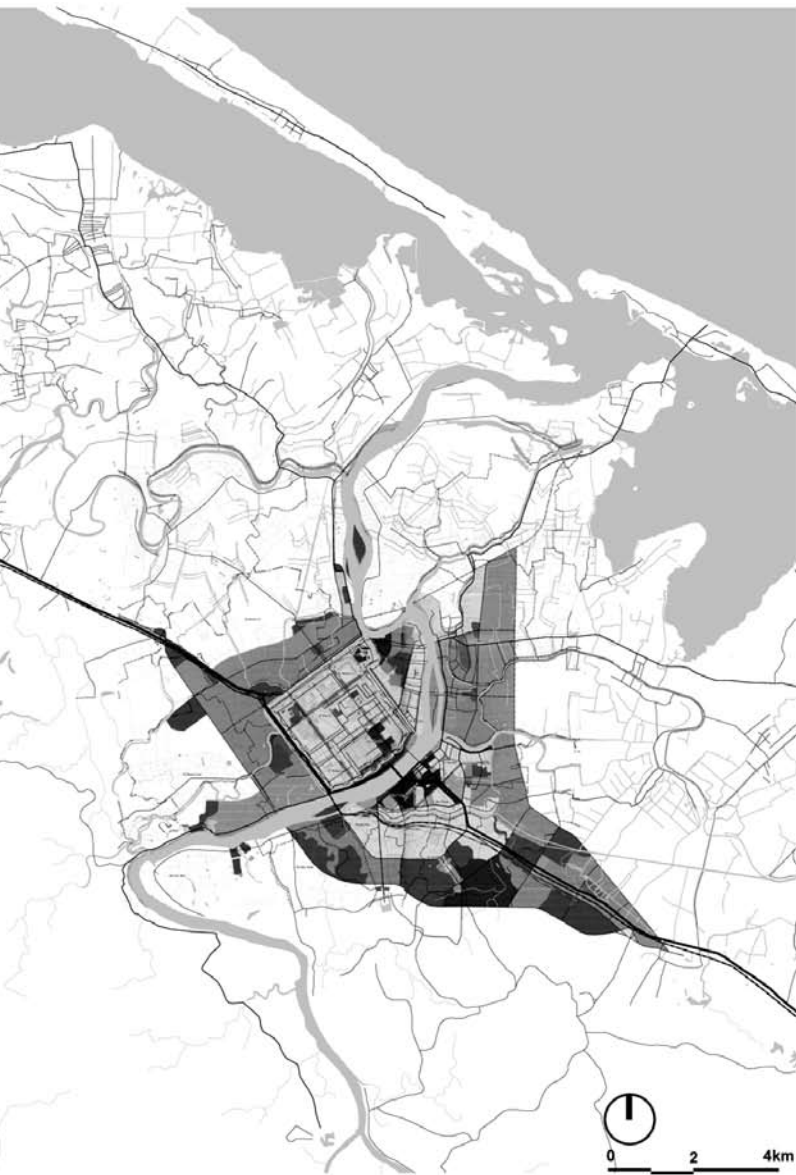
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## **TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE TOURIST TOPOGRAPHIES**

Thua Thien Hue's tourism's relies upon the attraction of place and the quality of the built and natural heritage are prerequisites – yet adequate facilities (particularly in the hospitality and transportation sectors) must be constructed. At the same time, it is essential to maintain a balance between the needs of residents and visitors. Strategies and policies could be developed to benefit indigenous residents and tourists alike; as much as possible, there should be a blurring of the boundary between tourist enclaves and public spaces within the city. The public realm could be reinforced and public-private partnerships providing facilities for international tourism could dovetail into projects of urban upgrading.

At the scale of the province, a connecting system of public service spines, productive urban parks and improved land access could better service the local population as well as make the diverse landscape of Hue and its periphery landscapes more accessible for tourism (FIGURE 10.6). The tourist economy in Hue can take advantage of





10.6 Connecting systems throughout the landscape: simultaneous de-buildings and consolidation. Interpretive cartography by the author, 2004.

much more than merely the citadel and the imperial mausoleums. The province's five main rivers, traversing the landscape from their mountain sources in the southwest to their estuaries in the northeast, could become public spines to structure a system of pathways, small roads, and urban and rural public services (including schools, clinics, sports facilities, drying platforms for rice and brick drying, etc.). In an alternative proposal, a large urban park (doubling as a bypass canal) could function as public space. In addition, a system of public platforms (which can rise with the high water) could structure the spine of the proposed park. Public programs, for residents and visitors, could be combined with urban agriculture, water storage and nature conservation. The neat rows of vegetable gardens, lush green fields of rice and forests of mangrove and bamboo could become part of the palette of materials, colors and surfaces in the redesign of the city's open spaces.

The alternative proposals for Hue build upon contemporary tendencies – both in the existing planning context as well as in daily reality. The country's tradition of policy-making and urbanism has been founded upon an unequivocal belief in planning and a certain power to impose radical spatial configurations upon the territory. Indeed, it is for this very condition that Vietnam is a context in which 'alternative' tourist policies and broad, structuring strokes of landscape urbanism remain feasible. The proposed large-scale interventions are (infra)structural and aim to protect and enlarge the collective, public realm of rapidly urbanizing Hue, while at the same time acting as supports for appropriation by unprogrammed activity, mobility, and transport, as well as platforms for sustainable investments. In Vietnam, there remains a will to plan and in this regard a new voluntarism is advocated which could operate on the level of (infra)structural and strategic planning. As a way of leveraging the negative impact of global tourism, the new built environment in Hue need not be formulated solely as a tourist product, but as a comprehensive sociospatial system which simultaneously caters to multiple users, and which intelligently and qualitatively builds upon the existing potentials of this unique place.

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# 3

## GLOBAL MOBILITIES

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**Spatialities of Suitcase Architects**

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# Spatialities of Suitcase Architects

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*Ken Tadashi Oshima*

In the symposium 'Critical Practice in a Globalizing World' held in October 2006 at the University of Washington in Seattle, the architect Craig Dykers noted that at any one time there are 1.4 million people in the air. Since 1989, when his Oslo-based firm Snøhetta won the Bibliotheca Alexandrina competition in Egypt, Dykers has been one of those air-based individuals and at present continues to commute between Oslo and New York City for the design of the World Trade Center Cultural Center. As part of an increasing population of globalized 'suitcase' architects who live and practice in geographic locations remotely removed from their building sites, Dykers represents a generation whose professional routines are facilitated by a close proximity to international traffic networks and hubs, as well as by the extensive use of the Internet.

While architects have traveled the world throughout the twentieth century for leisure and inspiration, today the degree of air travel for work is unprecedented. In 1955, Le Corbusier famously flew from Paris to Tokyo and to India where he designed art museums, but his daily routine did not involve extensive fly or traveling. The tragic and legendary passing away of Louis Kahn at New York's Grand Central Station in 1974, and its link to Kahn's well-known fear of travel, did bring a new dimension to the understanding of his earlier journeys to India and Bangladesh. Alejandro Zaera-Polo, principal of Foreign Office Architects (FOA), distinguishes between the first and the second generation of global 'star architects' (FINCH 2003): the first generation includes Renzo Piano, Rem Koolhaas and Frank Gehry, and the second includes himself and his partner Fashid Moussavi. The Spanish-born Zaera-Polo and Iraqi-born partner Fashid Moussavi, who both practised with Rem Koolhaas at the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), launched their global career in 1995 by winning the Yokohama Ferry Terminal Competition, and subsequently developed and built the Terminal to a great success between their office in London and the building site in Japan. In addition, therefore, to Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM), Kohn Pederson Fox (KPF), and Hellmuth Obata + Kassabaum (HOK), corporate architectural practices that

1 See the interview with David Adjaye in this section.

have routinely practiced globally since 1950s, independent practices the size of Snøhetta and FOA have recently emerged as actors in the global architectural marketplace that recognizes no political or cultural borders. The University of Washington symposium used the term ‘critical globalism’ to describe the processes through which such global practices employ cultural resonances and dissonances in the production of architectural work.

Such global practices can be seen to emerge through global flows of capital, information, and people. For FOA, they defined their practice ‘not within the discipline of architecture but as emerging processes of production and economic integration that seemed increasingly to determine all contemporary practices beyond their disciplinary categorization’ (ZAERA-POLO 1998: 125). In terms of the economical processes that affect architecture, the sheer volume of airline travel has, in relative terms, lowered the price of international airline travel, at least for economy tickets that facilitate emerging practices whereby direct face-to-face contact between the architect and client/site is essential. Distance is no longer a barrier for architectural opportunities, rather the direct connections and competition among the airline route maps of such low-fare companies such as easyJet and Ryanair are increasingly shaping the realm of professional possibilities.

In particular, London is one hub for travel to all parts of Europe and the rest of the world and the home base for FOA as well as firms such as the 2000-person global design and engineering practice, Arup. As Arup director Rory McGowan noted in the symposium, 80 percent of his work is abroad as he divides his time between Beijing and London and relies on the loose framework between Arup’s offices around the world created through personal connections, an internal email system, and an increasing reliance on local teams in the field. For architect David Adjaye, London serves as his base between work in Oslo, Venice, New York City, Denver and teaching in London, Philadelphia and Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Seattle, home to multinational enterprises including Boeing, Microsoft, Amazon and Starbucks, provides a counterpoint to the global–local space of London. While sharing a similar northern climate with London’s rainy weather and temperate summers, Seattle’s location along the Pacific Rim at the northwestern corner of the continental United States shares strong cultural ties with both Asia and Scandinavian countries. As the site for the UW symposium, Seattle was thus inherently imbricated with layers of locality both in its topographical and cultural sense, along the lines of David Adjaye’s thinking on architecture.<sup>1</sup> Within this multilayered context, Finnish architect Markku Komonen spoke at the symposium about finding a familiar/foreign identification with the mystical powers of seeing Mount Rainier. Moreover the

architects, dislocated from a Euro-centric context, were no longer situated in a customary relationship of center and periphery providing a new platform for global discourse.

Ultimately, this can be seen to create a new 'space' for architectural practice. The space of the airplane itself is a floating office, which at least for now allows for concentrated work basically free from telephone and Internet communication. Such a space over international waters is literally free from national boundaries, although flag-bearing national carriers will inevitably shape the atmosphere of their cabins accordingly. Yet as multilingual announcements and menu options attest, it becomes a microcosm of international interaction and negotiation on person-to-person level.

For all the benefits of jet travel, it also certainly brings on negative effects. Of course, jetlag can be physically debilitating and contribute to a sense of placelessness. While business-class travel is intended to alleviate these problems, tickets that are often four times as expensive as economy fares create a hierarchy of economy, business and at the very top first-class architects. Moreover, the ecological price of air travel in terms of noise and energy consumption is not to be underestimated. For the UW symposium, Alejandro Zaera-Polo in the end did not attend because of over-commitments to other travels and rising Berlin-based architect H. Jürgen Mayer, who was commuting to New York City to teach at Columbia University, noted that he 'felt homesick for the first time in his entire life'. Such an increasingly nomadic existence is the norm for this genre of architects, with Yung Ho Chang commuting between Beijing and Boston, and Craig Dykers between Oslo and New York.

In the end, a critical global practice relies on a delicate balance between global travel and a strongly rooted local base. The balance between direct communication and mutual understanding is essential. As Markus Schaefer points out in this chapter, the fax remains a vital global tool to communicate through sketches. Nonetheless, the never-ending element of discovery of the potential of new worlds and rediscovery of one's own existing realm through travel continues to inspire new architectural forms. From 2007 to 2025, the number of air travellers is expected to double to 9 billion a year, and so the need to address the global-local situation will only intensify.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, critical practice sets up the basis for new opportunities and a new way of looking and producing architecture at an unprecedented speed.

<sup>2</sup> Prediction made by the Airports Council International (ACI), Air travelers expected to double by 2025, MSNBC, 30 January 2007, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16886557/>, accessed 1 February 2007.

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# Mobility and Immobility in the New Architecture Practice:

## *A Conversation with Hiromi Hosoya and Markus Schaefer*

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*Jilly Traganou*

Hosoya Schaefer Architects was founded in Zurich in 2003 and focuses on architecture, strategy and research. Its two principals, Japanese-born Hiromi Hosoya and Swiss-born Markus Schaefer, met during their studies at the Graduate School of Design (GSD) at Harvard University, where they were among the authors of the *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* (CHUNG 2001). After completing her degree in 1998, Hosoya returned to Japan to work for architect Toyo Ito and was sent as a project architect to the Netherlands, where she set up and became director of Toyo Ito Europe in Rotterdam (2002–03). From 1999 to 2003, Schaefer worked for the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), and in 2002–03 he was the director of the firm's research department AMO.

Although Hosoya Schaefer's studio is in Zurich, most of the partners' work and teaching takes place at sites away from their office base. Schaefer, for instance, taught two studios at the Berlage Institute in Rotterdam from 2004 to 2006, while Hosoya taught at Cornell University in the fall semesters of 2005 and 2006, and both taught at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Vienna in the summer of 2007. Similarly, most of the firm's commissions are at various locations throughout Europe.<sup>1</sup> For these projects they collaborate with an international network of professionals with offices far from their own. For their AnAn project in Wolfsburg, Germany,<sup>2</sup> for example, Hosoya Schaefer collaborated with the Copenhagen-based media company Shiftcontrol, the Bern-based graphic design studio Buro Destruct, and a range of young Japanese graphic and media designers.

As a result of these circumstances, physical mobility is crucial to the firm's practice – for teaching, meeting with clients and collaborators and overseeing projects – and as a condition, it is far from an exception for architects of Hosoya and Schaefer's generation. Increasing numbers of architects today not only study in countries other

- 1 Current commissions include the design of an office building and the new Rinascente department store in Santa Giulia, near Milan, Italy (master plan by Norman Foster), and *Cities in Motion* a documentary film to be produced by Condor Communications (2007–08). Among the firm's recently completed projects are AnAn (WOLFSBURG 2007), a noodle bar for Autostadt Germany, the theme park and communications platform of the Volkswagen Group, and Mobiglobe (2005–06), a media exhibition for Autostadt. In 2008, the firm won the first prize in a competition for the design of a private airport for the company Engadin Airport AG in St Moritz-Samedan, Switzerland.
- 2 Hosoya Schaefer won the Special Award 'New Generation' at the Contractworld Awards 2008 for this project.



12.1 Statistical globe developed for the Mobiglobe installation at Autostadt, Wolfsburg. © Hosoya Schaefer Architects, 2006.

than their native one but, as members of transnational architectural networks through which they acquire and maintain their recognition, find themselves perpetually on the move. These new circumstances – frequent mobility and distance from the home office – have produced a significant change in the way architecture practices operate today, especially in comparison with the relative stability, or smaller geographical radius of work, that characterized most offices until the recent past.

In a practice like Hosoya Schaefer's we find certain characteristics intersecting: the partners' graduate studies at the GSD, a school that, in addition to maintaining educational excellence, is regarded as an avenue to global success and networking; tenure in elite architectural practices of international stature prior to establishing an independent studio; and a transnational working process that expands the firm's realm of operation to places beyond its base studio in Zurich. These conditions are all important for sustaining a mobile practice like theirs. At the same time, Hosoya and Schae-

fer's personal trajectories and backgrounds in fields other than architecture (Hosoya studied English literature and Schaefer neurobiology)<sup>3</sup> qualify them to question the conventional role of the architecture office and the disciplinary boundaries of architecture. It is no coincidence, therefore, that their practice includes design for new media installations and virtual environments as well as research and consulting. Among their projects, it is particularly noteworthy that some focus precisely on the very notion of mobility, such as Mobiglobe (FIGURE 12.1), a research project and interactive media installation on global automotive mobility exhibited at the Autostadt (a subsidiary of Volkswagen) in Wolfsburg, Germany (2006), and *Cities in Motion*, a documentary film on mobility.<sup>4</sup> With Mobiglobe, Hosoya Schaefer presented a cartography of the condition of mobility in the contemporary world, claiming the need to reinvent automobile transportation through 'new efficiencies, multi-modal transport systems, energy sources, behaviors, and cultural values, especially when faced with the huge potential demands in emergent economic powers like China and India'.<sup>5</sup>

The aim of the following conversation is to explore the ways in which the increasing mobility that characterizes life in a globalized world affects the work of contemporary architects. We begin by exploring the importance of travel to architects' careers today, and arrive full circle to question this certainty in light of broader conditions ranging from communication problems that arise because of distance to global environmental concerns.

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## FOREIGN ARCHITECTS AS CATALYSTS

**TRAGANOU:** Your practice is particularly intriguing to me in the context of this book because you belong to the generation of architects who are in continuous transit, and because it seems that mobility as a subject is integral to your work. Hiromi, in your lecture at the Japan Society in 2006,<sup>6</sup> you pointed out the cultural differences in the ways in which the architecture and building industries operate in Japan and the Netherlands. What has been your way to negotiate such differences as an architect, away from home, in the Netherlands?

**HOSOYA:** Let me first briefly explain the background. After I received my graduate degree from Harvard University, I decided to go back to Japan to work with Toyo Ito. It turned out that all the projects I became involved in Toyo Ito's office were in Europe. More specifically, I worked on two projects in the Netherlands. One project was an office building in Amsterdam (MAHLER 4-BLOCK 5, 2005), and the other was a housing project in Groningen (BLUE MOON UURWERKERSGANG, 2005), in which the building was finally transformed into a hotel. I found people in the

**3** Hosoya received a BA in Architecture from the Rhode Island School of Design, in the United States, and a BA in English literature from Doshisha Women's University in Kyoto, Japan. Schaefer holds a Master of Science degree (Dipl. Zool.) from the University of Zürich, Switzerland.

**4** *Cities in Motion* (commissioned in 2006) is co-authored by Chris Reuter and Markus Schaefer and produced by Condor Communications and Interscience Film/Gero von Boehm.

**5** From the website of Hosoya Schaefer Architects, <http://www.hosoyaschaefer.com/mg.htm>. Accessed on 2 May 2008.

**6** Japan Now: Country Positions in Architecture, co-sponsored by the Japan Society and the College of Architecture, Art and Planning at Cornell University, took place at the Japan Society, New York, on 1 November 2006. Other speakers were Momoyo Kaijima (Atelier Bow-Wow), Mitsuhiro Kanada (ARUP) and Taira Nishizawa (Taira Nishizawa Architects) with keynote speaker Toyo Ito (Toyo Ito & Associates, Architects).

7 The figure of the 'moon princess' derives from the Tale of the Bamboo Cutter (Taketori Monogatari) a tenth-century Japanese folktale, which is also known as The Tale of Princess Kaguya (Kaguya-hime no Monogatari). It is the story of a girl discovered as a baby inside the stalk of a glowing bamboo plant. She grows to be a woman of extraordinary beauty and is asked to marry the Emperor of Japan. To the sadness of all, a heavenly entourage comes to take her back to the Capital of the Moon (Tsukino Miyako), where she came from.

Netherlands to be very enthusiastic and open to new architectural ideas, but also to be interested in achieving maximum performance with minimum cost. The construction cost per area in the Netherlands is half of that in Germany and one-third of that in Switzerland. It was difficult for us as a Japanese practice to understand how to operate in an environment where architects cannot spend time and money developing details. How one can associate with this pragmatism creatively is a key to making a successful project. For example, we realized why some cases of Dutch architecture are based on radical concepts rather than on sensitive detailing. In the case of the project in Amsterdam, we had limited responsibilities during the construction phase. In fact, we supervised the construction phase mainly from a distance, using telephone, email, fax and only occasionally through site visits. In such a case, the relationship the architect develops with the client becomes very critical.

**TRAGANOU: As foreign architects, what kinds of relationships did you develop with Dutch partners and collaborators, especially given the impetus that Dutch architects have received through government initiatives and overall public support?**

**HOSOYA:** It took a while for me to understand that having a meeting in order to arrive at a consensus was a social habit in the Netherlands. In the Groningen project, the local government together with urban planners, private enterprises and architects developed the design together, forming an overall consensus regarding the project. Meetings are used for agreeing on an idea that makes everybody happy. We used the metaphor of the 'princess from the moon', a Japanese folktale,<sup>7</sup> for the master plan concept – an idea of a catalyst that connects the new with the existing. The idea of employing a foreign architect makes sense in such a context.

**TRAGANOU: This is an interesting way of framing the input of the 'other', who even though catalytic in the local context eventually returns to where he or she comes from. So you, as a foreigner, never felt treated as an outsider in a negative sense?**

**HOSOYA:** It is given that I am always being treated as an outsider and will always be a foreign architect. Even if I work in Japan, I would feel this way given my circumstances. However, I do not find my situation particularly unique or negative, except for the fact that it is difficult to get the job done if you do not speak the local language. Doesn't everybody work the same way?

**SCHAEFER:** What is interesting about the current time is that architecture culture is in many ways thoroughly globalized. Of course, there are regional differences, and these regional differences are very important. But in the end, the agenda



is set by a network of people who act very globally and who are interconnected through star culture and academia. This happens at the level of established architects who often are not only stars by virtue of being invited to the important competitions and winning them, but who also have a professorship at a prestigious university. The younger generations, too, forge their careers by hopping from one university to the next. This, for better or worse, is the background against which these individual movements you are describing play themselves out.

**TRAGANOU: I wonder whether these two circles, the professional and the academic, are related?**

**SCHAEFER:** Circles of the professional and academic worlds overlap. Architects who are very successful, like Rem Koolhaas or Jacques Herzog and Pierre De Meuron, are people who bridge this gap, obtaining legitimacy through their academic work while at the same time drawing commissions from the commercial world. In addition, they obtain visibility through professional and academic publications, for which you need to know the right journalists and the right magazines. In this model, constituted out of these three elements, successful careers play themselves out. This is simply one of the facts of contemporary architecture. Only rarely does an outsider rise to global awareness with respect to any of these three circles.

**TRAGANOU: It is interesting, then, that the notion of the outsider is thus defined not only in relation to the politics of a given place, but rather in relation to these elite circles that control the world of architecture on a global scale. But, at the same time there is a degree of openness, so besides the large offices you have also some small practices that benefit from that.**

**SCHAEFER:** For us this system is actually quite good – the experience at Harvard University was crucial. We are small, yet still fairly well anchored and connected. The system can be beneficial. But what I am saying is that this system needs to be understood on its own terms. It is a new phenomenon that an architect brings to a project not only architectural knowledge but access to an international circuit, to media exposure, information flows, or magazines. Architects have an effect on the built world but also a strong effect in the media and the market. This is the reason why brands with their flagship stores, and developers or investors with their flagship projects, are interested in star architects. Territorial displacement, a whiff of the exotic, is an essential ingredient in this kind of game.

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## MOBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY EUROPE: THE CASE OF SLOVENIA

8 The six Slovenian architectural offices involved in Sixpack are: Bevk Perović Arhitekti (Matija Bevk, Vaso Perović), Dekleva Gregorič Arhitekti (Aljoša Dekleva, Tina Gregorič), Elastik (Mika Cimolini, Igor Kebel), Maechtig Vrhunc Arhitekti (Tomaž Maechtig, Urša Vrhunc), Ofis Arhitekti (Rok Oman, Špela Videčnik), Sadar Vuga Arhitekti (Jurij Sadar, Boštjan Vuga).

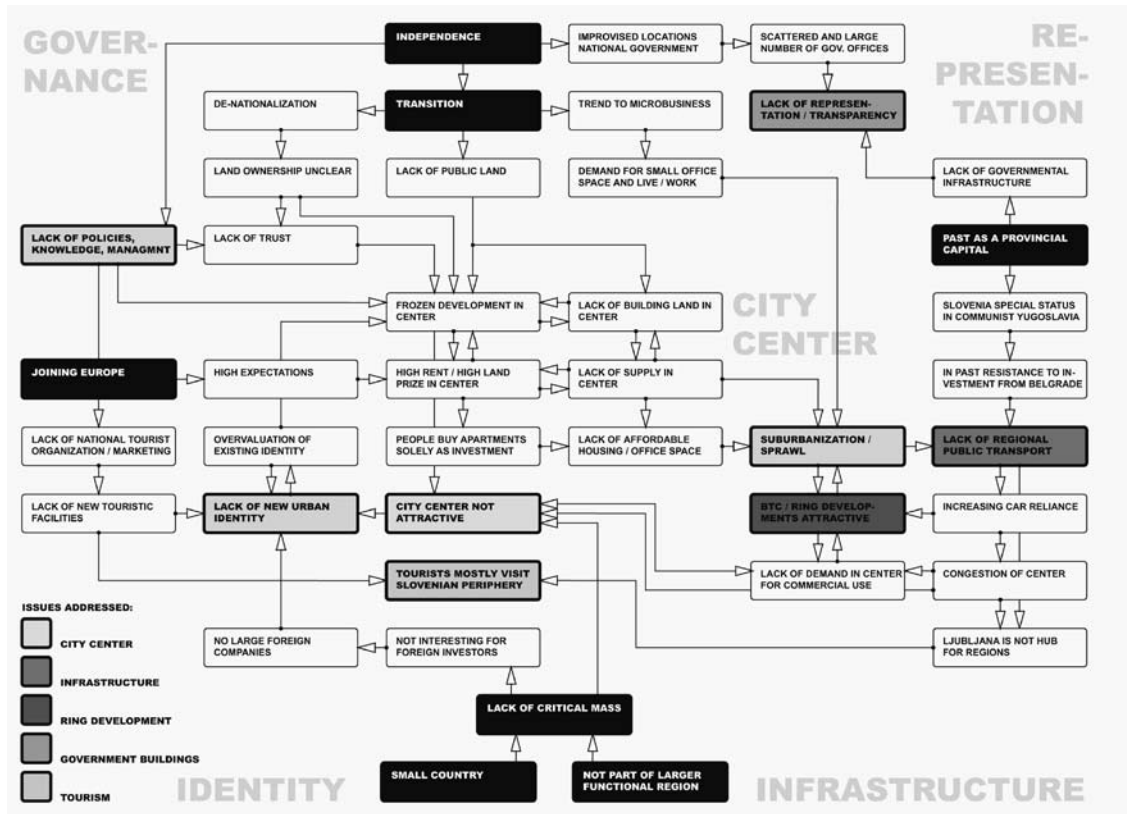
**TRAGANOU:** Markus, in 2006 you and your students at the Berlage Institute developed a project for the city of Ljubljana (Ljubljana: Urban Scripts for a Light Capital). Would you say that Ljubljana is a city that consciously took advantage of this system that you described above in their collaboration with you and the Berlage Institute? How did you become involved in that project?

**SCHAEFER:** The project was initiated in 2005 by a student of mine who is from Ljubljana and who suggested that the Berlage Institute does a study for the city. The Berlage Institute is very much a part of the international circuit we mentioned. Ljubljana, on the other hand, has a very strong internal and local architecture scene, which in many ways right now is detrimental to the city's development. There are so many local interests that, instead of helping to develop the city, they rather make an effort to block each other. These are local interests from a variety of sectors: architects, planners, investors and developers. Ljubljana and Slovenia move very cleverly on the international stage, but the construction scene is astonishingly introverted, mainly due to the lack of perceived opportunity and to high barriers of entry for foreigners of any discipline. The upside of this closed market is a healthy resistance to foreign influences. In spite of the general slowness with which change occurs, Slovenia is a place where young local talent gets a lot of opportunities and can be astonishingly experimental. The scene of young architects is very interesting and has gotten a certain international renown through the Sixpack exhibition and catalogue (DESMAN 2006; HRAUSKY 2004).<sup>8</sup> There might be wisdom in being slow.

**TRAGANOU:** I was intrigued by your final statement in the text you wrote about that project:

This project is based on an external point of view ... hence it cannot provide concrete proposals. Yet, this view from outside gave us the freedom to propose and illustrate processes which could potentially lead to substantive and new solutions. (SCHAEFER 2006)

**I am especially interested in the way this statement resonates with your flow chart, which is a rather sharp criticism of the city (FIGURE 12.2). Do you think that despite this resistance to foreign influences the distant eye of a foreigner can produce change in the city by stirring up the waters? There is, of course, a long tradition of outsiders making strategic plans**



12.2 Diagramming causes for the lack of development in the city of Ljubljana, Slovenia. © Markus Schaefer / Berlage Institute, 2005.

for foreign cities. In the early twentieth century, what equipped architects to be commissioned for such projects was often not only their expertise or fame but also the ideology of colonialism, as in Le Corbusier's plan for Algiers. What do you think is the ideological framework for an outsider-architect's involvement in such projects in contemporary times, and why would cities often prefer to have their involvement rather than the engagement of local architects?

SCHAEFER: It was very much the hope of some people in Ljubljana that someone who comes from the outside would not be a part of these current compromises and could bring fresh ideas. The desire was also – and this became, of course, more impossible to live up to – that an external agent could bring so much muscle, so much glamour, that it would simply overrule some of the local proponents. I think this was a dream which proved wrong, and it is actually good that it proved wrong. In the end, I believe to some degree in local agency, a healthy

sense of community. Groningen is a very good example. The city has a really good social contract, and I think that is why they are able to absorb so much foreign talent in a manner beneficial to the city. In Ljubljana, this social contract first needs to be established. Independence is still comparatively recent. Old economic, administrative and political structures are still apparent. The intellectual and political vanguard that fought for independence is by no means uncontested. The country is slowly moving from an old planned economy to a new, market-driven system. The sentence that you quoted before was a political sentence. It was clear that we were allowed to push the envelope, but in actuality we found a lot of closed doors simply because we were foreigners. In this context, we wanted to make sure that our ideas were not discarded simply because they would not immediately fit with local perceptions.

**TRAGANOU:** How did your proposal affect the city despite the fact that it may not be implemented?

**SCHAEFER:** We only did a study; in what way it might affect actual city planning still remains to be seen. It was important for us to show the necessity of understanding the current impasse in a precise and fruitful manner. In my opinion, situations which are healthy should be able to solve themselves. Bilbao is a very good example. The strategic basis for the changes in Bilbao has been established locally. An alliance of the public sector, institutions and local businesses established the strategy and saw it through. It was only at the end that they had to introduce a series of star architects such as Frank Gehry and Norman Foster almost like icing on the cake, but all the important strategic infrastructure had been established locally. That is why in the end, despite all the criticism of Frank Gehry's building and the perceived shallowness of Guggenheim's programming, the development is sustainable. Sustainability is hugely at risk when changes are implemented purely by foreigners. The most important step for Ljubljana is not to devise a new strategic plan, but to establish the framework in which development is possible. This has to do with clarifying land ownership, reducing the government's space requirement in the city, establishing a meaningful dialogue with the developers, provide long-term planning stability, establishing infrastructure and solving the problem of vehicular traffic.

**TRAGANOU:** Expanding our attention from Slovenia itself to the broader process of European integration, we may see that a new nation-state like Slovenia is interested in fostering not only the development of its own autonomous, national identity, but at the same time its relation with Europe, a Europe that simultaneously strives to define

dimensions of its new postnational identity. This process is orchestrated by the European Union with various projects that cross national borders, such as students' exchanges and academic collaborations between various European universities. It is astonishing to realize today that most architecture students throughout Europe complete a large part of their academic studies at different European universities by utilizing programs such as Erasmus and Socrates as well as the incredible number of other, more or less institutionalized opportunities. Would you say that this project of mobility and integration leads to the idea of abandoning conventional national categories, such as Dutch architecture or Swiss architecture, or do we, in fact, witness the opposite?

SCHAEFFER: Maybe it is cynical, but in the end also pragmatic, to say the following: as long as there is interest in a national platform, as long as it is useful – and it will be useful for very long time still – it is not really in question. If we were visible in a publication of Swiss architects, of course we would not refuse such an opportunity, even if we don't perceive ourselves as a Swiss office at all. The same is true from the point of view of publishers, but we might equally well be part of a book on media, or on strategic architecture. The world of architecture is fairly promiscuous.

TRAGANOU: I would say that this is symptomatic of a broader contradiction, not only in the world of architecture. Thinking of the promotion that national architectures have enjoyed in the last ten years or so, such as Dutch architecture, we see that as the world becomes more globalized, national categories become stronger. This may be a resistance to globalization or just a marketing strategy as localities compete for differentiation and visibility on a globalized scene.

SCHAEFFER: Yes, it becomes more a means of profiling.

TRAGANOU: So what do you gain by being a Swiss firm, or by being based in Switzerland, and being able to promote your practice abroad from that anchor point?

HOSOYA: I do not know the answer to that question, but one of the reasons why I decided to stay and practice architecture in Europe is that people still believe in architecture.

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## DISCIPLINARY MIGRATIONS: BEYOND ARCHITECTURE

TRAGANOU: It is interesting that you came to Europe because architecture is more appreciated there, but actually what characterizes your practice, as with most contemporary young offices like yours, is that you are involved in practices beyond architecture. How have contemporary offices like yours expanded the language and practice of architecture

9 In 'Mapping Switzerland' (2004–05), Hosoya Schaefer created eleven maps of Switzerland that attempt to 'find new ways to describe the identity of Switzerland ranging from the scientific to the artistic,' according to the studio's website ([www.hosoyaschaefer.com/seedam\\_exhibition.htm](http://www.hosoyaschaefer.com/seedam_exhibition.htm)). The project was published in the Swiss weekly magazine *Weltwoche* (23 December 2004: 84–91), and in a shorter version in *Das Magazin*, the weekend magazine of the Swiss newspaper *Tages Anzeiger*, in collaboration with *The Economist*, in December 2003. The project was also exhibited at Kulturzentrum Seedamm in Pfäffikon, Switzerland, 1 May–19 June 2005.

**by doing projects that do not conventionally belong to the realm of architecture, despite your declared faith in the discipline?**

**SCHAEFER:** What is very interesting is that a set of discrete creative disciplines are now increasingly merging together into a continuous spectrum. Our office covers a range from architecture to graphic work, to media work, to strategic consulting. In many ways, this is very stimulating and interesting, but it is not unusual. A lot of offices, at least the more versatile ones, are operating like that. But it is interesting that this is happening in other disciplines too, like graphic design or industrial design, where we see similar moves in the direction of architecture. Today we are able to move flexibly from one discipline to the other because we live in a digital world, and in the end all these disciplines operate in similar programs, similar environments, similar professional relationships.

**TRAGANOU:** Would you find any influences from your own backgrounds, in literature or neurobiology?

**HOSOYA:** For me it is always very interesting to think about how one can create architecture in an environment where the communication structure is linguistically different.

**SCHAEFER:** This is the point where we are trying to redefine, argue and rethink the architectural profession as simply doing a building, or rather to understand architecture as a participant in larger systems. I was always interested in projects that enable us to think an idea across different disciplines. For instance, recently we did a pitch for a news studio for a TV company. The interesting thing about this news studio is that it is planned to be virtual. Of course it has real space where they film, but what you see on the screen in its largest degree is virtual, what is generated through the computer. This is an architectural type that consists not only of brick and mortar but also of bits. It is a hybrid type.

**TRAGANOU:** I would like to discuss some of your projects that specifically relate to the aspect of mobility. I would consider your mapping Switzerland project<sup>9</sup> (FIGURE 12.3) as belonging to the same category, because one of the many functions of the map is being the major wayfinding tool of the traveler. Did you feel as if you took the role of travelers while doing this project, even though you, Markus, come from Switzerland?

**SCHAEFER:** Mapping is in a way a site analysis, only dealing with broader issues. The Swiss mapping project was a self-initiated research project and a means for us to understand where we landed after we came back from abroad. We were trying to understand global issues through the specifics of the Swiss context.



## 12.3

Cities, brands and people most often associated with the words 'Swiss' or 'Switzerland' in Internet newsgroups.

© Hosoya Schaefer Architects, 2004.

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## MOBILITY AND COMMUNICATION IN ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

**TRAGANOU:** Coming to a very practical issue: how would you say that mobility affects the daily life of your practice? How do you work from a distance, for instance? Do you often use Skype?

**HOSOYA:** This does not happen so much among ourselves, because we are usually both in the office here in Zurich. But we use it for some projects that we do with a team in Tokyo, for instance, with whom we collaborate on competition projects or have renderings done. As soon as Skype became available time pressure was gone, and all of a sudden working with the team in Tokyo became simple.

**SCHAEFER:** Hiromi teaches at Cornell University, while I am teaching at the Berlage Institute. With our students at both institutions we often collaborate long-distance through Skype conferences. Then we have projects like one for National Geographic where we collaborate with a person in Scandinavia, an office in Milan, an office in Barcelona, and an individual in Los Angeles. These are people we collaborate with regularly, day to day. For the Mobiglobe media installation we did with the Danish company Shiftcontrol (FIGURE 12.1) we had day-to-day collaboration via Skype, via Wiki, or via FTP. With my students at the Berlage Institute we use Basecamp, a file-sharing website.

**TRAGANOU:** Would you say that the verbal aspect of communication that is necessitated by these new technological tools becomes stronger than it used to be in the conventional studio setting?

**SCHAEFER:** I think that a critical difference is the absence of the sketch. You have words, or illustrations as PDFs, or images as JPGs. But the hand sketch, in its immediacy and its haptic interaction, is now missing.

**TRAGANOU:** And what used to happen in the studio, where you had the charismatic figure of the master-architect who could sketch a solution to the architectural problem, this kind of relation between professors and students seems not to be feasible anymore in the digital environments. Can the myth of the master-architect be maintained through a tele-presence?

**SCHAEFER:** It is interesting that at OMA, Rem Koolhaas's tool is the fax machine, while our tools are email, Wiki and Skype. With the fax you can still sketch, it doesn't look good, but it visually conveys the idea. Every other day Koolhaas would get a 40-page set of drawings faxed to his hotel. He would



then look at it, sketch over it and then fax the pages back. When I work with the Danish interaction designers I make a long multiple-page sketch. I scan and email the sketch, but soon after that I visit Denmark and we conclude everything through face-to-face communication. I believe in the need for a face-to-face component of collaboration. Because students need more direct support, with them one needs to have face-to-face collaboration more frequently. Nevertheless, because of electronic communication devices, the teacher is always available, at least virtually.

**TRAGANOU:** Would you say, then, that communication is now based more on a conceptual agreement rather than on being able to interfere with the visual languages? Do you find that this affects the process of the work, or do you see other possibilities that are equally productive?

**SCHAEFER:** What is truly interesting is what is lost in translation. When you sat next to the student you would always have a pen in your hand and you would always sketch. Now, when I am writing an email or when I am critiquing a PDF they sent, I have to be extremely precise in the way I discuss it, and still it is often misunderstood. It is incredibly hard to exactly convey an idea or a criticism and to completely control the project. You cannot make a little arrow and describe an iteration. Sometimes, to avoid this problem, I am sketching and scanning.

**HOSOYA:** It is true. On one hand, I miss the immediacy or the directness: everything takes much more time to explain or communicate the point. On the other hand, it is not always the case that I have a point or know the best answer. In such a case, it helps me to construct an idea.

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## FROM TRAVEL TO LONG-DISTANCE MANAGEMENT

**TRAGANOU:** From the way you describe this condition of exchange with your distant partners – the dynamic between the urge for mobility and face-to-face communication on one hand, and the desire for immobility and efficient exchange on the other – it becomes obvious that what once used to be dealt with through ‘traveling’ is now resolved through what we may term ‘long-distance management’. The institutions that are the most relevant to us today are not those that deal with transportation but rather those that deal with communication; in other words, not those that facilitate our need for mobility but rather those that satisfy our desire for immobility.

**SCHAEFER:** The negative aspect is that often the precision in communication is lost. Too often communication is just idle chatter, made more burdensome by the need to spell everything out. It is essential to treat communication as a medium in its own right. Each medium defines a specific way of collaboration. Whether faxes are exchanged with hand sketches, a Skype session is simply left on so that a long-distance presence becomes almost environmental, phone conferences structure a large team, or documents are exchanged in defined intervals over FTP, each collaboration needs to find its own rules.

**TRAGANOU:** It seems that what was considered 'disembodiment' until recently, with all the negative connotations of the term, is replaced today by new ways of operation, new types of spaces that include the 'here' and 'there', and within which physical traveling is just one of the options. It is not a coincidence that 'slowness' and 'immobility' are becoming the new keywords in the recent discourse; physical mobility is not as desirable as it used to be.

**SCHAEFER:** Mobility is becoming increasingly important through its limitations. Dwindling resources and environmental costs become increasingly an issue and the ability to move more precious.

**TRAGANOU:** The unsustainability of mobility?

**SCHAEFER:** Of our current global system as a whole, in which mobility is a crucial factor.

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# Itinerant Perspectives:

## *A Conversation with David Adjaye*

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*Jilly Traganou*

- 1 David Adjaye began his career in 1994, and reformed his studio in 2000 by establishing the Adjaye Associates.
- 2 His study of Japanese timber structures became the source of a timber joint he developed as a part of his 1993 MA thesis at the Royal College of Art in London.
- 3 Among Adjaye's most notable projects are the following: Elektra House (Whitechapel, East London, United Kingdom, 1998–2000), Dirty House (Shoreditch, East London, United Kingdom, 2001–02), Idea Store (Chrip Street, Poplar, East London, United Kingdom, 2001–04), Nobel Peace Center – Exhibition Center (Oslo, Norway, 2002–05), T-B A21 Olafur Eliasson Pavilion–Art Installation (Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, 2005), Idea Store Whitechapel (Whitechapel, East London, United Kingdom, 2001–05).
- 4 In the United Kingdom, Adjaye was a unit tutor at the Architectural Association (2003–05), and a lecturer at Southbank University (1993–2002) and at the Royal College of Art (1998–2002). Adjaye was the first Louis Khan Visiting Professor at the University of Pennsylvania in 2006, the Kenzo Tange Professor in Architecture at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design in 2007, and a Visiting Professor at Princeton University in 2008.

David Adjaye (b. 1966), principal of Adjaye Associates,<sup>1</sup> is a Ghanaian, Tanzanian-born, London-based architect, who, as the son of a diplomat, spent most of his childhood as an expatriate in various countries of Africa and the Middle East. After settling in London in 1979, and during his formative years in architecture, traveling became a means of expanding his architectural vocabulary, bringing him to different parts of the world (such as Portugal and Japan) that proved to be instrumental to his professional development. Adjaye worked with the architect Eduardo Souto de Moura in Oporto in 1991, and in 1992 held a fellowship at Kyoto University of Art and Design in Japan.<sup>2</sup> As his work has gained international recognition in the last ten years,<sup>3</sup> traveling has come to dominate Adjaye's daily routine: he builds and teaches internationally,<sup>4</sup> with current projects in places as diverse as Denver, Moscow, Beijing and Seoul.

The conversation that follows attempts to enlarge the lens through which Adjaye's architecture, as well as his role as a practitioner today, may be assessed. It does not disregard the partial truth in critic Deyan Sudjic's claim that Adjaye's architecture sprang out of 1990s London,<sup>5</sup> but it takes into account this architect's itinerant life from early childhood to the present, examining it in light of the cosmopolitan ethics that many find essential in the contemporary globalized world.<sup>6</sup> Viewed in this way, Adjaye's architecture is one that encapsulates itineraries rather than origins, becomings rather than essences; most importantly, it can be seen as a model that turns our attention to the perception of architecture as a part of a broader system of flows affecting architects and the constituents of their work alike. David Adjaye's work challenges the conventional way of looking at architecture that focuses on the narrow duration of architectural production and stops at the moment a building is handed over to its clients: it shifts our attention from notions of authorship and authenticity to the process of transformation in which the users, inhabitants, and readers of architecture are as important as its makers. Adjaye has learned this process by observing how colonial architecture

has been appropriated in the world's so-called 'peripheries', which he experienced in his childhood and later travels. Such itinerant perspectives are reminders of the necessity to be conscious of the constant intercultural exchanges that characterize today's world, and that affect the ways architecture is being used and perceived by its various constituents.

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## APPROPRIATING THE MODERNIST BOX

**TRAGANO:** There are several reasons that I find traveling to be a significant aspect of your work. The first relates to your reading of a condition associated with one pervasive type of displacement over the last several centuries: colonialism. I was very intrigued by the analogy that you and your contributors make in your recent book *Making Public Buildings* (ALLISON 2006) between the rectilinear, modernist, horizontal box – its purity and its use as a tool of modernization – and the colonial, formal structure of the grid that was imposed on places at the so-called periphery: Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In my opinion, this reveals the nature of the modernist box as a colonial device rather than simply a formal language. And this is shifting the ways in which architects usually perceive modernism, from a rather aestheticized perspective to a more politically nuanced one. This very recognition immediately asks us to turn our gaze toward the 'afterlife' of the modernist box and to look at its subsequent phases of use: its purity is going to be corrupted by its end-users in a process that you have called the 'hijacking of modernism'.<sup>7</sup> It seems to me that, having experienced this condition and been implicated in it through your multiple identities, you seem to accept this modernist vocabulary with its embedded ideology as a starting point of your work. And your immediate move is to leave some cracks in the box in order to initiate the process by which the users eventually introduce informality.

**ADJAYE:** This is something I am extremely interested in: the way I am working as an architect in the specific social trajectory, trying to position my work against an educational background that sets up a classical language – modernism – as the basis of my architectural enterprise, and at the same time un-learning that language by trying to run it through a series of scenarios, to open it and weaken it by allowing a degree of porosity into it. I am actually interested in this weakness, as opposed to the generation of architects before me who hoped to convince the public to accept the language of pure modernism, which I find to be fictional. For me there is a requirement to set it up and switch it off at the same time. It's a way of allowing this extreme brutal purity of modernism – because purity is quite brutal – to exist and not be overwhelming to the notion of the civic. Double identity, double play is my strategy. The double consciousness of the system is the only way that one can look at it objectively and change it.

- 5 In his text 'Building in London', Sudjic states that 'despite the fact that he was born to Ghanaian parents in Tanzania in the mid-1960s and moved around the world with his family before finally settling in Britain, he [Adjaye] is an architect whose work could only be the product of the very particular circumstances of the London in which he was educated and began to practice in the 1990s'. The text continues by elaborating on the particular local conditions and circles of people that, in his opinion, nurtured Adjaye's approach to architecture (SUDJIC 2005: 186).
- 6 According to Kwame Anthony Appiah, there are two strands that intertwine in the notion of cosmopolitanism, universal concern and respect for legitimate difference: 'One is the idea that we have obligations to others . . . that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind, or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship. The other is that we take seriously the value of . . . particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance' (APPIAH 2006: XV).
- 7 In his discussion with Kodwo Eshun, Adjaye talks about what he calls 'a particular fascinating moment' in the history of modern Ghana, between 'colonial leaving and the ambition of the new modernism of architecture', which was 'based on the notion of trying to hijack modernism, to bend it to become a tropical modernism' (ALLISON 2006: 210).

8 In his essay 'Popular Sovereignty and Public Space: David Adjaye's Architecture of Immanence', Okwui Enwezor talks about the differences between *la ville* (the urban district) and *la cité* (the suburban) in the case of Kinshasa, the first 'representing the heart of official culture and its symbols of economic power', while the second being 'a space of negativity (crime, poverty, anger, death) and made all the more impoverished by its lack of access to power and resources', a dichotomy that 'constitutes two competing impressions of public space' (ALLISON 2006: 8–9).

**TRAGANO:** I understand that this scheme, formal versus informal, colonization versus appropriation, emerges from your own itinerant experiences. One may say that the idealism of the modernist box derives from your architectural education, which, because it took place in the United Kingdom, was quite Eurocentric. At the same time, through your experiences living in other countries, you have gained access to the process of appropriation, which in the periphery becomes even stronger. You have recorded these conditions in some of your photographs from Africa, such as those of Kigali, the capital of Rwanda (FIGURES 13.1 AND 13.2). What did you learn by observing how colonial structures are informalized by their constituents in the different places where you have lived and traveled?

**ADJAYE:** Basically, one starts understanding the African city by looking at essentially European cities in the tropics and at the ways through which they are inhabited and appropriated. Even though I question the notions of African-ness or European-ness, the inhabitation process in African cities is totally localized, even though the image of their architecture is imperial or colonial. The ways these structures are formally set up in these peripheries is irrelevant to the users, who reappropriate and reconfigure the structures. But when we say periphery, we should not exclude places like East London, where the notion of periphery is also played through.

**TRAGANO:** It seems that what is important to you is to always allow this possibility of 'encounter' between the formal and the informal, or the elements of '*la ville*' and '*la cité*', in Okwui Enwezor's terms.<sup>8</sup> And this is where the idea of traveling, in my opinion, becomes relevant. By this I do not mean that I see you as a traveler who goes around and collects souvenir images to bring back home as a source of inspiration for his architecture. It is rather that I think you draw your gestures from the traveler's capacity to negotiate, which I assume you have been practising most of your life.

**ADJAYE:** You are absolutely right. I guess for me traveling is something that conditions me, literally. I have been moving since I was born, so I was not allowed to take on the host quality of any culture, to be a part of it. My only sense of specificity is very biologically driven, and very pure in that sense, and this is, of course, related with language, beliefs, ethics and the myriad qualities and scenographies of cities I visited and lived in. I was born at a time when Modernism was being propagated throughout the African continent; then very early on I encountered the idea of the Islamic city – this idea of a segregated, gendered city – and then I hit the European city, with its postwar planning. So I became highly aware of the notion of the formal modernist container, as you are saying, but also of the fluidity and power of the informal, which today I associate with a humanist position.



**13.1**

*Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. 'African Cities, A Photographic Essay by David Adjaye', exhibition at the Graduate School of Design Gallery, Harvard University, 2 April–23 May 2007. Photograph by David Adjaye.*



**13.2**

*Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. 'African Cities, A Photographic Essay by David Adjaye', exhibition at the Graduate School of Design Gallery, Harvard University, 2 April–23 May 2007. Photograph by David Adjaye.*

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## AFRICAN DIASPORA AND COSMOPOLITAN ETHICS

**TRAGANOU:** I see this relating to the cosmopolitan ethics that you seek to introduce through your work, and which we see advocated by many intellectuals of the African diaspora today, such as Anthony Appiah and Caryl Phillips. How connected do you feel to the African diaspora as an individual, and would you say that your work relates to this aspect of your identity?

**ADJAYE:** Yes, indeed, I feel a part of this discourse. However, I share it not with architects but much more with people in other circles, especially artists. I find their work to have different manifestations of the same multiplicity that my work is trying to evoke.

**TRAGANOU:** Are there any direct parallels between how this multiplicity is expressed through architecture and art? For instance, you have collaborated frequently with Chris Ofili. Would you say that you are both engaged in a similar dialogue, even though through different media? His case may be different because he often uses African patterns.

**ADJAYE:** But so do I, actually. I find it intriguing that architecture, more so African architecture, does not have the same iconography within the broader culture that the public associates with. It is not as transparent. Actually the appropriation of painterly African patterns has been already performed by continental European groups, it actually would be funny for an artist like Chris Ofili to play that transmutation of it, because history has made a topsy-turvy discourse, already, the appropriation has gone the other way. While in architecture, for me, the situation is different because I don't even need to hide my references to Africa and the various other places I have visited and lived in, I only need to do the referencing. There is not even an alphabet: my act of referencing is invisible by default, so I have to create the alphabet.

**TRAGANOU:** Do you think that this act of referencing is understood by other architects, or by the inhabitants and viewers of your work?

**ADJAYE:** I am fascinated to see whether it is. I seem to get a reaction, a certain kind of jealousy, for having a theoretical source that I can mine deeply. Some people feel real envy of this, which I find incredibly ironic. I hadn't realized that my minority has become a privilege.



**TRAGANO:** It seems legitimate for you to use these references, while for those who do not have a similar background – especially within the world of architecture, dominated by white men – to do so would appear to be simply resorting to a tourist type of iconography, or like a suspicious gesture that repeats their paternal sin of colonialism. In a sense, they seem to be trapped in their singular identities, in their inherited colonial guilt, while you have gained the right to cosmopolitanism and a much wider palette of references. For instance, the dark spaces in a house like Chris Ofili's (London, 1999) may have been drawn from mud dwellings and Berber houses, but also from the architecture of the teahouse that you encountered in your travels in Japan. It seems to me that in our time, multiple identities like yours are much more relevant and more productive than those stable identities of the past that were reinforced by certain hierarchical structures.

**ADJAYE:** That self-imposed kind of exile has to do with their conservatism. It is ironic to me that this condition can be so polarized. This aspect of my biography and its relation to my work sometimes results in animosity on the part of others, as if we were all participating in some kind of a game in which the rules are clearly set up and I start breaking them.

**TRAGANO:** Are some of these references in your work now exposed with your African cities exhibition,<sup>9</sup> in a type of a lexicon?

**ADJAYE:** I am slightly doing this in public, and I am shocked at how many references are actually embedded in the things that I am now working on. In a way, I am unpacking my childhood.

**TRAGANO:** Weren't you aware of these references before?

**ADJAYE:** No, not in the way I am seeing them now.

**TRAGANO:** I think that the pavilion in your 2007 'Horizon' exhibition at the Albion Gallery in London,<sup>10</sup> where you inserted the very powerful image of the Sea of Galilee (FIGURE 13.3), marks a very different phase from your earlier works, in which you collaborated with artists who inserted their imagery. I would see this gesture as moving in a similar direction to that of the lexicon, revealing aspects of your own trajectory.

**ADJAYE:** That was a very cathartic moment for me. This was my own photograph, which I took standing at the edge of that lake, last year. I was there as a young child, and I knew this was part of some experience I had. It is a curious moment. At one point, I think that the use of the photograph makes the work weaker in terms of strict architectural criteria, but then I am realizing the hopelessness of the inability of most people to read things which are blatantly obvious. I hadn't realized that I could also have that privilege to reveal aspects of my biography, and now I realize that by default I have to reveal it. Already it seems that my work is dissolved into the system. I see students using elements of my work,

**9** 'African Cities, A Photographic Essay by David Adjaye' was curated by Adjaye and exhibited at the Gallery of the Graduate School of Design Gallery at Harvard University, in the period 2 April–23 May 2007. The exhibition presented photographs of ten African cities that the architect visited and which are part of his ongoing research project to study new patterns of urbanism. Several of Adjaye's photographs capture unofficial developments and appropriations. In the photographs of Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, for instance, the photographs depict the appropriation of the modernist boulevards with arcaded frontages constructed by Belgian colonizers as they have been taken over by a wide range of unplanned uses, occupying all the available space, in a sense humanizing colonial architecture. Besides their merit as a record of African urban development, the photographs also touch on themes that Adjaye is developing in his architecture (GSD Exhibitions 2007).

**10** 'Horizon' was exhibited at the Albion Gallery in London, January–March 2007.

### 13.3

*Sea of Galilee, David Adjaye, 2006.*  
*'Horizon' exhibition, Albion Gallery,*  
*London. Original photograph by*  
*David Adjaye, pavilion photograph*  
*by Ed Reeve, 2007.*



and I didn't even know that I was using them. What is sad for me is that because my use of biographical references was done invisibly and because it was unconsciously absorbed, there was a lack of understanding. I don't know whether this means that I am now countering everything that I set up, but I am interested in understanding just how such awakening moments are created.

**TRAGANOU:** At the same time, this opening of your personal references to the public, besides functioning as a means of decoding your architectural language, also allows some cultures that have been in the periphery to be seen under a different light.

**ADJAYE:** There is no secret in my desire to make this whole lexicon as well known as that of the Parthenon. The success of it is to no longer have a hierarchy of imagery or cultural references, the success is for architecture to have a polyphony of appropriate imagery which we are capable of manipulating and using across the globe.

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## GLOBAL PRACTICES

**TRAGANOU:** Your repertoire does not end with your relations with African cities. We may safely say that for the last several years you have worked globally. How can you maintain

**engagement with local communities, publics, and clients when you are constantly in different locations and find yourself working in environments that you may not be familiar with?**

**ADJAYE:** This is, I think, the fragility of the position now. The work before was predicated on a different grounding, a certain type of positioning and looking at a set of dioramic possibilities, while now I feel that I am moving at the same speed as the thing I am looking at. What I most fear is that I might obtain a mannerist tendency, which today is developing faster than with the generation of architects before us. For me this is terrifying, so I am trying really hard to leverage this position as a strategy. It is really tough for clients to read that, and for the end user too it has become a little abstract.

**TRAGANOU:** Do you have any strategies set up in your office to resolve these issues, such as how to both qualitatively and quantitatively increase your knowledge about the new locations where you work?

**ADJAYE:** That has already started happening for each context where we work. Also, I am using different strategies to try to immerse myself in these new places. I am always trying to develop strategies that move me away from very open-ended ways of engaging to more specific kinds of experiences. Either I am accepting it really coldly, just looking at it ruthlessly, like a surgeon, or I am looking at it by mimicry and using assimilation as a way of getting information very quickly. I am simultaneously using both methods; it is not one or the other. The whole new body of work in Asia<sup>11</sup> is completely different from the public building projects that are published in the latest book, *Making Public Buildings* (ALLISON 2006). For me, this is the test of whether this discourse is able to operate globally, because the old model has been an imperialist model, where you just take what you learned and put it everywhere, and people love it because somehow it has some signature quality to it: it means progress and modernity. For my project in Beijing, I am embroiled in trying to assimilate what a Chinese city must have been like. All I have are photographs, but this is not a kind of fiction I am trying to recreate, rather one I am trying to employ as a lens. Through the work I am trying to keep a link with the history of the place.

**TRAGANOU:** By applying the dual strategy that we talked about earlier, the strategy that allows for the building to be localized, one would expect that this would work at any place. But how much do you need to know the local codes in order to be able to predict whether the 'porosity' you are aiming at in your buildings would be really effective?

**11** Among other projects, Adjaye Associates are currently working on the Moscow Business School in Russia, a large-scale commercial building in Beijing near Tiananmen Square, and a residential tower in Malaysia.

**13.4**  
*Idea Store, Adjaye Associates,  
Whitechapel, London, 2005. Photo-  
graph by Timothy Soar.*



**ADJAYE:** I am aware that it may be completely misread – that’s the dilemma. I am not sure if in my public projects in London, the Whitechapel Idea store (FIGURES 13.4 AND 13.5) for instance, notions of porosity and openness necessarily came from a specific reading of the place. In some ways they are ambitions placed within that context. I place them there explicitly, knowing that they might fail happily; but from a programmatic standpoint, if they fail they would not compromise the building. Thus, somehow there is an implied kind of risk management –I hate this word!– but it is somehow part of the whole way in which the engagement with architecture operates. There is a risk and there are certain unstable parts in the project, but also there is an inherent regenerative quality which can stabilize the core of the building as a living object.



13.5

*Idea Store, Adjaye Associates,  
Whitechapel, London, 2005. Photo-  
graph by Timothy Soar.*

**TRAGANOU:** It is interesting that these elements didn't come out of a cultural reading. Does that mean you would expect the same process to happen elsewhere?

**ADJAYE:** Ultimately! My expectation of this process is based much more on taking into account unconscious rather than conscious acts of people. I am more interested in the ways habits occur – habits which are not formalized – before patterns are already established, or before they are recognized as patterns.

**TRAGANOU:** In this way, we may say that you give the possibility of what is latent to be expressed because you don't want to allow the already recognizable patterns to be continuously repeated. This would mean preserving culture and precluding the possibility of change, while what you want is actually to allow culture to change.

**ADJAYE:** As fluidly as possible.

**TRAGANOU:** And do you expect this to happen in China or Russia?

**ADJAYE:** There are also very specific nuances which are played out through a set of subconscious acts, subconscious negotiations, that I see because I am moving so fast. I see them so explicitly that I feel like some kind of therapist, a global therapist. The last couple of years it became explicit to me that there are certain symptoms, which I see repeating as I travel, of the idea that the global and the local are colliding. Even though they may be articulated quite differently, the aspirations are utterly similar: they are all strictly about desire, the desire for change and modernity.

**TRAGANOU:** Do you see spatial or cultural homogeneity as effects of such a desire?

**ADJAYE:** There is a degree of homogeneity that may emerge out of this process, which I find terrifying because I am utterly not interested in 'planetary' architecture. I completely adhere to the sense that the explicit latitude and longitude of the place imprints a quality that manifests itself through the people and that can find adequate expression in architecture.

**TRAGANOU:** So we may say that the global vocabulary is being localized and, as you say in your book, 'imbricated' with layers of locality both in its topographical and cultural sense. That is why it is so important to observe the 'afterlife' of buildings that may look similar to each other now but soon become something else. It seems that today buildings are no less on the move than their architects and users.

**ADJAYE:** Recording this trajectory to see what happens is probably the next project!

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# Asian–Indian Diasporic Networks and Sacred Sites in the Bay Area of California<sup>1</sup>

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Reena Mehta

Religious groups have an innate ability to transform secular and profane spaces into distinguishable and delimited sacred spaces. In Hinduism, such a process typically begins with the placing of an idol (of a god or goddess) in a space, an act of symbolic transformation that generates ‘the deeper, abstract implications of delimiting a particular site as sacred’ (PARK 1994: 245). Within the Hindu community, particular places can, through such rituals, be associated with manifestations of sacred power (SOPHER 1967: 47–9). In this context, this chapter asks three interrelated questions: What type of space embodies the notion of a sacred site for Asian–Indian populations who live abroad? What roles do such sites play in the daily practices of the Asian–Indian diaspora?<sup>2</sup> How has the creation of sacred sites transformed the broader urban landscape in the new places inhabited by these populations?

In order to understand these questions, scholars from urban sociology, cultural geography and critical theory employ notions of identity, location, place, positionality, territoriality and diaspora. Despite the fact that such disciplinary and theoretical convergences have not yielded a shared research methodology or theoretical closure, they have been instrumental in detecting a shared theoretical investment in the making of space as a social product (KENNEDY 2000: 8). According to Kennedy, to understand space as a social product requires us to consider

the instrumentality of space as a register of not only built forms but also embedded ideologies. This entails a demystifying of space as natural and transparent so that it is understood as a product with particular, localized meanings.  
(KENNEDY 2000: 8–9)<sup>3</sup>

- 1** This chapter is based on the author’s primary research and fieldwork in the Bay Area conducted between 2000 and 2004. I wish to thank all the interviewees who participated in this research and invited me to their homes. To protect their privacy of the interviewees, pseudonyms have been used in place of their real names.
- 2** According to Clifford, the main features of diaspora are ‘a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland, and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship’ (CLIFFORD 1994: 305).
- 3** The term ‘instrumentality of space’ emphasizes a contextual approach that goes beyond the examination of the physical qualities of a given space and recognizes space as a means of embodying the ideologies of those who produce, consume, or appropriate a given space.

4 The term 'diasporic space' defies 'the old localizing strategies – by bounded community, by organic culture, by region, by center and periphery' (CLIFFORD 1994: 303), and is defined by the 'border relations' experienced by dispersed people once they are separated from their homelands. These 'border relations' are made possible 'by modern technologies of transport, communication and labor migration. Airplanes, telephones, tape cassettes, camcorders, and mobile job markets reduce distances and facilitate two-way traffic, legal and illegal, between the world's places' (CLIFFORD 1994: 304). For further reading see Basch et al. (1994) and Tololyan (1996).

This chapter will argue that Asian–Indian immigrants who cross transnational boundaries and settle in diasporic spaces<sup>4</sup> perpetually negotiate between the need to identify with their 'origins' and the need to adapt in an environment of 'otherness'; however, notions of both 'origins' and 'otherness' are affected by broader historical contexts. The focus here is on the San Francisco Bay Area in California, which has a high concentration of Asian–Indian immigrants. Over the last half of the twentieth century, the Bay Area landscape has been dramatically transformed from one of orchards and farmlands to one characterized by high-tech companies with links to almost all parts of the world. The high-tech industry represents the dominant employment sector in the area, and one of its largest groups of employees is comprised of Asian–Indian immigrants.

In order to examine the emergence and development of the Asian–Indian diasporic landscape in the Bay Area, two phases of Asian–Indian diaspora will be discussed: one that appeared around the turn of the twentieth century, within geographically bounded yet disconnected spaces, and the more recent diaspora of the post-World War II era, a network of interdependencies that transcend sociospatial boundaries. This chapter will focus on the latter of the two phases, examining aspects of the immigrants' socioreligious practices and the architecture of their sacred spaces.

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## DIASPORA WITHIN GEOGRAPHICALLY BOUNDED YET DISCONNECTED SPACES

As Basch, Blanc, and Schiller (BASCH ET AL. 1994) note, researchers have traditionally studied immigrants as people who have either been 'displaced' by force or have voluntarily 'displaced themselves', in the process losing sociocultural linkages with their homelands. The word 'immigrant', they argue, 'evokes images of permanent rupture, of the abandonment of old patterns of life, and the painful learning of a new culture and often a new language' (BASCH ET AL. 1994: 4). At the same time, immigrants are people who, having severed all ties with their homeland, have 'relocated' to another nation-state, territory, or country. Once the immigrants have crossed significant spatial divides and established roots in the new terrain, the sociospatial boundaries between the places of 'dislocation' (known as the homeland) and 'relocation' (known as the hostland) are clearly delineated on the basis of an undeniable geographic separation.

The immigrants who arrived in California from India during the late nineteenth century attest to the existence of such a notion of spatial separation (TATLA 1999: 41–61).

Nearly 90 percent of the early Asian-Indian immigrants were Sikh men who left the state of Punjab during the late 1880s, when the territory was under British colonial rule, whereas it was rare to encounter Muslims and Hindus in California at that time (LEONARD 1992: 30). Entering California from Canada and Mexico, these immigrant groups established themselves in three locations: Yuba City (Sacramento Valley) in the north, around Fresno in the Central Valley, and in El Centro (Imperial Valley) in the south (LEONARD 1989: 612-23). Initially, they cultivated rice in northern California and grapes in central California, and established cotton farming in the southern Imperial valleys. By 1913, there were more than ten thousand Sikhs living in the Imperial Valley and in Sacramento.<sup>5</sup>

Over time, the increase in capital-intensive agriculture and large-scale irrigation led to a greater demand for labor, which the Sikh community – having established a reputation for reliability and hard work – took advantage of, much to the resentment of the Caucasian farming community, which found the Sikh presence irksome. Similar early reactions to immigrant groups from India led the US government to impose a more restrictive immigration law that prohibited single Sikh men from bringing their families to the US from India, thereby encouraging feelings of isolation. The California Alien Land Act of 1913 prohibited immigrant ownership of land. Thus, alone and with no opportunity for land ownership in sight, Sikh men were forced into working-class status as farm laborers. The restrictive laws began to reshape the social structure of the Sikh community: Sikh men began marrying women of Mexican ancestry, especially in the Imperial Valley of southern California, and since their new wives were entitled to land ownership, the Sikhs indirectly became landowners. However, these new marriages across racial lines were later prohibited in California until 1948 (LEONARD 1989: 612-13). As Kang explains:

By 1946, there were 400 Punjabi families in California. Virtually 80% involved Mexican women and Punjabi men. Culturally it was tough. Mexican women insisted on raising the children in their own culture. They brought them up as Catholics and taught them Spanish and English. Although Punjabis were tolerant of their wives, they tried to reassert their traditional family control. The cultural conflicts saw at least 20% of the marriages end in divorce. The women received custody of the children. Most of these children married among Anglos or Hispanics. (KANG 2002)

Overall, California's restrictive laws forced the Sikhs to adopt a new cultural identity bracketed within a larger 'Hindu'<sup>6</sup> identity, which, in contrast to their original reputation for reliability was instead perceived very unfavorably. Male Sikh immigrants were

- 5 These immigrants, both skilled and unskilled, form the basis of today's Sikh community. While the skilled gained well-paid jobs in the lumber industry and with Pacific Railways, the unskilled formed groups of laborers known as the Hindu Crews, who were poorly paid and moved from the rice-growing areas of Marysville and Yuba City to the fruit-growing areas of the Sacramento Valley.
- 6 The term 'Hindu' includes Sikhs and Muslims of Indian origin.

perceived as having a 'lack of personal cleanliness, low morals and blind adherence to theories and teachings so entirely repugnant to American principles' (PALMER 2002: 99).

Late-nineteenth-century Western discourses referred to all people living near the River Sindhu, in India, as 'Hindoo', or Hindus, regardless of their religious identity. When Sikh immigrants arrived in California during the early part of the twentieth century, this practice of misidentification continued. Such practices attempted to equate the cultural and religious identity of those who believed in Sikhism with those adhering to Hinduism. Among themselves, however, the Asian-Indian immigrant community recognized differences along multiple lines: first, based on an immigrant's state of origin (for example, 'Punjabis' were from the state of Punjab); second, based on their nation of origin (for example, 'Indians' were from India); and third, based on the categories established by the United States Census.

Among those Sikhs who settled in a difficult environment while experiencing restrictive regulations and the misrepresentation of their communal identities were Sikh members of the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society, who established the Sikh Gurudwara in Stockton, California, in 1915. This gurudwara – a two-story wooden structure – became 'the center of religious life for the Sikhs and of social and political life for all the Punjabis in California, who gathered there several times a year' (MCMOHAN 2001: 39), and was one of the first religious centers for Indians in the United States. As Kang notes, the gurudwara was the religious and social center where Sikhs, Hindus, Mexicans, Catholics and even Muslims met, worshipped and socialized together (KANG 2002). Hence, it not only functioned as a religious center but also facilitated social and political activities, and was a place where memories and oral traditions played an important role in maintaining homeland linkages and the reconstruction of diasporic identities. By the 1960s, with rising fears of racism and various immigration restrictions, the Sikh community in the United States had dwindled to three thousand people, with only three gurudwaras in the United States struggling intensely to retain a sense of identity within the threatening public realm.

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## CONTEMPORARY ASIAN-INDIAN DIASPORA AS A SOCIAL AND SPATIAL NETWORK

The concept of diaspora is today applied to a variety of individuals and social groups that migrate due to the accelerated processes of decolonization and global migration, and the development of communication networks and rapid transportation that

encourage multiple attachments and traveling ‘within and across nations’ (CLIFFORD 1994: 306). Recent scholarship on diaspora distinguishes clearly between contemporary diasporic formations and place-bound ethnic communities, with the former implying different forms of mediated linkages between ‘homeland’ and ‘hostland’ through networks, activities, patterns of living and, potentially, ideologies that span the two realms (SAFRAN 1991; BASCH ET AL. 1994). Today such linkages have evolved from being primarily temporal, embodied in the idea of memory, into something directly visual and interactive, empowered by the possibilities of dynamic cyberspace participation and mobility. As Tololyan explains:

In the era of globalization and transnationalization (the terms are not synonymous but often used as such), when both communication and travel have become easier, these immigrants retain contact with the homeland and kinsmen in immigrant communities elsewhere to an extent undreamed of in earlier migrations, when relative isolation from homelands contributed to ethnicization or assimilation.

(TOLOLYAN 1996: 20)

In such a context, the construction of diasporic identity crisscrosses spatial boundaries between the host and home societies as it migrates through emerging social, political, cultural, and economic networks and associations.

The emergence of such a complex, transnational, sociospatial networked migration is today obvious in the Bay Area, where the majority of Asian-Indian immigrants who arrived after the mid-1960s fit this category. These post-1960s immigrant groups were composed of highly educated, pro-urban, professional individuals representing many languages, cultures, castes and religions. Their influx began under a specific set of political conditions in the United States, and especially with the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act.<sup>7</sup> Conceived in the context of the expanding Civil Rights movement, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963, and the looming Cold War, this act facilitated immigration to the United States from Asia, Latin America, and Africa – countries that had previously faced severe quotas. The new immigrants had comparatively high levels of education and thus were able to join a more productive and wealthier segment of American society than had previous generations of immigrants, an aspect that was reinforced by the growth of the dot.com industry in the 1990s and the role of the Asian-Indian immigrants in that economic boom. In turn, their higher incomes and newly developed communication networks, augmented by the fluency of many of these individuals in information technology, enabled recent Asian-Indian diasporic subjects to maintain viable relations beyond their current places of inhabitation.

7 In October 1965, amendments to the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) repealed the national origins quota system. Under the old system, a foreign country was allowed to have 2 percent of its total population emigrate to the United States. The 1965 amendments established a system based on reunification of families and needed skills. Since then, the major source of immigration to the United States has shifted from Europe to Latin America and Asia.

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## CONSTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS SPACES BY THE ASIAN-INDIAN DIASPORA IN THE PUBLIC REALM

8 Over the last two decades since the inception of the Fremont Hindu Temple, the architecture has undergone several transformations.

As these new immigrants settled in California from India, they too began establishing places of gathering and worship, located in both the public urban realm and the private spaces of their residences. The first places of worship were initially housed within warehouses and office buildings. For example, during the 1980s, the Fremont Hindu Temple (FIGURE 14.1) was officially established through the acquisition of an existing Seventh Day Adventist Church in the city of Fremont, California. This site was founded by a Hindu-speaking group that had emigrated to the United States from the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan Delhi, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh. The founding group was composed of 14 to 16 families who periodically performed bhajans and kirtans (religious songs and poems, respectively) and conducted a monthly Satyanrayan Katha (a Hindu religious ritual) in their homes. In October 1984, two years after the temple property was purchased, the Fremont Hindu Temple was officially established as a religious institution.<sup>8</sup> Rituals such as Pranprathista were performed to sanctify the land, and the main idols that adorn the temple podium were shipped from India.

Until the time of my last visit in 2004, the first scheduled daily activity at the Fremont Hindu Temple starts at eleven in the morning with bhajans sung in the Hindi language by a temple devotee. There are always about 25 to 30 elderly people in attendance at the beginning of this session. Men sit on the right-hand side of the podium, women on the left-hand side. As the session progresses, the number of devotees increases at a steady pace as men and women gradually separate into two distinct areas. On one of this author's visits, the devotional songs were followed by two lectures on Ramayana given by a swami (a traditional Indian scholar) from Banaras, India, and a professor from the University of California, Berkeley. The Indian swami had been invited to give daily talks at the temple by a local temple devotee, while the professor had been invited by the Brahman Samaj of Northern America (BSNA), a transnational social, cultural, educational and religious organization with no political affiliations. The presence of the Indian swami at local rituals exemplifies the active transnational connections that these immigrants maintain with the homeland. At the same time, the professor, who lectured on Western interpretations of Eastern culture, is a part of this immigrant community's network of local intellectuals. The professor's lecture was subsequently translated from English into Hindi for the benefit of those who did not understand the English language, thereby highlighting BSNA's effort to encourage the attendance of non-English-speaking and second-generation immigrants.

**14.1**

*Fremont Hindu Temple, Fremont, California. Author's photograph.*

The early beginnings of the Fremont Hindu Temple are intertwined with those of the Hindu Community and Cultural Center, Shiva-Vishnu Temple, Livermore (henceforth referred to as the Livermore temple) (FIGURE 14.2). Initially, during the mid-1970s, the founding members of both these temples comprised a single group that wished to combine their efforts toward the establishment of a temple in the Bay Area. During this process, however, two approaches emerged. The group of people who identified with the present-day Livermore temple wanted a building in a very traditional, Indian-temple architectural style. Adopting this approach would mean establishing a temple from scratch – buying the land, and designing and constructing the temple.





9 For further reference see the temple website: <http://livermoretemple.org/>

Those who opposed this idea preferred to establish a temple in an existing building (exemplified by the present Fremont Hindu Temple), and remained together.

The first group subsequently broke away to establish The Hindu Community and Cultural Center (the Livermore temple) in the city of Livermore, California, on an eight-acre parcel in the city's unincorporated zone. The initial foundation stone was laid in 1986 (two years after the emergence of the Fremont Hindu Temple), after a period of nine years of struggle and negotiations with the city of Livermore and the surrounding neighborhood over various issues such as the purchase of the property and obtaining a permit to establish a religious building.<sup>9</sup> The construction and physical



design of the temple as it is seen today have taken place over a period of 21 years; with the design based on traditional principles of Indian temple architecture and following the sacred scriptures *Shilpa shastras* and *Vastu shastras*.

During the 1980s, the Fremont Hindu Temple functioned as the only geographic center of the Hindu community residing in nearby cities and the southern region of the Bay Area. In the early 1990s, however, new temples were established by a variety of Indian diasporic communities, such as the Hindu temple Bochanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha (BAPS) in Milpitas, Bhakti Yoga Iskon temple in San Jose, and Shiva Murugan temple in Concord. In the case of the BAPS temple in particular, one of its key proponents was Shantilal Patel, an Asian-Indian immigrant from Kenya. This is one indication that the Asian-Indian community is composed of individuals from a worldwide diasporic network rather than those who oscillate between static homeland/hostland positions.

Other diasporic groups that defy the strict definition of the immigrant community as one bound between the polarities of homeland and hostland are those that have arrived in the Bay Area from locations outside of India, where they have resided for several generations. An example of this is the Asian-Indian populations from Fiji, who continue to maintain facets of their Hindu identity even though they identify themselves as Pacific Islanders in the United States Census. In terms of their religious practice, they have retained two particular elements of the Indian Hindu tradition, the worship of Lord Ram and the flying of the orange flag on the exteriors of their temples. This community established the Sanatan Mandir<sup>10</sup> (Radha Krishna temple) in San Bruno, located in a commercial zone, and the Radha Krishna temple in San Mateo, in a residential zone.

The number of temples in the Bay Area grew exponentially to 13 by the mid-1990s, further diversifying the existing Hindu and Sikh religious landscape. Certain patterns emerge in this growth: in the early 1990s, for example, temples embodying generic notions of Hinduism were established, while temples founded in the late 1990s embody more sectarian forms of Hinduism. A study of temple names reveals such patterns. As a case in point, the Hindu Temple and Community Center of South Bay (the Sunnyvale temple) represents a generic notion of Hinduism: the inclusion of the word 'Hindu' in the temple name signifies that all Hindus can perform their religious rituals within this space. As the temple founder, Rajeev Batra, explained:

[Here] people are from everywhere, from all over India; we have a wide variety of functions and a cultural mix ... We are serving eighty thousand people. [This] Hindu community ... is owned by all the Hindus in California. Every Hindu is the owner of this property; no one can sell it ... We have our own place, a sense of ownership.<sup>11</sup>

10 Sanatan Mandir is the official name of the temple (*sanathan* means eternal, and *mandir* means temple). The Hindi language spoken by the temple community is phonetically and grammatically different compared to the Hindi spoken by immigrants from present-day India.

11 Interview with Rajeev Batra, Sunnyvale temple, June 2002.

The presence of an implicit guiding philosophy of the community members, or more specifically that of the temple founders, also forms the basis of their choice of temple name. Bhakti Yoga Iskon temple in San Jose, Shiva Murugan temple in Concord, and Sanatan Mandir identify communal groups who worship a specific god or goddess. For example, the Shiva Murugan temple name identifies worshippers of the Lord Shiva, whereas the Radha Krishna temple name identifies worshippers of the Lord Krishna and his escort Radha. In a larger context, both of these groups identify themselves as Hindus.

It is important to note that the function of these sacred sites in California goes far beyond that of housing religious services; the temples also operate as cultural centers that bring broader communities together. This fact certainly differentiates them from their equivalents in India, which assume more strictly religious functions. Another distinct aspect of these places of worship, directly related to their role as community centers, is their practice of serving food. In Indian temples, the role of food is intricately tied to the presence of a deity. Food is usually freshly prepared and offered to the deities on a regular basis, as part of their daily meals. Following the offering, the food takes the form of Prasad and is redistributed in smaller portions to visiting devotees. In Northern California, in addition to continuing this traditional religious act, temples have invented a new tradition of serving food to the devotees every Sunday. The role of preparing, serving, and eating food is also intricately linked with domestic space on two levels. First, prior to the presence of kitchen facilities within the temples, devotees would prepare entire meals at home and bring them to the temple each Sunday to be served to the entire community. One of the original founders of a temple explained that the introduction of food for the devotees was intended to attract more people. In Northern California, this trend is particularly evident in decisions made by temple committees to construct additional kitchen space. With the establishment of fully-fledged working kitchens, temple volunteers cook at the temple. The increase in the importance of food to the Hindu diasporic community reflects a new spatial component to their religious identity. Food, which always played a central role in the community's social and cultural practices, has now become a literal part of the religious space.

Despite the fact that the Bay Area Asian-Indian population has been represented by a multitude of subcommunal identities in the public realm, from an architectural perspective the population still remains largely invisible to society at large. There are many explanations for such a situation, but the most important one is the complexity of recreating traditional temple architecture in the hostland. Only two of 13 temples in the Bay Area (Livermore temple and Jain temple) represent traditional Indian temple

architecture. Due to financial considerations, other temples have been established in existing L-shaped, one-story warehouses, office buildings, storefronts and in several instances in existing churches in residential zones. Typically, either the 'Om' symbol or the temple name marks the building's exterior and indicates the existence of a Hindu temple. 'Om', or 'Aum', is of paramount importance in Hinduism.<sup>12</sup> What is common to these different temples is the idea of creating a sacred site by placing an idol, representing the god associated with that temple, on a clearly demarcated podium within an existing building. Yet, despite the repeated establishment of Asian-Indian religious sites in the Bay Area, their anonymity in the public realm indicates the complex nature of the recent Asian-Indian diasporic identity – an identity which, in its iconoclasm, becomes a means of avoiding ethnicization.

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### CONSTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS SPACES BY THE ASIAN-INDIAN DIASPORA IN THE DOMESTIC REALM

Asian-Indian immigrants in the Bay Area live in different forms of urban real estate, ranging from custom-designed single-family homes to one- or two-bedroom apartments. Within these residential spaces individuals and families commonly create sacred sites that range in size and can occupy an entire room or a kitchen closet. Amit and Smita, who were observed and interviewed in this study, emigrated from India in the mid-1990s and the mid-1970s, respectively (they are unrelated).<sup>13</sup>

Amit completed his undergraduate engineering degree in the town of Vidy-anagar, in the state of Gujarat, India. Thereafter, he worked in Baroda for five years as a software engineer. In 1996, he came to the Bay Area, like many other Indian immigrants, on an H-1 visa, to work with the Soriant Corporation in Sunnyvale. By the mid-1990s, the Bay Area had a strong Asian-Indian presence, visible in the form of numerous restaurants, religious buildings and grocery stores. Hence, Amit's transition from the homeland to the hostland environment was relatively comfortable. Before departing from India, Amit knew the exact location of the Swaminarayan temple and the names of the people he would seek out upon arrival. 'The first day I came to the United States I called the temple', said Amit. 'Next day, I went for darshan (worship), and beginning the following Sunday I have been a regular at the temple'.

Amit lives with his family – his wife and one son – in a one-bedroom apartment. Within his small home, religious symbols occupy a prominent place, particularly in the living room. The depth of Amit's religious faith is represented by the presence of visible

<sup>12</sup> The syllable OM is the most sacred symbol in Hinduism. In its sound and form, OM symbolizes the infinite Brahman and the entire universe. In Sanskrit the sounds of the letters A and U, when combined, produce a sound equivalent to the letter O. The OM sound is obtained by combining the sounds produced by the letters A, U, and M.

<sup>13</sup> Interviews with Amit and Smita were conducted in March 2003 at their homes, located in Milpitas and Monte Sereno, California, respectively.

**14.3**

*A miniature mandir (temple) in Amit's house, Sunnyvale, California. Author's photograph.*



**14** The symbol of Akshar Deri is the trademark of Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Sanstha, also known as the Swaminarayan community. The Akshar Deri is a holy shrine in Gujarat, India, that commemorates the cremation site of Aksharbrahma Gunatitanand Swami (1785–1867), one of the most important sadhus, or holy men, in the Swaminarayan faith. For further information, see the website, <http://www.swaminarayan.org>.

physical markers such as the mandir (FIGURE 14.3) and images of his spiritual leader, Swami Pramukh Maharaj. The mandir is a miniature version of a traditional Indian temple and primarily functions as a place of daily worship, while pictures of Swami Maharaj adorn the walls of the living and dining spaces. These visual markers are an essential part of Amit and his family's daily life and of their religious identity. Such objects are shipped from India and then distributed to individual devotees through a sophisticated network: First they arrive at a Los Angeles temple shop, then they are sent to shops within temples throughout California, where community members are able to purchase them. As Amit explained, these markers help to remind him of his faith and concentrate on his prayers, because 'it is human nature to forget, [while] you can concentrate very well with an object'. Further, to exemplify their sense of belonging and of respect for their community, Amit's family created a painting of Akshar Deri,<sup>14</sup> including the symbolic image of their Swami's footprints and the tilak chandlo, a physical representation of the Swaminarayan community (similar to the cross for Christians). Today, this art piece hangs on their living-room wall.

Amit chose an apartment complex close to the temple because he wished to maintain his homeland traditions. As he explained, 'we wanted to come close to the



## 14.4

*Goddess Durga podium in the Puja room of Smita's house. Author's photograph.*

temple at the same time my parents were going to visit us ... and we go daily; everyday we go for darshan'. Like Amit, many of his friends in the Swaminarayan community have chosen to live within a one-mile radius of the temple. This close proximity allows them to take an active part in the daily religious and social activities.

Smita's story represents a different stratum of the Asian-Indian immigrant community. Smita arrived in the United States in 1972 with professional engineering qualifications and became financially successful during the late 1990s. She and her husband, Shailesh, immigrated first to Dayton, Ohio, from the city of Lucknow in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. In 1974 they moved to the Bay Area, like many other immigrants, influenced by the weather and job opportunities in the region. Over the next three decades, Shailesh founded several companies that were subsequently bought by larger

- 15 The son of Shiva and Parvati, Ganesha has an elephantine countenance with a curved trunk and big ears, and a huge pot-bellied body of a human being. He is the lord of success and destroyer of evils and obstacles. He is also worshipped as the god of education, knowledge, wisdom and wealth. Ganesha is one of the five prime Hindu deities (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Durga being the other four) whose idolatry is glorified as the *panchayatana puja*.
- 16 *Puja* is a religious act of daily devotion consisting of a ritual offering of food, drink, and ritual actions and prayers, most commonly to an image of a deity. Typically, if an idol of a god/goddess is placed within a room then subsequently, a *puja* would be performed within that space and the room would be identified as the *Puja room*.

corporations. The couple's cumulative financial success is reflected in their Italian-style villa in the hills, in an exclusive residential area in the city of Monte Sereno, near Los Gatos. Smita custom-designed their home, which reflects her passion for Italy. The exterior facade loosely reflects the architectural elements of an Italian villa, complete with red-tile roof, imposing entryway, and walls painted in warm Mediterranean colors. The garden and the landscaping surrounding the house replicate aspects of the Italian Baroque and include a gazebo-style dome structure.

In sharp contrast to the Mediterranean-style exterior, the interior constructs a different narrative. Upon entering the house, one is instantly confronted with strong juxtapositions of elements drawn from both Eastern (Indian) and Western (Mediterranean and California) cultures. For example, crossing the entryway and facing the main hall, one finds a large entryway niche occupied by a giant bronze statue of Ganesha, also known as Lord Ganapati,<sup>15</sup> framing the grand Mediterranean-style staircase in the center of the hallway. Architectural elements that adorn the main hall are embellished with Western motifs and frame a view toward the stone fountain in the garden patio. The patio, a typical element of Italian architecture, is framed by a wall adorned with frescoes representing images of daily life in an Indian village. The juxtaposition of these elements at such a dramatic scale emphasizes Smita's desire to project an identity that spans two different cultures. As she pointed at these juxtaposed elements with a sense of pride and achievement, she simultaneously oscillated between her assumed identities. Smita exhibited a strong desire to be acculturated to Western ways of living while at the same time holding on to the Hindu way of living, which formed her childhood in India.

Another space of special importance in Smita's house is a 200-square-foot room designated as the *Puja room*.<sup>16</sup> Here, the statue of goddess Durga occupies the central location on a podium (FIGURE 14.4), and Smita and her family members worship the goddess and perform the religious rituals associated with her. Adjoining this space is an 80-square-foot room where Smita keeps the paraphernalia required for the religious rituals. Smita maintains active connections with India, and with the help of her family living in Jaipur, she was able to import most of the deities carved in marble. She also describes herself as a 'Hindu temple-goer' who visits the temple on a regular basis. During her initial years in California, she visited the Fremont Hindu Temple. Over time, along with a few other individuals, she decided to start a temple in the South Bay that would accommodate all Hindus and enable them to participate in and perform individual forms of Hindu religious practices. The founders wished to establish a place where all the Indian Hindu festivals, such as Ganesh Chaturthi and Rath Yatra, could be performed.



14.5 Rath yatra festivity by devotees members of the Hindu Temple and Community Center of South Bay, Sunnyvale, California. Author's photograph.

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## **PUBLIC RELIGIOUS RITUALS AND INVISIBLE SOCIOSPATIAL NETWORKS OF THE ASIAN-INDIAN DIASPORA**

Asian-Indian immigrants in the Bay Area continue to recreate sacred spaces within both the public and domestic realms, and in the process they continuously negotiate their individual and communal identities. As this chapter explains, the emergence of the immigrants' public and domestic architecture over the last century has depended on many complex sociocultural variables. During the first half of the twentieth century, the Sikh community in the United States was able to establish only three gurudwaras

17 Ratna Sinhasan is the golden throne on which Lord Jagannath sits.

18 The pilgrimage route starts at 7.30 a.m. at the Swaminarayan temple, and ends back at the temple at 5.30 p.m. Temple members pay US\$10 as a commitment to completing the entire trip.

that served as their public sacred sites. At the time, the Sikhs were living in a closely circumscribed sociocultural environment, simultaneously experiencing restrictive regulations and the misrepresentation of their communal identity. The second half of the twentieth century, on the other hand, represents an altogether different story. Today, the Asian-Indian community has transformed the Bay Area urban landscape through the establishment of gurudwaras, temples, churches and mosques. Between 2003 and 2005, 13 Hindu temples were established, 11 of which occupy existing buildings such as warehouses, offices and retail complexes. Even though individually these sacred sites may be unassuming and isolated, numerous socioreligious and sociocultural practices connect them with densely woven sociospatial networks.

One prominent aspect of religious Hindu practice is participation in the act of pilgrimage, whether during a religious festival such as the Rath Yatra or by taking a tour. In India, the Rath Yatra festival is celebrated primarily in the coastal town of Puri, where every year in July the town comes alive and colorful chariots lead a procession in one of the biggest festivals celebrating Lord Jagannath. (According to the Indian solar calendar, Rath Yatra falls two days after the new moon day of the month of Asadh.) To begin the festival, Lord Jagannath emerges from the Ratna Sinhasan<sup>17</sup> with his brother and sister into the streets of Puri, and joins his devotees while visiting his birthplace, Gundicha Ghar. On the day of the journey, three chariots line up in front of the temple and one deity is placed on each chariot. The king of Puri, the living symbol of Lord Jagannath, sweeps the chariots with a golden broom and scented water; then the pilgrims line up with a rope and pull the chariots towards Gundicha Ghar.

Similarly, in the Bay Area the idols of Lord Jagannath and his siblings, which normally reside in devotees' homes, are brought to the temple on this particular day. The temple priests prepare for the religious ceremony and decorate the rath (car) in the parking lot. As the ceremony begins, devotees carry the deities from within the temple and place them on the rath. This act of placement is followed by a series of religious rituals, after which the rath traverses the parking lot and public streets, making a full circle around the temple in a symbolic procession (FIGURE 14.5).<sup>18</sup>

During the festival of the Rath Yatra and related pilgrimage tours in the Bay Area, parking lots function as accessory circumambulatory spaces and highways are symbolically converted into pilgrimage routes. Performing these rituals symbolically transforms profane places into sacred spaces by extending the physical boundaries of the temples beyond the temple space itself. In addition, these acts foster the emergence of an invisible social network that connects the various Bay Area temple adherents to other Bay Area temple communities.



Through participation in temple festivities and pilgrimage tours, devotees create temporal, socioreligious connections between their public and private diasporic spaces. Devotees also assist with the temple administration and organize cultural events on a regular basis. Their belief is that by creating such complex and elaborate spatial interconnectedness, the next generation of Asian-Indian youth will have the opportunity to learn about the rich religious and cultural heritage of India, and thus maintain its identity.

The typical sociospatial boundary that defines the notion of the sacred in India takes on a new form in the diaspora. In the new environment, traditional boundaries intertwine with new forms of temporal and sociocultural boundaries, and thus religious forms and practices are cross-pollinated with local idioms and adapt to local codes. The emerging transnational identities of Asian-Indian immigrants in the Bay Area, as expressed by their socioreligious practices, are suggestive of the diasporic communities' acquired ability to negotiate notions of selfhood and otherness, and to create sociocultural networks that are robust, yet not always discernable by those who are not members of the community.

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# Athens, City of the Displaced:

## Notes from the Field

Eleni Tzirtzilaki

*Joy, warm as the joy that shipwrecked sailors feel  
when they catch sight of land – Poseidon has struck  
their well-rigged ship on the open sea with gale winds  
and crushing walls of waves, and only a few escape, swimming,  
struggling out of the frothing surf to reach the shore,  
their bodies crusted with salt but buoyed up with joy  
as they plant their feet on solid ground again,  
spared a deadly fate.*

-HOMER, *THE ODYSSEY*, BOOK XXIII, LINES 262–9

In the same sea where Homer's heroes traveled, today hundreds of undocumented migrants find themselves fighting with the fury of winds and waves following sudden capsizes and shipwrecks. Many of these displaced populations, attempting to reach Greece – and eventually Europe – illegally by boat, do not survive the arduous trip.<sup>1</sup> Even those who are 'spared a deadly fate' are confronted with disillusion as soon as they 'plant their feet on solid ground again.'<sup>2</sup>

These contemporary populations are among the *sans-papiers* (those without papers), whose numbers in Greece have increased steadily in recent years.<sup>3</sup> Entering Greece via water or land, these perpetually transient individuals, claiming no fixed address, are part of an escalating international phenomenon in postindustrial cities, the result of mounting political, economic and social pressures in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and the reshuffling of the world map. Today, millions of people are driven away by war, persecution, or in search of a better life,<sup>4</sup> and flee their lands without heeding the physical and mental costs of such displacements. Given the fluid nature of the workforce that characterizes the era of globalization, in which the gap between affluence and poverty is increasing, progressively more stringent government

1 According to the website Fortress Europe, which tracks media reports of immigrant deaths along the borders of Europe, in the period 1988 to 2006, 724 stowaways died in the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Greece, and 364 were recorded missing (FORTRESS EUROPE 2007).

2 According to a report by the Italian police, 4,737 stowaways were caught and sent back to the Greek ports of Patra and Igoumenitsa in 2003; 3,117 in 2004; and 3,360 in 2005 (PASHA-LIDOU 2007: 52).

- 3 According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the foreign-born population in Greece increased from 1.6 percent of the country's total population in 1991 to 7.3 percent in 2001. In 1998, according to the Greek Manpower Employment Organization, the number of foreign residents in Athens constituted 10 percent of the city's population. These statistical data, however, hold little significance for the study of illegal immigrants, whose numbers remain largely unregistered.
- 4 According to the International Migration Report of the United Nations, 'today the number of people residing outside their country of birth is at an all-time high of about 175 million, more than double the number a generation ago' (UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS 2002: 1).
- 5 This fieldwork was conducted as part of the author's doctoral research in the Department of Architecture at the Technical University of Athens, Greece (2001–08).
- 6 Unless otherwise noted, this and subsequent excerpted quotations are from interviews conducted by the author with subjects in Athens from 2000–05. These and other translations from the Greek in this chapter were supervised by Jilly Traganou unless otherwise noted.
- 7 The Schengen Agreement was originally signed on 14 June 1985 by five European countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and The Netherlands. It allows for a common border and common immigration policies among participating countries. To date, 26 countries have signed the agreement and 15 have implemented it. Border posts and checks have been removed between Schengen countries, and a common 'Schengen visa' allows access to the territory. The agreement does not cover residency or work permits for non-EU nationals. The policy in Greece conforms to recommendations issued by the International Organization for Migration, established in 1951 with 118 member states, and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, established in 1974.

measures to curb migration are proving futile. Nothing, it seems, can keep these populations from fleeing.

As Zygmunt Bauman (BAUMAN 2003) claimed, these 'superfluous' populations of migrants, refugees, and other marginalized individuals are usually treated as 'human waste', yet they are inseparable from the process of modernization and the drive for economic progress. Despite the arguments of scholars that it is the human duty to accept the sans-papiers with 'hospitality' (DERRIDA 1997), what they usually find in the cities is exile: the metropolitan exile has replaced the erstwhile exile to remote lands.

Diasporas, or networks of displaced populations, are scattered around the world. The form of habitation for these displaced individuals is 'en route' or 'in motion', a habitation that constantly trespasses boundaries. Dispersion becomes a crucial concept for these populations, replacing the static notions of homeland and hostland and implying a destabilized sense of belonging. Individuals belonging to these displaced populations, for example, do not seek a permanent place to live, since they know that they cannot have it, and they do not hope to return to their home countries. Rather, they are engaged in a constant search for settlement under the unstable conditions they have come to terms with. Not only do these populations spend a great deal of time traveling, often illegally and usually under brutal conditions, but once they arrive at their chosen destination they must inhabit places that would normally be considered uninhabitable.

The research findings and first-person accounts presented below were collected during fieldwork in Athens, Greece, in 2000–05.<sup>5</sup> These field notes record the ways in which displaced populations perform their 'habitation en route' upon arrival in Athens. Specifically, this chapter documents how two specific social groups, asylum-seekers and illegal immigrants in Greece, experience the city of Athens as a temporary space of inhabitation. This chapter does not attempt to draw conclusions about the overall mode of inhabitation in Athens. Rather, the aim of this study is to understand what habitation en route means for the displaced populations in the city. As architecture theorist Anny Vryhea has written, 'Today we cannot talk about man's needs in terms of space, but about the multiple, different needs of multiple, different peoples in terms of private and public spaces' (VRYCHEA 2003: 353–4).

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## THE JOURNEY

We started from Kabul. We walked for days in the mountains. It was very cold. We were hiding. We were afraid of getting caught. I was traveling with others from back home. It was very difficult. We walked for days ... I arrived at Izmir. I tried to leave with others, but we were caught.

We were put in jail. When I got out of jail, I stayed for three months in Istanbul. Then I went back to Izmir. I crossed the sea to Greece using an inflatable raft, together with my friend. The waves were enormous. During the entire crossing we were praying. We traveled for seven hours. Upon arrival, we were caught and put in jail for four months. Then I asked for asylum. I stayed for three months in the park at Pedion Areos [in downtown Athens]. Then I found a house with others from back home.

(MEHDI, 23-YEAR-OLD FROM AFGHANISTAN, JANUARY 2003<sup>6</sup>)

Beginning in 1990, Greece, which in 1992 signed the Schengen Agreement,<sup>7</sup> began to receive increasing numbers of displaced individuals. Given its geopolitical position – in the southeast fringe of Europe, edging toward Asia and Africa – Greece constitutes a ‘passage’ or temporary abode for these migrant populations. Greece receives asylum-seekers (those who seek refugee status)<sup>8</sup> primarily from Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Afghanistan; and immigrants from Albania, the former Soviet Union, Poland and Romania who seek more favorable economic conditions. Many such individuals enter Greece illegally, traveling great distances at risk to their lives, on foot over land or by sea in dangerous vessels. Despite the fact that they often get arrested and must return to their home countries, they set off again on their journeys to the ‘West’. Most new arrivals prefer Athens as their destination because public services and humanitarian organizations are housed in the capital and because they hope to find job opportunities there. Furthermore, in Athens these displaced individuals feel they have more opportunities to meet with their compatriots than they would in smaller towns. Given Greece’s restrictive legislation, these displaced populations are classified as ‘without papers’ for long periods of time. The number of those recognized as refugees is very small, and although many have grounds for seeking asylum, they prefer not to apply for fear of having their applications rejected.<sup>9</sup> An alternate possibility is to acquire a residence permit. However, obtaining a residence permit as an immigrant is a long process; according to the Greek government Act 3386 of 2005, it is possible only for those who arrived in Greece before 31 December 2004, and requires proof of having entered the country legally and having secured employment.

In the following section, I describe two types of experiences typical of displaced individuals arriving in Athens: the first applies to legal asylum-seekers housed at the various camps or hostels organized by national or transnational organizations, usually located at the periphery of the city; the second is that of independent, self-organized undocumented immigrants in inner-city Athens waiting for asylum or a residence permit, often on an illegal basis.

8 The 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Protocols are the key international treaties defining refugees, their rights, and the legal obligations of states toward them. The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted on 28 July 1951 by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, defines the term ‘refugee’ in Chapter 1, Article 1, as someone who ‘owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it’. Article 33 prohibits the expulsion or return (refoulement) of refugees. Because the 1951 Convention was designed to protect mainly European refugees in the aftermath of World War II, a Protocol signed in 1967 removed geographical and temporal restrictions (persons who had become refugees before 1 January 1951 in Europe) so that the protections provided by the Convention would apply to all refugees, regardless of where they were from or when they became refugees.

9 Those who request recognition as refugees are currently provided with a ‘pink card’ that gives them the right to work legally until their case is examined by the Ministry of Public Order in collaboration with the UNHCR and the non-governmental organization Greek Council for Refugees, established in 1988. This interim period may last from six months to two years. If an applicant’s claim is rejected, he or she has the right to appeal. If the applicant’s claim is rejected for a second time, however, he or she is obliged to leave Greece. Many applicants then remain in Greece illegally or apply for immigration status. According to the UNHCR, the number of individuals granted asylum by the Greek government in recent years is declining (from 222 out of 3,083 applications in 2000 to

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## HOSPITALITY: LIFE AT THE BORDERS

**10** In addition to the facilities described in this chapter, other institutional amenities include low-cost hotels operated by the Ministry of Health that host a very small number of individuals; and the Nefeli program, under the auspices of the ministry's Foundation for Social Work and the UNHCR, which administers five units in the western part of Athens, with two families living semi-independently in each. The organization Social Welfare of the Hellenic Red Cross owns also two camp facilities in the region of Thessaly, one at Ano Kallithea in the town of Sperchiada, and Kokkinopilos in the town of Elassona. The former lies in a mountainous region and in 2004 hosted four families and a total of thirteen people. The second lies in a barren area on the west side of Mount Olympus and in 2004 hosted 35 single men and women from Afghanistan, China and Romania.

**11** Over the last 20 years, downtown Athens has been emptied of its former residents, most of whom have fled in favour of more upscale suburbs.

**12** Author's visits to the refugee camp in Lavrion took place in September 2000, October 2002, November 2004, January 2005 and June 2006.

Officially, hospitality in Greece is extended only to asylum-seekers, and then only in selected cases. For years, Athens counted just one totally inadequate reception camp for asylum-seekers, in Lavrion; recently the city acquired some smaller-scale facilities.<sup>10</sup> Individuals and families housed in available facilities usually change over every six to seven months, but they can stay for as long as two years. After that period, and if they have the money, they join forces to rent apartments, usually substandard units with deficient lighting, ventilation and plumbing. Many are forced to stay in abandoned houses and factories, mainly in old neighborhoods near downtown Athens, while some end up living on the streets.<sup>11</sup>

### *Reception Camp for Asylum Seekers, Lavrion*<sup>12</sup>

Lavrion is neither home nor a country

(A KURD HOSTED AT THE LAVRION CAMP, JANUARY 2004).

The official reception camp for asylum-seekers in Greece is in Lavrion, a town situated about 55 kilometers from Athens and known since ancient times for its mines. It lies on the coast opposite Makronissos, an island used as a place of exile following World War II and in the years of the military junta of 1967–73. Today, Lavrion is an industrial urban center with a population of 10,500. As Bauman explains, the main criterion that nation-states use for choosing a location for a temporary and permanent camps is distance from the urban centers:

A distance large enough to prevent the poisonous affluvia of social decomposition from reaching places inhabited by their native inhabitants is the main criterion by which the location of their permanently temporary camps are selected. Out of that place, refugees are an obstacle and a trouble; inside that place, they are forgotten.

(BAUMAN 2003: 78)

The physical facilities consist of two blocks and a fenced courtyard. Formerly an army camp, it has a capacity of 350 persons but usually houses 700 to 800. Each floor has communal toilets to serve the rows of rooms. Ten to fifteen individuals occupy each room; the rooms range from 10 to 15 square meters in size. One of the wings includes a cafeteria, a sitting room and a library, the other has only bedrooms and toilets. The rooms are used for cooking, eating, visiting, storing possessions and sleeping. Daily life

takes place inside the rooms, where each individual's sole personal space consists of a mattress. A map of the home country on the wall was usually the only decoration in most of the rooms. In the crowded corridors and balconies, people chat, do their laundry and hang out their clothes to dry. Overall, conditions are harsh. The facility is neglected: broken drains, humidity, crumbling walls and missing roof tiles do not create a comfortable or homelike atmosphere. As a former army camp, the installation does not lend itself to adaptation due to its rigid architecture, both in terms of structure and spatial articulation.

The Lavrion camp, which first opened in 1955, is managed by the Hellenic Red Cross and funded by the Ministry of Health and Welfare, which assumed control from the Ministry of Public Order in 1998. The occupants receive free accommodation, board and medical care. They are given no financial aid or work permits. Most find seasonal employment in construction work or on local farms but receive no social security. The camp provides Greek language lessons for adults and children, while the latter attend school in Lavrion.

Asylum-seekers' journeys had left a strong impression on them, and during the author's visits they felt the need to talk about their experiences. Many of them had walked for days, stopping only briefly before moving on. Others had been hidden in the hold of a ship or had spent several days on a small boat. Although the refugee center does not suit them, they have nowhere else to go. They noted the camp's problems: the bad drains, humidity, low-quality food, and the hunger strike they had initiated in order to pressure the camp's administrators for better food.

Life is organized around a series of boundaries. A piece of coloured fabric in the doorway marks a room's boundary with the corridor. Another decisive boundary is the division of the two wings: in 2005 one was occupied by Kurds and the other housed Afghans. The two groups maintained uneasy relations, as Kurds have suffered discrimination and persecution at the hands of their neighbors. The dividing line with the town of Lavrion is the iron fence around the facility: the refugees rarely have the money to cross the iron gate and visit the town. Since downtown Athens is 55 kilometers away, it is not easy for the refugees to reach the capital because they cannot afford public transportation. At the same time, the borders of the country are also closed to these individuals because they have applied for asylum: they cannot travel further or go back home.

The occupants of the camp restore the memory of their native countries through their daily habits. They leave their shoes outside and sit on the floor. Instead of eating in the cafeteria, they usually bring food back to their rooms and eat while sitting on the floor. They drink tea while lying on a mattress with a makeshift cover. When they have the money, they buy supplies from outside the camp and prepare tra-

- 13 Osservatorio Nomade, an initiative of the Stalker Group, is a multidisciplinary research network, composed of artists, architects, video-makers and researchers, founded in Italy in 2002. Osservatorio Nomade promotes European cultural diversity encouraging intercultural dialogue among migrants and minority groups, and undertakes site research and participatory territorial projects. Through this approach the Osservatorio Nomade seeks to promote the development of self-organized processes and the participation of non-specialist populations in the management of urban issues (OSSERVATORIO NOMADE 2006).
- 14 *ON Egnatia. A Path of Displaced Memories* was a project organized in 2004–05 by the Osservatorio Nomade and other European agencies. The project aimed to investigate, map and preserve the memories and experiences of people who travel along the route of the ancient Appia–Egnatia Road. Appia and Egnatia were two consecutive thoroughfares (interrupted by the Adriatic Sea) established in the Roman period (the Appian Way in the fourth century BC and the Egnatia in the second century BC). The first connected Rome with Brindisi in southeast Italy, and the second extended the connection to present-day Istanbul. The route functions today as a major avenue of displacement for millions of refugees and immigrants moving toward Western Europe. For more information, see <http://www.egnatia.info/egnatiascrittaneraindex.swf>.
- 15 Author's visit to Nea Makri hostel took place in September 2000, when she was escorted by social workers employed at the facility.
- 16 The camp is off Marathonos Avenue, 2 kilometers outside of Nea Makri, which has a population of 17,000 and is located 32 kilometers from Athens.

ditional meals. The courtyard of the Kurds' wing is an empty concrete space that serves no specific use. However, on the evening of an event organized by the Osservatorio Nomade (Nomadic Observatory),<sup>13</sup> a multidisciplinary group that promotes European cultural diversity (see below), as part of their 'ON Egnatia' project,<sup>14</sup> this void was transformed by the dancing of the inhabitants (FIGURE 15.1). The moves were abrupt and grave; the dancers moved in circles that unfolded spirally into one another. Everybody danced – men, women and children, carrying in their movements the memory of their home countries.

### *Reception Center for Asylum Seekers and Displaced Persons, Nea Makri*<sup>15</sup>

A small signpost on the main road to the town of Nea Makri points to the location of the reception center of Nea Makri, which was managed by the Social Welfare of the Hellenic Red Cross and funded by the Hellenic Red Cross and the European Commission. Located two bus stops away from town, the hostel stands some way off the main road, 'hidden' from the eyes of passersby and at a distance from the holiday homes of this busy resort town.<sup>16</sup> The hostel, which had a maximum capacity of 120 people, opened its gates on 1 March 2000 with the support of the European Union and ceased to operate in April 2004, when funds were exhausted. Guests came from Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran. Specifically, seven single-parent families (headed by women) resided there, each with four to six children. The fathers were either in prison in their home countries or had fled to another country. Many of the women who lived there suffered a variety of psychological maladies.

During my visit, the camp's residential units consisted of 17 tents provided by the Hellenic Red Cross and intended originally for earthquake victims. The tents had a metal frame and stood on stakes driven into the ground, with a gap left between the soil and the wooden floor for ventilation. The waterproof tent fabric was lined with glass wool, which made the tents warm in winter but also very hot during the long summer months. Each tent was divided into two sections by a makeshift partition of colourful fabric put up by the inhabitants. One tent contained eight beds, a small table, suitcases, two plastic wardrobes, children's toys and two chairs; the floor was covered with rugs. The tight space inside the tent resulted in a complete lack of privacy for the people who shared it. Common bathrooms and toilets were located outside, and the kitchen was also shared. The women cooked and cleaned the place in turns.

Because of the tight space, daily life took place out in the open. During my visit, residents had placed chairs or benches outside the tents, where the women chatted and the children played, while others carried food or did their laundry. In this kind of habitation boundaries shift from the interior of the tent to outside; household





15.1 Event organized within the framework of the Egnatia project (*Osservatorio Nomade*) at the reception camp for asylum seekers in Lavrion, 27 November 2004. Author's photograph.

chores but also people's personal lives are necessarily made public. Living 'outside' is an unusual condition for women from gender-restrictive societies who have learned to live in closed, indoor worlds. However, although disconcerting at first, this experience often helps them overcome some of their psychological problems, as they learn to live and cooperate with others rather than being strictly confined to their own family unit. Gradually, the entire hostel becomes a communal home: the hostel is the 'inside', and the 'outside' is what lies beyond the fence.

### ***Penteli Reception Center***<sup>17</sup>

The Penteli Reception Center is situated on the periphery of Athens, in the forest of Mount Penteli.<sup>18</sup> Formerly a summer camp funded by the Agricultural Bank of Greece, the camp was operated between 1999 and 2003 by Médecins du Monde (Doctors of the World), a non-governmental humanitarian aid organization, and had a capacity of

<sup>17</sup> Author's visit took place in May 2001.

<sup>18</sup> It is situated 3 kilometers from the center of Penteli, a town of 6,156 people located 12 kilometers from Athens.

280 people. The center was funded by the European Union, but also received financial support from numerous Greek businesses and individuals. Although the facility officially closed in 2003, it still accommodates some asylum seekers: at the time of the research 12 families lived there unofficially. NGO volunteers and refugees organized the space on their own, renovated the camp's plumbing, and repaired the communal facilities. During my visit in 2001, the guests were Kurds from Turkey and Iraq, housed in 16 prefabricated aluminum huts and 11 tents (FIGURES 15.2 AND 15.3). The auxiliary facilities include a kitchen, four men's and four women's toilets, bathrooms, a storehouse and a recreation space for children. Over the years, the center has housed more than 10,000 people, while today it houses nearly 300 people, mainly families headed by single parents.

Each hut houses two families, while young men occupy the tents. Even though the tents were designed to accommodate six people, it was not uncommon for up to ten people to sleep in each of them. Guests had obviously attempted to personalize the space with rugs, curtains and colored blankets. Equally striking was the resourceful reuse of materials in erecting makeshift structures of timber, asbestos-cement panels and fabric. Many huts had an added kitchen outside, while plastic, cloth and wood was used to protect the tents from poor weather.

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## THE CITY AS REFUGE

Whether refugees from Asia Minor in the 1920s<sup>19</sup> or domestic migrants in later decades, newcomers have always gathered around Omonoia Square in downtown Athens in search of jobs, accommodation, or acquaintances. Because this area has also been a hub for Athenians on their way to work, out shopping, or seeking entertainment, *hostis* (the foreign traveler) and *hospes* (the host) have always come together here. According to Massimo Cacciari, the two categories are often blurred: "The *hostis* always resides within the *hospes* and vice versa. These are two interwoven dynamics, not two separate situations" (CACCIARI 2006: 31).<sup>20</sup> Greece's immigration history indeed confirms such dynamics.<sup>21</sup> Numerous former *hostis* (either refugees from Asia Minor or immigrants from elsewhere) are now Greek citizens. Today, they are often oblivious to their immigrant past and approach the new displaced populations with a xenophobic attitude. It is no longer the *hospes* who protects these displaced populations, but rather the city itself.

Today these displaced populations are the principal users and inhabitants of public space in downtown Athens, in the area around Omonoia square that has

19 Following the Turco-Greek War of 1919–22, the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations was signed in Lausanne, Switzerland, on 30 January 1923. As stated in its first article, it involved 'the compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory', and led to the displacement of two million people on the basis of religion. Under this agreement, more than one million Greek Orthodox were uprooted from Asia Minor and fled to Greece in 1923, flooding major urban centers and doubling the population of Athens from 200,000 to 400,000 inhabitants. See Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations (1924).



15.2

*Temporary tent in Penteli  
Reception Center, February 2001.  
Author's photograph.*



15.3

*Temporary inhabitant in front of  
the Penteli Reception Center, Feb-  
ruary 2001. Author's photograph.*

20 According to Cacciari, 'hostis is the foreign traveller (*peregrinus*); hospes is he who welcomes the hostis and gives him hospitality. The word hostis, like the Greek word *xenos*, did not initially have the meaning of *enemy* (*inimicus*, *peduellis*). The word *xenos*, in fact, in many cases, appears as a synonym for the word *filos*: and for this reason enmity toward *xenos* (*exthroxenos*) is an offence equivalent to not worshipping the gods (Seven Against Thebes). Nor does hospitality initiate some assimilative process: the *hostis*, the stranger, is sacred because of the difference in his identity and individuality from that of his host. The host is in turn a potential *hostis*: he always faces the possibility that he too, will become a stranger, an itinerant who will require hospitality. The *hostis* always resides within the *hospes* and vice versa. These are two interwoven dynamics, not two separate situations. As the 'amazing' evolution of the language teaches, there is no assurance that the hostis will not become *inimicus*' (CACCIARI 2006: 31).

21 In addition to the major refugee movement from and to Asia Minor described above, Greece has experienced two important waves of mass emigration since the formation of the modern Greek state in the early 1830s. In the period 1890–1914, almost one-sixth of the population of Greece emigrated, mostly to the United States and Egypt. In the period 1950–74, more than one million Greeks emigrated to Western Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia. Economic and political circumstances largely motivated these moves; the post-World War II migration was a consequence of the 1946–49 civil war and the country's period of military rule from 1967–74. Official statistics show that in the period 1955–73, Germany absorbed 603,300 Greek migrants; Australia 170,700; the US 124,000; and Canada 80,200 (KASIMI AND KASSIMI 2004).

historically been the hangout of both strangers and locals. Their presence is facilitated by the complex, dense pattern of buildings in this area, the several abandoned spaces and urban voids<sup>22</sup> that characterize the city of Athens, the intricate web of arcades and stairs and the proximity to the Central Market and various smaller vendors' markets around the Monastiraki area, all of which open doors of communication. The various types of habitation in the urban voids are fluid and changeable; once they are discovered they are banned, and the persecuted seek a new space in the city. This is mobile habitation, not only because it involves constant displacement but also because it is assisted by various portable tools, such as wheelbarrows, large colorful bags, bundles, fabrics and cardboard boxes.

### *Habitation of Koumoundourou Square: A 'Room' within the City*

Koumoundourou (or Eleftherias) Square is situated in downtown Athens, south of Omonoia Square.<sup>23</sup> It is surrounded by a few significant buildings, such as the Municipal Gallery, housed in the former Foundling Hospital, but primarily it is known as the terminal for buses to the western, rather impoverished, suburbs of Athens. In late 1998, the square and its surrounding area were neglected enough to be described as one of several urban voids, abandoned spaces in the city that are awaiting new modes of becoming.

Such a new mode of becoming took place in Koumoundourou Square in October 1998, when groups of displaced Kurds gradually made their home in the square proper (FIGURE 15.4). By the end of the year, the number of Kurds inhabiting the square had increased to almost 1,300. As journalist Georgia Dara wrote:

1,300 people fit in the small square. They hardly trusted us. Finally they talked to us, using pseudonyms, about the illnesses they suffer from the cold weather and the harsh conditions, the fear of deportation, the police, and the constant threats of the slave traders. The number of the Kurds is increasing daily, but neither the question of political asylum nor of temporary residence has been resolved.

(DAMA 1998: 16)

These individuals maintained, or had gradually developed, close relationships with one another, and had begun to behave as relatives or friends. It may have been their common identity as Kurds or the particular mode of inhabitation within the square that led to these close relationships. The people required minimal materials. Some slept in cardboard boxes, some on benches, others on grass under the trees. Despite their large and constantly increasing numbers, they all managed to squeeze in. The various mar-





15.4 *A room in the city. Early stages of temporary habitation of Koumoundourou Square by Kurdish refugees, October 1998. Author's photograph.*

ginalized individuals who formerly hung around the square (mostly Athenians) were forced to step out, while passersby kept to the pavements and the surrounding streets. They looked on furtively, feeling that the square now belonged to those who resided in it. Soon, the refugees began to erect tents, occupied either by families or by groups of males; one tent was appropriated by a mother and her baby. Donated food was stored in plastic bags inside prams or hung on the trees. Occasionally, the immigrants grilled Arabic bread and sung around a fire in the middle of the square. A clear boundary had thus been established: there was an 'inside' and an 'outside'. The concept of the threshold – implying a wall – became even more obvious on New Year's Eve in 1998, when the inhabitants of the square received the outsiders (the people of Athens) and

22 Urban voids are spaces that appear at the sites of old buildings that are torn down or left to crumble away, on empty plots, archaeological sites, underutilized public or private buildings and abandoned industrial facilities or sites. As abandoned places, they are open to new patterns of habitation and use in the city.

23 The square is adjacent to Pireos Street, a thoroughfare that links the center of Athens with the port city Pireas and follows the trace of the ancient walls of Athens.

celebrated together. The event was also encouraged by several left-wing newspapers; one of these, *I Avgi*, published the following invitation in its 31 December 1998 issue: 'New Year's Eve of Solidarity. At Koumoundourou Square, Thursday 31, at 8:00 p.m. Let's celebrate together with the refugees, the immigrants, the socially excluded.' During their daily inhabitation of the square, the temporary residents had a sense of ephemeral security but no comfort. Living conditions were difficult and unsanitary. Their occupancy had a strongly impermanent character, as the refugees knew they could be chased away at any moment. To many, the Kurds' presence was offensive and menacing. Local storekeepers asked for their removal, pointing to the squalid living conditions in the camp as constituting a serious health hazard and fearing that the district would be stigmatized. But the growing numbers of displaced Kurds inside the square also invested them with a special kind of dynamic. They constituted a throng or a mass, a phenomenon that became powerful enough to allow the refugees to impose their presence.

In this form of habitation, a neglected square in Athens became a 'shelter', an interim space between the place these displaced populations had left and their unknown destination. It was a temporary address, a 'room' or house within the city. This room was delineated by the edges of the square, by the boundaries of the settlement. There were visible signs of habitation: tents, cardboard boxes, clotheslines, blankets and so on. Although clearly an outdoor space, it was characterized by introversion: it became an unwritten address on the diasporic map of the Kurds. This mode of habitation reflects the special traits of a group of people with common roots, and illustrates a uniform but adaptive cultural and social behaviour 'en route'.

The square was occupied from October 1998 to February 1999, when the settlers were driven out by police forces that raided the square. When the local authorities of Tavros and Aigaleo (municipalities that belong to the Athens Metropolitan area) refused to receive the displaced Kurds at a welfare services building (former facilities for infectious diseases) where the government planned to transfer them, they were taken to the abandoned NATO base on Mount Pateras. This facility, however, was far from the city, and the refugees gradually left. Many of them returned to Athens and tried to stay in derelict houses near the square. Today, Koumoundourou Square is renovated, following an architectural competition held in 1998. In addition to being a transportation node, it broadly belongs to the area of 'immigrant clusters' described by Sofia Vyzoviti's chapter; around it are now numerous shops run by Chinese immigrants. The square remains a hang-out for immigrant populations (mainly Afghans and Pakistanis), even though most of them prefer to gather in the surrounding Menandrou and Sappfous streets rather in the square proper.

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## THE BODY AND THE URBAN VOID

I used to sleep in the park. We were driven out. Now I sleep in a house at Petralona. There are usually one hundred people sleeping there, not always the same. Staying there costs three Euros per night. The house has five rooms, a bathroom, and two toilets. We live on top of one another. It was better before, when I could sleep in the park.

AN AFGHAN LIVING IN ATHENS, MARCH 2005

Many displaced people have been squatting in empty houses in the old, largely deserted residential neighborhoods of Athens – Psyri, Keramikos, Metaxourgeio, Kolonos – as these areas are transformed into entertainment or cultural districts. Groups of men, predominantly, take over a house and live under particularly harsh conditions. They have no water, and they often steal electrical current from the main conductor. When the district of Psyri (next to Monastiraki) became gentrified in the 1990s,<sup>24</sup> they were forced to move to other areas. The area around Larissis Railway Station, with its large, disused industrial buildings, became a new hub. I visited one such building that accommodated 100 individuals: Iraqi, Kurdish and Afghan men. Although they had used packing cardboard and other discarded materials to make the space more habitable, the living conditions were appalling and the space lacked toilets and a water supply.

The human body is the primary coping tool for most of the displaced populations. Through an arduous process, they devise a new form of habitation – scattered, physical, fluid, inventive – that penetrates the city’s voids. Under these conditions the body rediscovers its forgotten skills. Using the body, displaced populations find new uses for humble materials – cardboard boxes, rope, cloth, nylon sheets – and their spatial practices often embody choreographer’s Frédéric Flammand description of architecture as ‘what happens between the body of one person and that of another’ (FLAMAND 2003: 14).

If political and social institutions in Greece cannot offer official hospitality, Athens itself, as a physical space, facilitates this bottom-up mode of inhabitation ‘en route’. The various urban voids – shabby areas, abandoned buildings, empty lots – are like cracks in the urban web that enable such acts of dispersed physical habitation. In the heart of the city there is a parallel, invisible city, a city on the run. This habitation is fluid; once a renovation projects starts, the displaced move at once to another part of the city. The flows of this constantly changing cultural geography interfere with real estate and gentrification processes and affect the city dynamic as a whole. Under such

**24** During the 1990s, the Psyri district became a new entertainment area in the city, gradually losing its original mixed-use character of residences and small-scale manufacturing and wholesale businesses. This change was the result of a variety of projects introduced to inner-city of Athens beginning in 1985, as prescribed by the city’s master plans as well as by the Unification of Archeological Sites program. The latter aimed at highlighting the historic character of downtown Athens and implementing preservation, greening and pedestrian-friendly projects in the broader downtown historic area. The ever-increasing number of entertainment-based (and to a lesser extent, cultural-based) businesses in Psyri benefited from this overall framework, and the area experienced uncontrolled development during the 1990s, that radically altered its sociocultural character.



15.5 Votive sculptures made of bread offered by the members of the Network of Nomadic Architecture to Afghani asylum seekers during the event 'A Hymn to the Apolis ... to the Places in which the Citiless Live', organized by the Network of Nomadic Architecture at the reception camp for asylum seekers in Lavrion, 11 November 2006. Photograph courtesy of the Network of Nomadic Architecture.

conditions, new communities are formed, but diasporic ones are also brought together.

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## RESTORING NETWORKS OF THE DISPLACED

The complexity of these processes cannot be addressed either by a single discipline



(such as architecture or urban planning) or by institutional top-down actions. In Europe today, several interdisciplinary groups deal with issues of displacement, both in its spatial and anthropological dimensions. Examples are the Rome-based Osservatorio Nomade, which organized the 'ON Egnatia' project mentioned above, and the Athens-based Network Nomadic Architecture,<sup>25</sup> which currently works with the Muslim minority in the Gazochori area of Athens and communities of displaced populations in the city. These groups work with diasporic communities and attempt to restore their social coherence and agency supporting processes of self-organization<sup>26</sup> and exchange with citizens. Through such projects, which are in constant search of new empirical methodologies, the groups' members become deeply affiliated with the displaced urban populations, as they become personally implicated into their life experiences and receive their hospitality, reversing the existing norms.

This reversal of roles was the deliberate aim of an event organized in June 2006 by members of the Athens-based Network of Nomadic Architecture,<sup>27</sup> as a part of the Network's participation in the exhibition *Apolis* (Citiless).<sup>28</sup> During the event, the network's members visited exiled Afghanis who were temporarily residing at the reception center of Lavrion, and offered them votive sculptures made of bread, whose shape was inspired by the ancient divinity Artemis, the goddess of otherness (FIGURE 15.5). The votives were meant to be 'an exchange of trust among people'. In return, the displaced hosts offered the members of the Network gifts, such as hand-embroidered scarves from their home country. According to the Network of Nomadic Architecture, 'the role of the foreigner here is ambiguous, as the apolis foreigner becomes the person who will briefly be the host' (NETWORK OF NOMADIC ARCHITECTURE 2006: 20).

Acts of this type are catalytic in creating connections between hostis and hospes, and revealing their reciprocal status.

25 The Nomadic Architecture Network is an open research Laboratory founded in 2005 that deals with issues of gender, ethnicity and marginalization in public space, as well as with cases of territorial and demographic crisis due to displacement. Eleni Tzirtzilaki, the author of this chapter, is one of its founder members. See [www.nomadikiarxitektoniki.net](http://www.nomadikiarxitektoniki.net).

26 One such example is the organization of a funeral with the support of the Osservatorio Nomade in the cemetery of Salento, in Southern Italy, which took place within the framework of the Egnatia project in July of 2005. The funeral was for two stowaway Kurds who died of suffocation while traveling illegally by boat from Patra (Greece) to Otranto (Italy), hidden inside a truck. Osservatorio Nomade helped the communities of Kurdish refugees in Italy organize a funeral a year after the death of the two men, during which a letter from their family who lives in Germany was delivered and read. The funeral took place within the framework of the meeting L'Egnatia sul Canale di Otranto (Egnatia Road at the Otranto Canal) organized by Osservatorio Nomade, 14–20 July 2005.

27 Participating members were Anna Tsouloufi-Lagiou, Eleni Tzirtzilaki and Peguy Zali.

28 The exhibition *Apolis* took place at the gallery of the Hellenic American Union in Athens, 4–22 December 2006. It was curated by Kostis Velonis.

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# Emerging Immigrant Clusters in Downtown Athens, 2002–2004<sup>1</sup>

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*Sophia Vyzoviti*

## INTRODUCTION

According to a report in the Greek press, between 19 and 21 October 1999, Pantelis Kazakos, a 23-year-old security officer at Greece's National Radio and Television Broadcasting Company, assaulted a total of nine immigrants in the streets of downtown Athens, wounding seven and killing two. After his arrest, Kazakos confessed to the police and claimed to justify his deeds by saying he was on a 'mission to rid the country of foreigners'.<sup>2</sup> Paradoxically, before shooting his victims he yelled, 'I am a Christian Orthodox' (HATZIDES AND KOURTIS 1999: 22).

Kazakos was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment, but at the time this extraordinary case, a unique example of a racist act, ignited public debate on national scale. Despite the extreme pathology of the crime, the case operated as a magnifying lens that reflected to a considerable degree the general public's prejudices against immigrants in Greece and their perception of the immigrants as inferior, dangerous, a source of contribution to the deterioration of the national economy (KARYDIS 1996) and to the conventional way of inhabiting the Greek city. The location of the assaults – in one of the oldest neighborhoods of downtown Athens – also exposes Kazakos's perception of this area as immigrants' territory. Considering the fact that the assaults were incidental, and took place in public spaces, we can presume that the murderer followed a random itinerary through what he perceived as 'immigrant turf' in pursuit of his victims.

What is the current state and function of this territory? Is the climate of perceived hostility prohibitive to its function? In this chapter, I will discuss the establishment of the immigrants' territory in downtown Athens as a self-organized public space, and highlight distinct spatial behaviors and patterns of organization within its

- <sup>1</sup> The chapter is based on the author's Ph.D. dissertation, 'Emergent Places for Urban Groups Without a Place: Representation, Explanation, Prescription,' completed at Delft University of Technology, January 2005, under the supervision of Prof. Alexander Tzonis and Prof. Liane Lefaivre, and funded by the State Scholarship Foundation Greece and Delft University of Technology. Empirical research in downtown Athens was conducted between 2002 and 2004. All empirical evidence, photographs and diagrams are the intellectual property of the author.
- <sup>2</sup> All translations from the Greek, unless otherwise noted, are by the author.

premises. This discussion will indicate that despite the widespread environment of xenophobia in contemporary Greece and the stringent regulations restricting immigration, the area inhabited by immigrants in Athens has exhibited a steady and robust expansion since the mid-1990s.

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## THE IMMIGRANTS' TERRITORY

3 The countries of origin stated here correspond to those of the individuals I interviewed during my field research in the area. An account of all communities of ethnic immigrants in Greece is presented in the book *Immigrants in Greece* (2001), by Marvakis et al.

In the western part of downtown Athens, particularly in the area that includes Menandrou Street and its intersection with Sophocles Street, Theatre Square, Diplari, Sapphous, Korinis and Geraniou streets, large concentrations of men of Asian and African origin congregate regularly. These street gatherings occur primarily during the week, in the early evenings, and reach their peak on Sunday at midday, when there is also a small number of African women in the streets. The immigrants gather in greater numbers and fill the street space, particularly during the warm months of the year.

Asian and African immigrants comprised 22.4 percent of the total immigrant population in Greece, which numbered up to one million in 2000. According to the *Social and Economic Atlas of Greece* (MALOUTAS 2000), the immigrants' countries of origin were divided as follows: 50 percent Albania, 10.5 percent Indian Peninsula, 8.1 percent former USSR, 6.8 percent Middle East, 5.2 percent Bulgaria, 4.8 percent Romania, 4.7 percent Poland, 3.4 percent Far East, and 1.7 percent Africa. However, the Asian and African immigrants congregating in the area of Athens defined by this study come from many countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Iraq, Kurdistan, Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan and Sri Lanka.<sup>3</sup>

In the area of Athens that I call immigrants' territory, the presence of Asian and African immigrants in the city is visible in the greatest concentration. This is where African and Asian people have established their public domain; more than 100 immigrants' stores, enterprises and associations operate in the area today. Two hundred people gather in Menandrou Street between Sophocles and Euripides streets – a distance of 100 meters – at peak times (FIGURE 16.1). In these streets immigrants get together with friends and fellow countrymen, communicate with people and consume products from their homeland, speak their native language and exchange information – about work, housing, or residence permits – that is essential to their survival in the city of Athens.

The immigrants' presence in the specific public spaces – their bodily postures, the way they occupy the street space and appropriate objects – displays comfort, relaxation and security. Here, Asians and Africans recreate and socialize without feeling



| 16.1 An immigrant gathering at the intersection of Sophocles and Menandrou streets, July 2003. Author's photograph.

excluded, alien, dangerous, or inferior; rather, they experience Athens as a place of belonging. This gathering place thus provides a vital function for Asian and African immigrant groups: It constitutes their primary space of intracommunity social interaction in the city, the space where they are able to assert cultural identity without confronting social discrimination. The area has been appropriated spontaneously and in time has become embedded in the specific practices of Athens immigrants, functioning as the social and cultural center of this diaspora community and as tangible evidence that Asian and African immigrants have laid claim to and established their space in the city.

The men assemble on the sidewalks and in the arcades, and occasionally on the street. They position themselves by entrances, between parked vehicles, or on street



16.2 A street gathering along the perimeter of Diplareion on a Saturday afternoon, August 2003. Author's photograph.

corners. Leaning on columns or walls, on street signs or rubbish dispensers, sitting on steps or window ledges, on parked motorbikes or the hood of a car, the men engage in conversation in small groups or pairs. Some stand alone at the edge of the sidewalk, or rest against walls, and watch the activity around them. Others converse on their cell phones. There is constant strolling along the streets and stopping to greet acquaintances. Provisional street-food outlets appear here and there: an improvised cantina for Arabic pita set in a sidewalk arcade, a casserole of biriani placed on the porch of a closed store, an open truck full of watermelons or bananas. Eating takes place on the street; sometimes a group appropriates the hood of a parked car and the men stand around it as if it were a table. Street merchandise appears on mats laid on the pave-

ment, in the trunks of cars, or in men's hands. Open trucks contain fruit, Asian vegetables, live chickens, or fresh fish for sale. Displays frequently appear on the pavement: shoes, clothes, sunglasses and small electronics. Prepaid cards for overseas telephone calls are usually sold hand-to-hand.

Surrounding the street action are numerous small stores and enterprises that provide products and services essential to the immigrants' everyday life. Clothes and shoes can be bought in Chinese-owned import stores; cooking materials, teas and pastries in Asian groceries or mini-supermarkets. Electronic goods and mobile telephones are sold in mini-malls or calling centers where cheap overseas calling time is available. Restaurants serve ethnic food and function as cafés. There are also money transfer agencies, travel agents, Asian hair salons and audio-video clubs. There are Indian incense, jewelry and gift shops, as well as oriental garments and home decoration shops. These stores are open up to 12 hours every day, until late in the evening, and their routine is very different from the standard commercial schedule in the area. By and large, immigrants' stores are always open on Sunday when Greek businesses are closed, so the immigrants have the day off and are able to spend their free time in the area. The men gather inside the store or outside by their doorways. In general, open spaces outside the stores operate as an extension of the store interiors. Most of the men stand around the sidewalk by the store entrance. Conversations take place between people on the street and people on the doorsteps.

All immigrant stores and small enterprises are immigrant-owned and managed, and in addition to providing for commerce they function as meeting places or hangouts for the immigrants, who sometimes celebrate special occasions there. The stores also provide spaces for information exchange: their windows are covered with announcements of public events, messages and posters in the immigrants' native languages.

According to fieldwork conducted in January 2004 and May 2004, Chinese import-export clothing and shoe shops constitute 25 percent of the immigrants' enterprises in the area. Chinese-owned stores, however, follow the standard commercial hours in the area, have a wider clientele, and do not serve as immigrant hangouts. Of the remaining 75 percent of immigrant-owned stores in the area, the five most numerous are Asian groceries or mini-supermarkets, calling centers, audio-video clubs, restaurants and hair salons. The strip of immigrant stores that are part of Diplareion Building at Menandrou Street is one of the most popular spots for street gatherings. In the summer months, crowds of South Asian men also occupy the other three sides of the Diplareion building (FIGURE 16.2) and take over Theatre Square. The generous windowsills, the stairs in front of the main entrances and the porches of the storefronts provide surfaces for leaning or sitting on, or for standing against.



*The Apostolic Church 'Garden of Comfort' on a Sunday midday, February 2003. Author's photograph.*



- 4 Musa Ambu, interview with the author, August 2003.

Occupying apartments in these same streets are provisional places of worship for Muslim or Christian immigrants. Musa Ambu, a Muslim priest and clothing factory employee, explained<sup>4</sup> that 'there are 5 mosques operating in apartments in the area out of a total of 23 in the city of Athens'. The Christian Africans frequent the Christian Pentecostal Mission, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, the Apostolic Pentecostal Church and the Apostolic Church – Garden of Comfort – Agbala Itura (FIGURE 16.3) all located on Sophocles and Menadrou streets. However, some African immigrants follow services in the local Christian Orthodox churches.

A number of immigrants' civic associations or supporting institutions also operate in the area. These are always open on Sunday, as well as on selected weekdays. The Association of Bangladeshi Immigrants in Greece (ABIG) is located here, in Aeschylus Street. The association is housed in a very small space in the mezzanine lobby of an apartment building and opens every Saturday and Sunday evening. Filothta, the Pan-Hellenic Federation for Supporting Muslims in Greece, is located in an apartment at 14 Geraniou Street and includes a hostel providing temporary residence to homeless Muslim immigrants.



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## TACTICAL AND STYLISTIC APPROPRIATION OF THE STREETScape

The way in which the immigrants appropriate the particular streetscape contributes to the expression of cultural identity and enhances their sense of community. Two modes of spatial appropriation of the streetscape by immigrants are visible in downtown Athens: one tactical and one stylistic. Cultural critic Michel De Certeau distinguishes between 'strategy' and 'tactics' as two distinct types of operations: a strong and a weak one. One seeks to produce, tabulate and impose, in contrast to one that seeks to use, manipulate and divert. Strategy is related to the establishment of a place, while tactics are related to its use over time (DE CERTEAU 1988: XIX).

In the immigrants' territory in downtown Athens, every element of the street is tactically redesigned or appropriated, in the terms of De Certeau; its morphological properties are recombined into new meaningful constructs. Tactical appropriation of the streetscape, according to De Certeau, is transitional and produces no physical structures. By means of sheer occupancy, the poorly maintained streetscape in this area is transformed into a convivial public space. Steps, doorsteps, ledges, the curb, as well as sidewalk arcade columns serve as provisional seating for individuals and small groups. Vehicles perform a number of functions beyond that of simply transporting people and goods. Many immigrants own scooters, which serve as seating for their owners and their friends. Cars, trucks and minivans are also engaged. Cruising around and driving slowly, with ethnic music blasting out of the sound system, is a common practice among Asian and African men. The open truck market is another. Goods are often displayed on hoods or in open trunks of parked cars. Cars also serve as provisional urban furniture or extensions of the shop interiors in front of which they are strategically parked. One specific car has been parked in front of the Asian grocery at 6 Menandrou Street since 2002. It appears in every photograph taken of the spot, as if it has never moved (FIGURE 16.4). This car functions as an extension of the grocery. When the trunk opens, it becomes the fresh vegetable display; the sides provide surfaces for men to lean on or over, and the bonnet provides seating for as many as can squeeze on.

An example of a provisional public square is the empty corner lot which awaits to be transformed at the intersection of Sapphous and Korinis streets that has been asphalted over and serves as a parking lot. It is circumscribed by the walls of two adjacent buildings and open on the two street sides. It is a sunny spot, with two trees and a small booth for the parking lot operator. During times when the parking lot is underused – mostly Sunday at midday and in the evenings – small groups of men stand



16.4 Immigrant gathering at 6 Menandrou Street, July 2002. Author's photograph.

between cars. On one July evening, a group of Asian men squatted on the asphalt, occupying the empty parcel between two parked cars and using their sides as backrests. On Sapphous Street, opposite the parking lot, is a garage where an open truck market often takes place.

Since the specific streets and sidewalks were designed to contain vehicular and pedestrian flow, there is no urban furniture for seating. To accommodate incidental discussion groups that form within the street gatherings, immigrants practically redesign the existing street objects by using them in inventive ways. Objects that accommodate street gatherings include traffic barriers, traffic signs and rubbish dispensers. Traffic

barriers serve as seats. In the narrow sidewalks, chatting areas are improvised between bollards and windowsills, steps, or porches. Men usually hold on to traffic signs when a group is gathered around them. Rarely, on occasions of great congestion, men also lean against overflowing rubbish containers.

When immigrants establish shops and enterprises, they make small alterations and improvements to the buildings they settle in. The result of this activity is a variety of visual signs that define the streetscape of downtown Athens. Shop signs introduce a foreign vocabulary into the textual assemblage of the streets; the following is a selected example: The Nile, SHERE BANGLA, Mini-Supermarket for Indian, Bangladesh and Pakistan Foods, 'Pak-Asia' Calling Centre, PRTHUMA, Asian Bazaar, Ya Tong import-export, Gin-Da epe, Prince Video and Laybery, Babul Hair-cutting, Diamond Calling and Lava Video Center. Bright colors also appear in the traditionally gray-beige palette of the Athens streetscape: the red of the Chinese lanterns that hang by every Chinese store in the vicinity, functioning as a recognition code; the turquoise blue, grass green, yellow, brown and bright pink that decorate the exterior walls of hair salons and restaurants. It is noteworthy that in all cases where a store is located near the end of a sidewalk arcade, the side wall perpendicular to the arcade is covered with a bright color, a mural, or a text in a language other than Greek. Posters in Arabic, Chinese, Indian, Punjabi, Urdu, Yoruba and English scripts appear on shop windows, walls and arcade columns, announcing community events, ceremonies, celebrations and invitations to protest marches and advertising night-out venues, private items for sale and parties. Bollywood movie posters are displayed in the windows of audio-video clubs. Oriental patterns appear on the wall decorations. Arabic lanterns hang from the ceiling of the sidewalk arcades of Sophocles and Menandrou streets. Food products that are considered exotic by Greek standards appear in shop windows and street displays. Garments and Asian textiles hang from the exterior wall surfaces of the Chinese clothing stores or from the ceilings of sidewalk arcades.

The spatial envelopes and façades of immigrants' stores and enterprises express distinct cultural identities as a result of practical redesigns, small-scale alterations, and decoration. The display of culture-specific visual signs in the immigrants' gathering places fulfills a double function: it affirms the immigrants' appropriation of space in the area and adds imagery that evokes their homelands. This stylistic appropriation of spatial envelopes by means of the placement of signs, messages, patterns, figures and color is analogous to what Dick Hebdige, in examining youth subcultures, defines as an act of bricolage. The subcultural bricoleur appropriates a 'range of commodities by placing them in a symbolic ensemble, which serves to erase or subvert their original straight meanings' (HEBDIGE 1979: 104).<sup>5</sup> Stylistic appropriation of the streetscape in downtown

5 Dick Hebdige (1979) emphasizes the creativity of youth subcultures – teds, mods, punks and rastas – as important to the generation of authentic style, and examines style as intentional communication signifying practice, as a homology between lifestyle and values, and as an act of bricolage.

Athens is an essential collective activity that contributes directly to the immigrants' need for belonging and freedom of expression. As John Clarke postulates, the activity of stylization is 'the active organization of objects with activities and outlooks, which produce an organized group identity in the form and shape of a coherent and distinctive way of being in the world' (CLARKE 1976: 54).

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## FROM THE 'ETHNIC ENCLAVE' TO AN EMERGENT IMMIGRANT CLUSTER IN DOWNTOWN ATHENS

Over the past ten years, the rate of establishment of immigrant businesses in downtown Athens has increased and these new businesses have endured,<sup>6</sup> thus enabling a discussion of the emergence of a system of ethnic enclaves, a term used in urban studies to characterize an immigrant economic aggregation. According to urban sociologist Nancy Kleniewski:

in some cities immigrant settlements have become so large and dense that immigrants have established numerous businesses in which they employ other members of their ethnic group. These ethnic enclaves can provide economic opportunities that may not be available to immigrants in the wider community.

(KLENIEWSKI 2001: 184)

In downtown Athens, immigrant activity initially appeared to aggregate according to common ethnic origin, and the immigrants' territory developed its economic role primarily through such ethnic nuclei, with the most visible being those of Bangladeshi, Chinese, Pakistani, Nigerian and Kurdish groups.<sup>7</sup> Immigrants' stores, enterprises, and associations were established by people of the same ethnic group and began to concentrate in distinct locations within the immigrants' area (FIGURE 16.6). As seen in Figure 16.5, which charts the increase in immigrant facilities in the area of study over the past 20 years the enclaves have grown at a spectacular rate.<sup>8</sup> According to the survey data and interviews with facility owners during field research, four main stages in the evolution of immigrant facilities in this area can be identified:

1. The first establishments prior to 1997: Ethiopian-Greeks established their association in 1975. The first Pakistani commercial facility opened in the area in 1989. Egyptians, particularly Greek-Egyptians who returned to Athens, established facilities in 1993. In 1994, the first Nigerian restaurant opened at 14 Geraniou Street, together with an electronics store at

6 This introductory statement is based on the author's field research and in particular on a survey about the chronology of establishment of every immigrant business in the area of study conducted in 2004.

7 Observation has indicated districts of Eastern European immigrants in proximity with, but outside, the designated area of study. At the intersection of Menandrou Street and Agiou Kwnstantinou Street, at the back of the church of Saint Constantine, immigrants from Eastern Europe – mostly women – regularly concentrate on the sidewalk to exchange information about work. The perimeter fence of the church is full of handwritten notices and photocopied advertisements for employment offers. On the opposite side of Menandrou Street, a travel agent that specializes in Eastern Europe often delivers packages to immigrants from their home countries. For the past ten years, at 65 Athena Street, on the extended sidewalk in front of Hotel El Greco, an open market of products that arrive by bus from Bulgaria has been taking place once a week. Eastern European women assemble there to purchase food, clothes and cosmetics.

8 Author's survey about the chronology of establishment of every immigrant business in the area of study conducted in 2004.

9 Geraniou Street. In 1997, there were in total 12 facilities in operation in the area. In this phase it is apparent that ethnic facilities are dispersed within the area of study, occupying distinct locations in different streets.

2. The 1998 legislation which permitted the establishment of businesses by foreigners on the basis of a residence permit, and resulted in an increase in the absolute number and rate of facilities established. Since 1998 a total of 108 facilities have been established in the area of study.
3. The arrival of Chinese enterprises in 2000: the Chinese commercial facilities have the steepest establishment curve. Although they are comparative newcomers to the location, their business network expands at the fastest rate of all the immigrant networks. In this phase the emergence of areas of multiethnic concentration is also noticeable.
4. The year 2004, final survey year: the number of facilities has reached its peak. However, some facility owners obtained an enterprise license on the basis of their certificate of application for a residence permit, which renders the future of their enterprises uncertain.

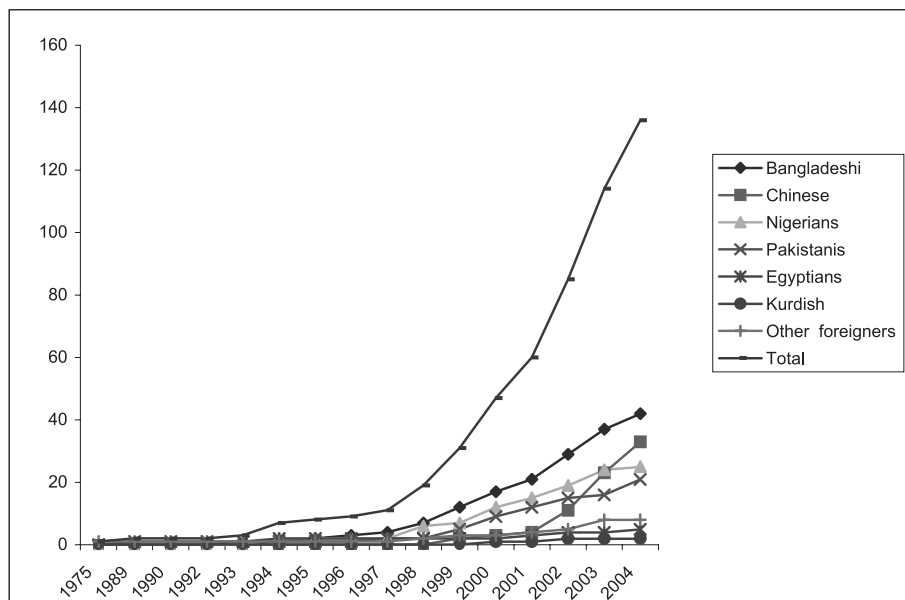
The immigrants' system of ethnic enclaves in downtown Athens has grown dramatically during the past decade, and evolved into a lively business area that fulfills essential socio-cultural and economic needs of the immigrants. Thus, the designated area of study that I call immigrants' territory is not incidental or simply transitory. We observed that in the period 1994–2004, the initially distinct ethnic establishments gradually evolved into locations of multiethnic concentration. By examining M. E. Porter and other economists' theses on the effect of geographical concentration on business, we can argue by analogy that the concentration of geographically proximate immigrant enclaves in downtown Athens exhibits characteristics of an 'immigrant cluster',<sup>9</sup> a cluster being a set of businesses related by certain commonalities – such as buyer–supplier relationship, buyers, distribution channels, or labor pools – that strengthen their performance through synergy, cooperation and mutual interdependence. Businesses owned by immigrant groups in downtown Athens are linked by such commonalities, as well as by their sociocultural marginalization in the city, even as they strive for economic and socio-cultural vitality.

Numerous benefits accrue as a result of clustering these activities at a specific location. The prime socio-cultural benefit is confirmation of the immigrants' identity and the enhancement of their sense of community. The need for safety, freedom of expression, a sense of belonging, relationships with the home country and assistance with everyday survival are fulfilled at such places. At the same time, the cluster provides

<sup>9</sup> According to Porter, a cluster is 'a geographically proximate group of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities' (PORTER 1998: 199).

## 16.5

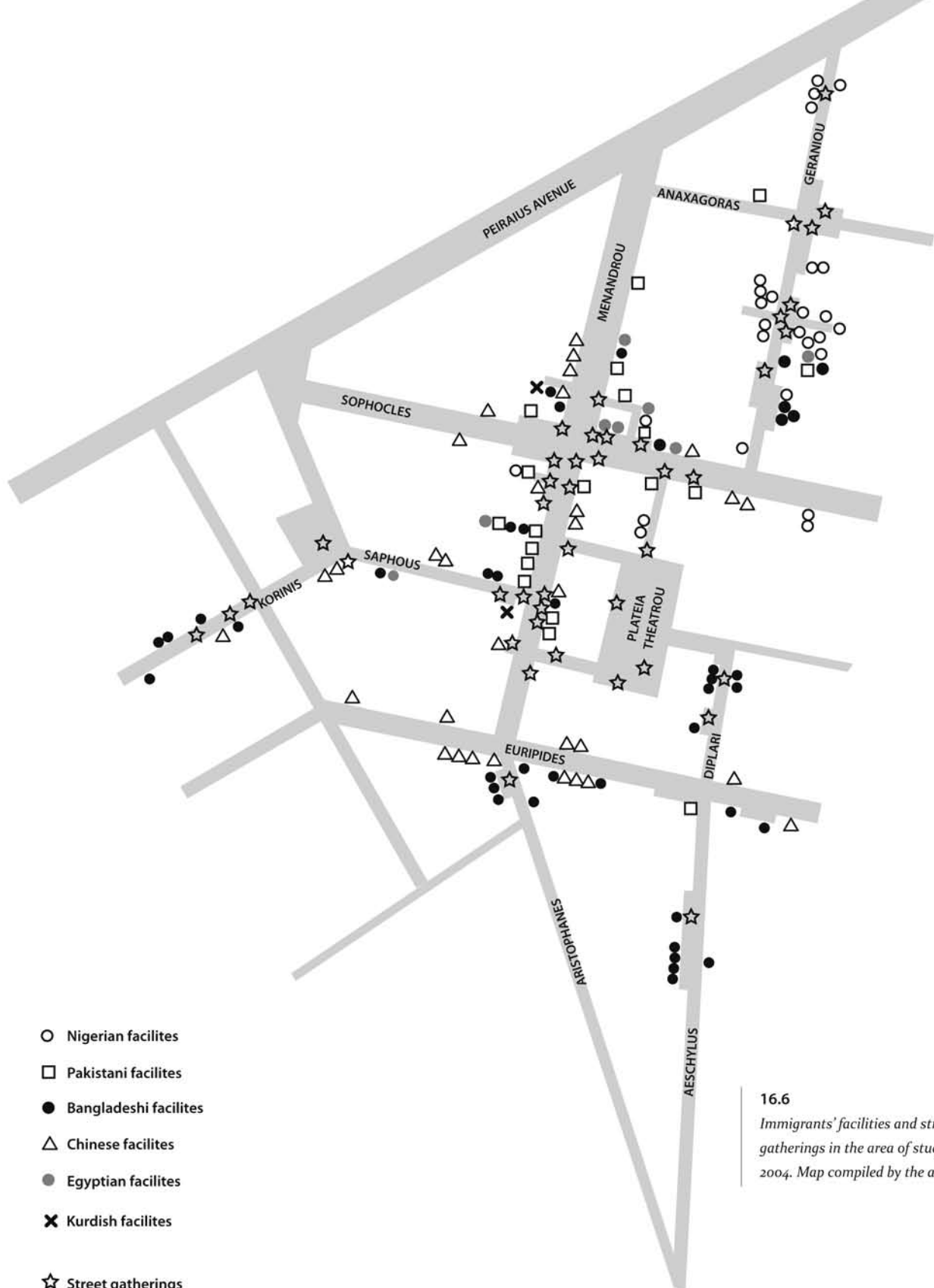
The increase in the establishment of immigrant facilities in the area of study, 1975–2004. Table compiled by the author.



considerable economic benefits, linking the immigrants with a global trade network and providing them with opportunities for employment within the area.

### CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EMERGENCE OF THE IMMIGRANT CLUSTER

What parameters have contributed to the development of the immigrant cluster in Athens? Situated to the west of the Athens Central Municipal Market, it is located in one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city. The streets of Sophocles, Menandrou, Geraniou, Euripides and Diplari, as well as Theatre Square, are part of the 'historic triangle' that was included in the first plan for an Athenian capital in modern Greece. Designed by Stamatios Kleanthes and Eduard Schaubert in 1832, revised by Bavarian architect Leo von Klenze in 1834 and again by Theophil Hansen and Schaubert in 1836, the area was already developed by 1862, and the above-mentioned streets are present on the military map of C. von Strantz dating from that year. As the city of Athens expanded outward in the twentieth century, the area of the historic triangle, together with the settlement around the Acropolis Hill, came to be considered the inner-city of Athens.



16.6

*Immigrants' facilities and street gatherings in the area of study, August 2004. Map compiled by the author.*

10 Dimitrios Antonitsis was interviewed by the author in August 2003.

Today this district is home to a portion of the city's major business establishments, and administrative offices. With respect to its residential component, however, the district's social and financial value has steadily deteriorated, especially in the period between the 1970s and 1990s, when the suburbs began to attract Athens' middle-class residents. The Athenian middle class abandoned their inner-city apartments and moved to the northern or southern suburbs, seeking greener surroundings and ample parking spaces. The deserted apartment blocks in the inner city have since accommodated residents in the lowest income brackets, to which foreign immigrants, in the majority, belong (PETRONOTI 1998: 114).

In the early 1990s, social deterioration in the area was mostly evident in the presence of crime and deviant subcultures. Visual artist Dimitrios Antonitsis, who has lived in the district since the early 1990s, states that the predecessors of the immigrants' facilities were small-scale food enterprises and brothels.<sup>10</sup> He describes the mood in the area as decadent, a gourmet's paradise during the day and a dangerous place at night.

The decay in the area was amazing. During the day the area was full of small shops of dairy products, cooking products from oregano to grousers. At night there were aged prostitutes and nothing else. It was very dangerous to walk around in the area at night. The corner of Socrates and Sophocles streets used to be a transvestite cruising spot; a 'piazza' where you could pick up transsexuals of the crudest kind, like bricklayers wearing wigs. Another gay piazza is located now on the corner of Euripides and Socrates streets.

(DIMITRIOS ANTONITSIS, AUGUST 2003)

The neighboring Omonoia Square, in the early 1990s, was the major Albanian immigrant receptor in Greece. According to Psimenos (1995), Omonoia Square and the neighboring area of Vathis Square were the first and most important places in Greece to host the entire incoming immigrant Albanian population prior to their dispersion to Northern Greece and East Attica. At the time, the most suitable spaces for the new Albanians were the old degraded hotels around Omonoia; these provided cheap lodging, and the surrounding area offered building sites and public spaces like the railway and metro station, parks and underpasses, where the immigrants slept in cardboard boxes (MAVRAKIS ET AL. 2001: 335). To the north and west of Theater Square, in the districts of Omonoia, Metaxourgeio and Vathis, foreign immigrants have been present continuously since the early 1990s.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the various small-scale food businesses concentrated around the Central Municipal Market slowly died out. The emergence of the neighborhood supermarket, which provided a wide range of specialized food products



that previously could only be bought in these small stores, rendered them redundant. At this time, the area around Theater Square claimed poor social and economic status; it had deteriorated physically and environmentally and was largely deserted. This particular condition, however, offered an opportunity for space that was financially accessible to immigrant businesses. Asian groceries, calling centers and hair salons gradually took over the spaces where spices, rare poultry and dairy products had been traded in the past. Provisional places of worship and immigrants' civic associations settled in the abandoned apartments, mezzanines and basements.

At the time of writing, there is no plan for government-sponsored urban renewal for the Theater Square area. However, the district to the south has experienced a self-regulated revival over the past ten years, with the opening of a constellation of art galleries, restaurants, and nightclubs – especially in the area of the old Ottoman settlement that today is called Psyri. The repurposing of these formerly deserted spaces – including the immigrants' establishments – has elevated the social and economic status of the area. Despite the absence of middle-class residences in the area today, there is a concentration of diverse urban uses: offices, governmental administrative services, markets, small businesses, hotels, cultural activities and recreation spaces, which attract different populations at different times of the day. The diverse urban functions and the increasing diffusion of immigrant businesses in other areas of the city<sup>11</sup> prevent the immigrants' cluster in downtown Athens from becoming a ghetto,<sup>12</sup> or from having a singularly ethnic character. The dense street network and high building density facilitate the coexistence of the immigrant stores, enterprises and associations with all the other urban facilities. The location clearly displays a concentrated immigrant presence, but functions, nevertheless, as a multicultural area, open – certainly for different reasons – both to old and new Athenians.

Contrary to the general assumption that marginal urban groups have no place to go and 'have survived and flourished in the interstices of the city' (Low 1999: 9) in the case of Athens ground-up observations have proved that ethnic immigrants have successfully established their territory, appropriating a specific part of the downtown. There is a case of a self-organized public space, created by spontaneous appropriation and inventive utilization of all available spatial resources in the location. In this 'do-it-yourself' manner of claiming cultural and social space in an often inhospitable environment, the immigrants in Athens may offer to us a great lesson in an urbanism of empowerment.

**11** It is significant to point out that today immigrants populate many traditionally Greek, Athenian neighborhoods, both close to downtown and farther away. Some of these are characterized by ethnic concentration (i.e. the Kypseli area, where the major immigrant group is African), but some, such as Patisia, attract a mix of immigrants who reside there on an individual basis rather than as a community.

**12** Kleniewski makes a distinction between the notions of enclave and ghetto: 'True enclaves have a specialized ethnic economy made up exclusively of ethnic workers in a few industries . . . In addition the difference between an enclave and a ghetto is also partly the difference between voluntary and involuntary clustering. To the extent that a group sticks together for mutual aid and to participate in familiar institutions, their community can be thought as an enclave. To the extent that they stay together because they are not welcome anywhere else, their clustering becomes involuntary and their community resembles a ghetto' (KLENIEWSKI 2001: 201).

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