



TRADITIONAL DWELLINGS AND SETTLEMENTS REVIEW

JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL ENVIRONMENTS



TRADITIONS OF THE MODERN
Ananya Roy

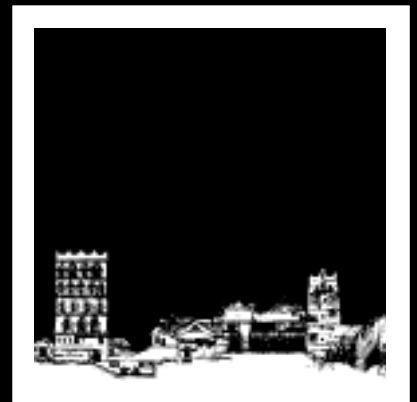
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Jean Duruz

THE ONTARIO COTTAGE
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MANSIONS OF DHAKA
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BOOK REVIEWS
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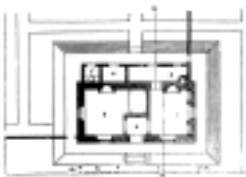
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COVER ILLUSTRATION: Typical integrated verandah of a bungalow. Emeric Essex Vidal, *Commissioner's Residence*. Watercolor, 1815. (Courtesy of the Massey Library, Royal Military College of Canada.)

Editor's Note

I write this note to update members of IASTE and subscribers to *TDSR* on the status of the association and the journal. Having had a very successful conference in Trani, Italy, last fall, the association is now in the process of finalizing its decision with regard to the site of its next conference. The advisory board considered two proposals: to hold the conference either in Hong Kong, or in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Following the Trani conference, IASTE members registered more support for the Hong Kong proposal, and the theme of “Boundaries, Borders and Tradition” was selected by a wide margin. As I write this note, we have not yet received confirmation from our hosts in Hong Kong, but we hope to inform the membership of the final decision in the next couple of months.

As for the journal, we continue our tradition of publishing papers presented at the last conference, particularly ones that received a lot of attention. In keeping with our previous practice, the four papers here that were taken from the 2000 conference were evaluated through a blind peer-review process. I am very grateful to their authors for revising them on short notice following the conference. We start with Ananya Roy's paper, which was initially prepared and delivered as a plenary address. This paper problematizes the dualistic narrative of traditional and modern, explores the possibilities of multiple and tainted modernities, and teases out the epistemological and ontological challenges inherent in the discussion of modernity. As Roy examines the question of modernity through the trope of tradition, she presents a particularly useful discursive framework through which to read the other papers in this issue.

The next article, by Jean Duruz, explores the reinvention of tradition as it applies to the production of “home” and “homeliness.” Her specific concern is two businesses that provide alternatives to traditional domestic space in a contemporary neighborhood in Sydney, Australia. She argues that an overly rigid criticism of late capitalism's purchase of tradition may fail to appreciate the real contribution of such “microinventions” to the design of convivial cities. This is followed by Lynne Distefano's article, which traces the evolution of the hip-roof cottage as it spread through the British empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Situating her work within the context of Canada, Distefano unpacks the global and the local as they manifested themselves within the specific example of the Ontario cottage. In the “On Design” section, André Casault examines the housing prototypes that were developed by the Canadian government for the nomadic Innu of Northern Quebec. Casault's article explores the persistence of tradition as it intersects with meanings of place and territory within the design of dwellings. Finally, in the “Field Report” section, Mahbubur Rahman and Ferdouse Ara Haque present their research on mansion houses in Dhaka, Bangladesh. They argue that these hybrid dwellings from the turn of the last century borrowed from both traditional Bengali houses and contemporary European styles in ways that are being echoed today.

For those of you who were unable to come to Italy, I hope that the articles included in this issue of *TDSR* convey some of the colorful flavor of the Trani conference.

Nezar AlSayyad

Traditions of the Modern: A Corrupt View

ANANYA ROY

At this *fin-de-siècle*, the “post” that was meant to mark off the modern, or perhaps to qualify it, has turned out to be a looking-glass of sorts, reviving engagements with the question of modernity. However, lurking in the shadows of this discourse is the “constitutive outside” that makes possible such narratives: tradition. In this article, I explore the question of modernity through the trope of tradition. I focus on three guises of the modern. The first is a rigidly dualistic narrative that has long marked off the traditional from the modern. Taking hold during the last *fin-de-siècle*, this is an unshakably teleological and Eurocentric modern that has woven its way through quite a bit of the social and political theory of the twentieth century. Second, I investigate the possibility of multiple modernities. I mean this not simply in terms of a globalized modern, diverse in its localizations, but as a modernity that is inherently and inevitably tainted. Third, consideration of such corruptions leads to a brief discussion of epistemological and ontological challenges. Drawing upon contemporary critical theory, I offer the “post” not as the end of intellectual traditions, but as a surplus present within the modern itself. It is my hope that this view of, and from, a corrupt modern will open up new allegories — beyond those of deaths and endings.

At the turn of the last century, how was the modern marked? In the pathways of pedestrians on Haussmann’s boulevards?¹ In the Classical dazzle of Burnham’s White City?² In the *mission civilatrice* of reforming North African natives through a reenactment of Haussmannized order?³ In the stirrings of nationalist movements, such as the one in Bengal that was cast ineluctably in the traditions of British liberalism?⁴ In a return to the naturalized haven of home and hearth amidst sweeping urban changes on both sides of the Atlantic?⁵

And if so, how is the end of the modern now marked? In the dramatic demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project?⁶ In the chaotic order of the Las Vegas boulevard, where the world, and its sights, are mimicked and staged? In the renewal of American cities as consumerist spectacle, where the visual blight of the poor and homeless must be brutally

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eradicated?⁷ In the waves of informal housing, those unruly clusters of shanties, that subvert even the most carefully planned utopia of Corbusian landscapes?⁸

The word “tradition” is at best polyvalent, and at worst, slippery. In this journal, for example, there has been a lively debate over its meanings and uses. I have chosen here to define and discuss tradition in relation to another keyword, “modern.” I see the two terms as locked in an unrelenting dualism founded on notions of purity and authenticity. In other words, I broach the question of tradition through the trope of the modern because each acts as the “constitutive outside” for the other — that is, each makes the other possible.⁹ If the modern thrives, then tradition is mummified and preserved. And if the modern dies, then tradition is revived on its ashes. Recently, the theme of the IASTE 2000 conference, “The End of Tradition?” necessitated discussion of just such cycles of life and death.

I focus specifically on two moments of the modern: its consolidation, and its supposed decline. The first involved establishment of a universalist modern, marked by a brutal symmetry of ideas and visions. But this was also a universalism that could only be defined through difference. Here, the modern was untainted by tradition because the traditional was marked off, secure behind a *cordon sanitaire*. In making this observation, I quite deliberately borrow a colonial phrase to signal the powers of modernization — the power to police space, to inscribe the traditional as exotic, to choose which traditions to preserve and display. This was the hard-fisted modernization that made the myth of the modern possible.

The second articulation concerns the more recently proclaimed end of the modern, which in turn has involved a revival of tradition. However, this seeming arch-rival of modernism is merely a mirror image, reversing the hierarchy of modern and traditional while keeping intact its dualistic logic. If the corpse of tradition was long preserved on the ice of high modernism, then it is now being resuscitated. But this is a birth that can only be couched through the death of the Other. It involves a negation that is as beholden to the modern as the modern itself has been wedded to the traditional.

It is with this discursive structure in mind that I present these two movements of the modern as a single dis/guise, rather than as separate historical moments. I will begin by situating the consolidation of the modern in fin-de-siècle world exhibitions and colonial design practices. I then review how the revival of “authentic” traditions today is an important marker of the contemporary condition¹⁰ — in particular, how the end of the modern is being written by critiques that celebrate, in populist ways, Third World traditions and indigenous knowledges.¹¹ But I also argue that the two moments, and their recurring tropes of purity and authenticity, are more usefully understood as being part of the same geopolitical order and discursive legitimacy.

Is there a more *disorderly* way of thinking about the relation between modern and traditional, another guise where these rigid dualisms are dismantled? I present this possibility

as one of multiple modernities. By this, I do not mean multiplicity as simply diverse localizations of the modern, the inevitable inflections of place and time that cannot be transcended by universalism. Rather, I am interested in what I see as inherent corruptions: in how traditional practices may slip past the modernist *cordon sanitaire*, and how modernity may taint the traditional and customary. I thus re-present the modern/traditional axis through instances of inauthenticity.

But how is this inauthenticity to be understood? If this is a surplus that cannot be mapped onto the dualistic grid of the traditional vs. the modern, how can it be imagined? The teleological grandeur of modernist narratives has come under much fire in recent decades. But the current fad of traditional dialects may in fact be little more than a new enactment of the same symbolic order. How, then, can we speak? How can multiple modernities be narrated?

In the third section of this article, I attempt to address this issue by interpreting the current historical moment as one that offers renewed privileges of representation. If this is an age of “postmodernity,” then I see the “post” not so much as an end, but as an interrogative possibility present within the modern itself. And if this is “the end of tradition,” then the emphasis (as in the title of the IASTE 2000 conference) should be on the interrogative mark rather than any verbal certainty. It is my hope that this view of, and from, a corrupt modern will open up new allegories — beyond those of deaths and endings.

TRADITIONAL ENEMIES

Let me start with a quintessentially modern icon: the Crystal Palace. First erected in London in 1851 to house a world exhibition, it was hailed as a feat of modern engineering. Involving thousands of small prefabricated parts, the structure combined iron lattice work with uniform sheets of glass.¹² But while the Crystal Palace was initially erected in London, a geopolitical mapping of its significance requires a more global sweep. I would particularly like to consider its impact as an emblem of modernization in two other locations: St. Petersburg and New York.

In late-nineteenth-century Russia, the Crystal Palace appeared as an accomplishment worthy of emulation. Russian intellectuals, inspired by the momentous 1861 emancipation of the serfs, had begun to envision a modern Russia, free of feudal trappings and rapidly catching up with the West and its democratic traditions. The Crystal Palace distilled such dreams.¹³ It was the affirmation of a universal modern to which Russia could aspire. This aspiration was a prescient vision, located midway between the words of Marx and the actions of Stalin. In 1867, Marx had declared: “The country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed, the image of its own future.”¹⁴ Almost a century later, Stalin would insist that the Soviet Union, while

fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries, must make good this distance in ten years. Thus was the teleology of modernization laid out.

But there was a late-nineteenth-century Russian voice that was markedly different. In the writings of Dostoevsky, the modernist utopia of Russia took on dystopic undertones. In *Notes from the Underground*, Dostoevsky called into question the promises of modernism, instead foregrounding a stomach-turning nausea that prefigured Sartre and the angst of the twentieth century.

Looking toward the West, Dostoevsky saw the norms of modernization and progress enshrined in monuments like the Crystal Palace, but he also saw little to celebrate. In the garb of the Underground Man, he wrote:

*You believe in a crystal edifice that can never be destroyed, an edifice at which one would not be able to stick one's tongue out, or to thumb one's nose, even on the sly. And I am afraid of this edifice just because it is of crystal and can never be destroyed, and because one could not stick out one's tongue at it on the sly.*¹⁵

Who is this “you” of whom Dostoevsky wrote? Perhaps the timeless subject of the universalist modern? And how is Dostoevsky’s snub of the Crystal Palace to be interpreted? As the perverse envy of a backward Russian? In his brilliant book *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, Marshall Berman has described Dostoevsky’s gesture as the ultimate marker of a “modernism of underdevelopment.” It is a modernism, Berman argued, characterized by desirous mimicry, bearing the apparent forms of the modern while lacking its processes and possibilities. It is also a modernism marked by an almost pathological envy, an “abject longing for the enemy’s love.”¹⁶ Berman’s interpretation is of some importance, because it casts the question of being modern in the universalistic idiom of Western reforms and brands the rejection of this as indelibly regressive. Herein lies a lineage that weaves its way through quite a bit of the social and political theory of the twentieth century.

I find it interesting to revisit Dostoevsky in the current, possibly unprecedented, era of globalization. It is worth remembering that the Crystal Palace was entitled the “Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations.” Prince Albert introduced it to the British public as a setting where “the products of all quarters of the globe are placed at our disposal.”¹⁷ As such, it was one of many world exhibitions then in which a newly carved-up globe was displayed through the techniques of colonial power.

Dostoevsky rightfully recognized this as an attempt to generate “worldwide commerce.” One Prussian diplomat at the time described the Crystal Palace as a “midsummer’s night dream in the noonday sun.”¹⁸ But Dostoevsky, writing in a piece poignantly titled “Winter Notes on Summer Impressions,” rejected the symbolic order of world exhibitions, this “Biblical scene,” this “ultimate truth”:

*You sense that it would require a great deal of eternal spiritual fortitude and denial in order not to submit, not to yield to the impression, not to bow down to the fact, not to worship, not to accept the world that exists as one’s own ideal.*¹⁹

Today, as battles over globalization play out on city streets, in pepper-sprayed protests, in the trashing of McDonald’s, in austerity riots, this comment from Dostoevsky’s “Winter Notes” sounds eerily familiar.

But the dualistic structure of this modernist narrative lies not so much in the feud between Russia and the West — in what Berman saw as Dostoevsky’s attempt to snub what he could not have. The significant counterpart, what closes off the narrative and cinches its discursive logic, is the American response to the Crystal Palace, which I will present through the words of the poet Walt Whitman. This is the geopolitical imaginary that marks the other end of the map and seals its boundaries.

Whitman has long been hailed as a “captain” of American literature. His epic *Leaves of Grass* has held a special place of prominence in American literature (although more recently it was accorded the more dubious distinction of being the only recorded gift from Bill Clinton to Monica Lewinsky!²⁰). Whitman, while writing the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, is said to have attended the 1853 Crystal Palace Exhibition in New York on a daily basis, where it was reported that he marveled at its sights day and night, until even the guards knew him well.²¹

There are two striking ways in which Whitman’s writings on the Crystal Palace contrast sharply with those of Dostoevsky. First, Whitman reveled in the Archimedean bird’s-eye view provided by the exhibition. Where Dostoevsky’s Underground Man was rendered invisible by the splendor of the edifice, Whitman embraced the sweeping moment when “to him the other continents arrived as contributions.”²² This was the very spirit of the world exhibitions: to exhibit the world — and, even more boldly, to image the world as exhibition.

Second, Whitman not only gazed at the view, but also managed to position himself beyond and above it, as master of it. Dostoevsky saw himself on the margins of this eternal and universal order that demanded of him a bowing down, a Biblical scene. But Whitman stated boldly, as if to the exhibition itself:

*Encompass worlds but never try to encompass me
I crowd your noisiest talk by looking toward you.*²³

These are stunning words, marking the arrogant privileges of an upstart American nation. And that section of *Leaves of Grass* in which these lines appeared, aptly titled “Song of Myself,” delineated a commanding gaze, one that prefigured the cartographies of the twentieth century. Even Whitman’s ambivalences, regarding the benefits of the Crystal Palace exhibition for the laboring classes, indicated the persistent ambiguities of an American project of modernity.

I have taken the liberty of starting with the late nineteenth century because I think it contained critically important lineages

of thinking about the geopolitics of modernity. Here lay the mastery of the twentieth century — which, in its second half, was indubitably an American century. Here also lay the traces of what would later coalesce as the Third World, the very idea of underdevelopment. One exists; the other mimics. One embodies clearheaded gentlemanly progress; the other engages in the rudeness of a snub. One desires (and conquers); the other desires — but only in warped and perverse ways, even hating with ambivalence.

I have been thinking about this theme of Third World envy and mimicry a great deal recently. Much of my current research has concerned the city of Calcutta, a Third World metropolis not only historically designated as the “black hole” of urbanization, but also one that today continues to languish at the margins of global change.²⁴ Let me take the liberty of sharing an incident from the field that provides a sense of what I mean.

The annual Book Fair is a well-established tradition in Calcutta, an urban ritual played out under a hazy late-winter sun. Its dense avenues of bamboo-and-cloth stalls, barely holding up to the swirls of dust stirred by the shuffling feet of avid visitors, have always symbolized more than simply the city’s famed cultural passions. In many ways, the yearly fairs have signaled Bengal’s participation in a world arena of literary production, with stalls “representing” particular nations and their cultural traditions. Thus, at the 1997 Book Fair, an ill-proportioned copy of Louis Kahn’s National Assembly building represented Bangladesh.²⁵ And a stocky arch led to the French pavilion, where indigent local artists displayed their paintings for ridiculously low prices (FIGS. 1, 2). Was this a world exhibition of sorts? A postcolonial articulation of the legacy of colonial museums and fairs, displaying “otherness” with commercialized certitude? Wasn’t it appropriate then that a gigantic Coca-Cola bottle overshadowed the entrance to the French stalls? Indeed, such symbols seem to have supplanted the more familiar blazing red of the Communist party, in power locally for more than twenty years.



FIGURE 1. (LEFT) *Bangladesh pavilion, 1997 Calcutta Book Fair. Photo by author.*

But the Calcutta fair was also different. If the last fin-de-siècle’s world expositions symbolized the colonial power to represent, then at the turn of this century, the clumsiness of the Calcutta Book Fair stalls perhaps only indicated its tenuous presence on the margins of a global cartography.²⁶ How is this to be interpreted? As a deliberate and snide rejection of the Crystal Palace motif, like Dostoevsky wishing to stick his tongue out, on the sly, at the edifices of the West? Or, more simply, as the failure of an aberrant modernism, the pathetic gesture of a liberalizing Communist government seeking to image itself within global capitalism?

The 1997 Calcutta Book Fair had a French theme, with a truncated cutout of the Eiffel Tower serving as the venue’s gate, and with French philosopher Jacques Derrida as guest of honor. But in this role, Derrida was as symbolic as the cardboard Eiffel Tower, his presence upstaged by a Communist regime simply eager to attract European investment.

But there was an unfortunate twist to this Bengali pere-stroika. A gas cylinder, which was being used to cook food in one of the stalls, overturned and set off a fire (FIG. 3). The sole fire truck on duty had no access to water, and other trucks did not arrive until the combustible mixture of bamboo, cloth and books had created a mushroom cloud of fire and smoke. The Book Fair burned to the ground. The European publishers who had arrived in the city ever so tentatively, retreated ever so rapidly.

The fire can perhaps be seen as just another instance of Calcutta’s crumbling infrastructure, a deathblow to a city long designated as “dying.” As such, it was just another example of a Third World metropolis unable to secure for itself the certainties of modernization. And the clumsy symbols of the ill-fated fair thus represent what Berman would designate a failed attempt to mimic the universal modern.

There is another form of mimicry with which this contrasts: this one from Las Vegas and its invocation of Parisian themes. Walking through Las Vegas’s Paris, along with the



FIGURE 2. (RIGHT) *French pavilion, 1997 Calcutta Book Fair. Photo by author.*



FIGURE 3. *Eiffel Tower gate with fire in the background, 1997 Calcutta Book Fair. Photo by author.*

33 million other annual tourists who make the pilgrimage to this asphalted stretch of Nevada desert, I have thought back to that day in Calcutta: to a lone and paralyzed fire truck on a winter afternoon. If Calcutta marks a pathetic attempt to emulate, how is the Las Vegas Eiffel Tower to be interpreted (FIG. 4)? As First World postmodernism, a success in a city where fakery is at a premium?²⁷ The idea of a “real fake” might sound oxymoronic, but this seeming paradox reveals a particular geopolitical privilege.



FIGURE 4. *Eiffel Tower, Paris Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas. Photo by author.*

In a fascinating review of René Magritte’s paintings, to which I shall later return, Michel Foucault distinguished between resemblance and similitude. In this vein, Calcutta’s Eiffel Tower can be seen to bear resemblance to a “model,” “an original element that orders and hierarchizes the increasingly less faithful copies that can be struck from it.” It is a failure to copy the authentic, an indication of geopolitical hierarchies. In contrast, the Las Vegas Eiffel Tower can be seen as a simulacrum, one that repeats, but through “an indefinite and reversible relation of the similar to the similar.”²⁸ Here, both are equally authentic, both equally part of a world geography that links the Parisian world exhibition of 1889 to the global display of Las Vegas 2000.

MULTIPLE MODERNITIES

I am arguing, then, that these two moments — the consolidation of modernism through the taming of tradition, and the revival of tradition on the ashes of the modern — are both part of the same grand narrative of geopolitical order and discursive legitimacy. They both don the same dis/guise of authenticity.

But there is another guise in which these questions can be posed. I designate this as multiple modernities. The word “modernity” signals a surplus, an ambiguity, not immediately evident within more determined terms such as “modernism” and “modernization.” Likewise, the idea of multiplicity can be understood not so much as historical diversity but rather as a constantly contested hegemony, a subversion of the singular ideal of the modern. To put it another way, if the anecdotes I have recounted about Dostoevsky’s Russia and Whitman’s America, about a dying Calcutta and a vibrant Las Vegas, portray a cartographic certainty, indeed a cartographic duality, then the idea of multiple modernities disrupts this inherited atlas. Here, both the corruptions of the modern and the inauthenticities of tradition are glimpsed.

I will next investigate this guise of multiple modernities through two examples: the spatial politics of post/colonialism in the North African colonies, and the iconography of squatter settlements in Brasilia and Calcutta. The first example locates the relation between tradition and modernity at the site of high colonialism and its incredible modernist experiments. The second critically investigates the romanticized resurrection of Third World communities as utopian havens in the face of postmodern flux.

Algiers

A great deal has been written about French colonialism in Algeria, that oldest of colonies, that most protracted of bloody independence struggles. It is not my intention to rework these debates.²⁹ Rather, I want to revisit them only briefly to outline some key themes. First, it is obvious that colonialism involved an unprecedented level of modernization and modernism. Not only were cities and regions bru-

tally remade in ways that would have made Haussmann proud, but so also was put into place an entire professional apparatus of modernism. Thus, on the one hand, the future was “invented”³⁰; and on the other, this invention was made possible through the rationalization of geopolitical knowledge, an ordering of the world, if you will. This was the hierarchical structure best epitomized by world exhibitions like the Crystal Palace, and most clearly expressed in the discursive logic of Orientalism.³¹ Crucial to this rational modernism was the supervised preservation of carefully selected native traditions, manifested on the ground through the socio-spatial management of difference.

A striking example of these forces was Le Corbusier’s Plan Obus for Algiers (FIG. 5). For someone who had dedicated one of his earliest designs to a single god, Authority, and who lamented the republicanism of post-Haussmann France, it was not surprising that Le Corbusier saw colonialism as a welcome opportunity to spread modernism. His graphic representation of colonialism thus portrayed it as an axis of ideas, taking hold in Algiers, and extending further south to French black Africa.³² Of course, this is the very axis along which a different colonial exchange — of resource extraction and revenues and labor power — was taking place. This was the primitive accumulation, the bloody modernization, which would make the edifices of modernism possible.

Le Corbusier was particularly interested in Algiers. He had first visited the city in the early 1930s during the festivities marking one hundred years of French occupation. At the time he believed that Algiers was perhaps “the most beautiful [city] in the world.”³³ His Plan Obus envisioned preserving Algiers’ Casbah intact, with a highway hovering above it connecting the planned expansions of European residences

with European businesses. Quarantined behind this vertical *cordon sanitaire*, the Casbah and its traditions would endure, as would the careful balance between European and Muslim cultures that he articulated in various sketches.

The Plan Obus never came to fruition. Even the French military authorities were convinced that it could only be implemented through a “new bombardment” of the city. But it is perhaps this incompleteness that imparts unsullied perfection to Corbu’s vision, marking it as one of the most distilled spatial images of colonialism.

The Casbah of Algiers was preserved in other ways by the French, most notably through policies of associationism, or what Rabinow has called techno-cosmopolitanism.³⁴ But what is most interesting for my purposes here is that it was precisely this socio-spatial arrangement that aided the emergence of particular forms of political protest. Lamprakos, for example, has documented the ways in which the Casbah and its spatial traditions became the site of guerrilla warfare waged by the National Liberation Front.³⁵ The native Casbah, in fact, often proved impenetrable to European troops and tanks, refusing entry to its very creator.

But there is perhaps another way of mapping these impositions of the modern, and the challenges posed by tradition. The boundaries between Casbah and White Town were not simply regulated through zoning and building regulations, but equally through the contestation of social norms. In Algiers, such struggles coalesced around the veil, which came to serve as a “visible marker” of cultural difference.³⁶ The French labeled the veil misogynist, and defined their mission of civilization to include the liberation of Algerian women from it. But for the Algerian nationalist movement, the veil became a sign of moral resistance to European colonialism. Thus, in his *Studies in a Dying Colonialism*, Fanon



FIGURE 5. *Le Corbusier’s Plan Obus, 1932.* Courtesy of M. Lamprakos, in N. AlSayyad, *Forms of Dominance: On the Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise* (Aldershot, Avebury, 1992).

wrote of how Algerian women, particularly in the cities, re-adopted the veil as a direct answer to French interventions.³⁷

Here then are the gendered and sexualized terms of the colonial modern: the exotic patriarchy of the Orient, recast and reworked by a nationalist movement. Here also is Le Corbusier's fascination with the seductive veil — which he saw as concealing the “penetrable mystery” of “ravishing coquettes,” turned on its head.³⁸ Corbusier feminized the Casbah, casting it in the image of a veiled woman.³⁹ But the Algerian nationalists nimbly used this very same veil to negotiate the *cordon sanitaire*. As the nationalist movement gained strength and vigor, the French responded by closing off the Casbah and monitoring all movement in and out of it. Meanwhile, Algerian nationalists contested such forms of spatial surveillance through performative strategies of gender that hinged on the creative deployment of the veil.

These positions were powerfully depicted in the film *Battle of Algiers* — Italian director Gillo Pontecorvo's paean to the FLN 1954–1958 uprising in the Casbah.⁴⁰ Among other things, the film showed how Algerian women would transform themselves into European women, carrying bombs and revolvers into the heart of the European districts. Fanon wrote of such moments:

*The unveiled Algerian woman moves like a fish in the Western waters. The soldiers, the French patrols, smile to her as she passes, compliments on her looks are heard here and there, but no one suspects that her suitcases contain the automatic pistol which will presently mow down four or five members of one of the patrols.*⁴¹

And when this strategy was uncovered by the French, the veil was once again assumed, this time by nationalist men who donned the *chador*, thus claiming the feminized protections of what was perceived to be a misogynist tradition. Surely, French soldiers would never have had the courage to look underneath the disguise of the veil (FIG. 6).

And so here is a traditional symbol “manipulated” and “transformed into a technique of camouflage.”⁴² This goes to the core of what Watts has called an “Islamic modernity,” understood through the ambiguous and paradoxical making and remaking of self and space.⁴³

Also revealed here are the ambiguities of both colonialism and its postcolonial articulations. *Battle of Algiers* showed how the seeming duality of the colonial city was a binary that could not be easily policed and implemented. Instead, the very inauthenticity of tradition, in this case embodied in the strategic deployment of the veil, allowed a constant remapping of city and home, nation and world. Here, the veil lost its fixed meaning as a traditional symbol, and instead became both the claim to a modern nation-state and to a distinctively regional articulation of that modernity. In other words, as the authenticity of tradition was undermined, so was eroded the universalism of the modern.



FIGURE 6. *Battle of Algiers*; film still: publicity material.

And yet it is important at this point to sound a few cautionary notes. I do not mean to interpret strategy as subversion, or inauthenticity as liberation. The manipulations of the veil shown in *Battle of Algiers* cannot be seen as a utopian recovery of tradition, as a weapon of the weak. Instead, I see them as an indication of the ways in which the articulation of the traditional and the modern act as an axis of identity and power.

Perhaps this is most clearly evident in the gendered nuances of this narrative. It was the performative gender strategies that created a surplus of meaning, one that defied the simple mapping of modern and traditional. When the Algerian woman took off her veil, was she modern? Was she mimicking the modern? Or was this the purest moment of her traditional incarnation? It is just such an equivocation I find exciting.

But, again, equivocation cannot be interpreted as freedom. Despite the intricacies of Fanon's argument, he maintained the female body as the ultimate site of nationalist struggle.⁴⁴ Le Corbusier's vision of the Casbah was consummated through his imagining of a city as plastic and beautiful as the supple-hipped and full-breasted Algerian woman.⁴⁵ Fanon's nationalist imaginary was fueled by a fetishized and feminized Algerian authenticity. For him, the Algerian struggle was made possible through a remaking of the female body, which in turn remade urban space. But, in the last instance, the revolutionary act of unveiling was to him the sexualized act of walking into an European city “stark naked.”⁴⁶ The contradictions of the Algerian veil, and the discourses thereof, can indeed be read as a forebearer of contemporary forms of anguish.

It is thus that Assia Djebar has written of an independent Algeria where the bombs that nationalist women carried under their clothes, that they took out as if they were taking out their own breasts, exploded against them, right against them.⁴⁷ In the nationalist imaginary, women became the “embodiments



FIGURE 7. Original sketch by Albert Laprade, Morocco, 1926.

of cultural authenticity,” condemned as Lazreg has pointed out, to an “irremediable caricatural existence,” and eventually to the violence of an increasing fundamentalist “religiosity.”⁴⁸

As Dubey has noted, “the metaphorical figure of woman” had been conjured up “to resolve the inescapable contradiction” of the nationalist project: the contradiction of laying claim to “European categories of progress and modernity, while reviving precolonial traditions to safeguard the nation’s cultural difference from the West.”⁴⁹ But in postcolonial times, this figure congealed and froze, taking on the rigor of nationalism. If the colonial modern had been unraveled by the deployment of inauthentic traditions, then the postcolonial modern was sealed and delivered through the purification of tradition. That each has been an incomplete project, always contested, at times subverted, remains a cause for hope.⁵⁰



FIGURE 8. Artist rendering of squatter settlement, Colombia, 1983. Courtesy of UC Slide Library.

The Iconography of Squatting

It was in the last of the French colonies, Morocco, that the colonial policy of preserving native traditions was perhaps most assiduously enforced. This is roundly apparent in the careful sketches with which architects like Albert Laprade filled their notebooks: the detailing of traditional environments executed with a great deal of love and fondness (FIG. 7). Laprade’s sketches formed the basis for, among other things, the strange paradox of a “new medina” — the French re-creation of a Moroccan casbah, what Wright has called a “Disneyesque setting for local traditions.”⁵¹

These colonial sketches compare in provocative ways with a more recent sketch: that done in 1983 by a group of architecture students as they studied a squatter settlement in Colombia (FIG. 8). And this, in turn, contrasts provocatively with Popko’s 1978 black-and-white photo-documentary of squatting in Cali, Colombia (FIG. 9).⁵² It would be naïve to think of this as a simple distinction between representation and reality. Instead, what appears to be at issue are varying genealogies of representation. Like Laprade’s sketches, the student representation of squatting revives a distilled and pure form of tradition that can only be romanticized, that is worthy only of museums. Here, traditional practices are recovered as reservoirs of pure meaning, standing in timeless opposition to modernism and modernization.

Such representations deserve a closer look, mainly because of the populist ways in which the practices of the Third World poor are being increasingly recovered and celebrated in a whole range of debates and discourses. These span a spectrum from international shelter summits like Habitat II to the work of scholars concerned with housing and community management practices.⁵³ What is this tradition that is being revived? Who are the bearers of such traditions? By focusing on squatting, I would like to make two points.



FIGURE 9. Squatter settlement in Cali, Colombia. Courtesy of E. Popko, *Transitions: A Photographic Documentary of Squatter Settlements* (Stroudsburg: Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, 1978).

The first concerns an iconography of urban informality. For some time there has been an interesting debate, some of it played out in this journal, that has cast urban informality as a distinctive source of vernacular aesthetics.⁵⁴ I am concerned here with how these traditions of informality are in fact intricately tied up with the question of the modern. Instead of seeing squatting as a traditional challenge to modernist environments, I think it may be better presented as a process that can only be understood through modernization, and through its universalist discourse of rights. Indeed, to frame the matter of Third World poverty as a question of local traditions that are somehow antithetical to modern ideals is to undermine the making and re-making of such modern claims, to deny the poor the right to participate in particular histories.

Second, I would like to point out how the tendency to celebrate the traditions of the poor uncritically, to see them as a rejection of modernism and modernization, is to negate any possibility of intervention and regularization.⁵⁵ It is to damn the poor to the fate of tradition in the belief that the assumed norms and efficiencies of the informal sector will somehow compensate for the inactions of neoliberalism.

I start with an example from a quintessentially modernist city, Brasilia. The city's designers, Costa and Niemeyer, were both deeply inspired by Le Corbusier and the modernist CIAM principles of the 1950s. However, in the competition for the city's master plan, Costa's entry won not so much as a tribute to Corbusian high modernism as for being a "personal muse, a vision of spontaneous origin." Oriented around the cross, this cavalier entry conjured up all kinds of significations, none of which were explicitly discussed.⁵⁶ Such a naturalization of the modern through the deployment of mythicized traditions is nothing new, but once again it points to the inherent corruptions of the modern. Rofel, quoting Nicholas Dirks, rightfully noted that "History is one of the most telling signs of the modern."⁵⁷

There is another set of images from Brasilia that I find compelling. It is of the squatter settlements that eventually came to ring the city. Costa, the city's planner, had refused to plan for a periphery, defying the socio-spatial patterns of Brazilian urbanization. But only a couple of years into the city's construction, thou-

sands of migrant workers began to set up shantytowns, eventually being absorbed into government-sponsored satellite towns. In a lively anthropological account of the city, Holston presented this as an unraveling of modernism: "the paradoxes of utopia that undermined its initial premises." But there was possibly more here than a simple unfolding of the inevitable constraints of modernization and modernism. My favorite image from Brasilia is of a squatter who has painted the symbols of the public mall, most notably the inverted arches of the presidential Planalto Palace designed by Niemeyer, on his shack at the periphery of the city (FIGS. 10, 11).⁵⁸ Herein, I think, is a distinctively public claim to space and place. It is an appropriation of a modernist heritage, and thereby of a modern future.⁵⁹

Let me offer another story in the same spirit. A great deal of my ethnographic research in Calcutta has been among squatter settlements. They are for the most part dismal places, marked by incredible poverty and a lack of the most basic of urban services. Despite all my hoped sophistications, in the last instance, at the end of long days of fieldwork, I judged this deprivation in comparison to a universalist ideal. Here was underdevelopment at its starkest. And yet one sultry evening as I was about to leave the settlement, I was stopped by a group of young squatter men. One of them, Ranjan, a lanky twenty-year-old with sparkling eyes, asked: "I have heard that there are homeless in America. How is that possible? Why doesn't the government allow them to simply take over vacant land like we have? Don't they have rights?" And in the face of all my explanations, he insisted: "If one is a citizen, one can't be homeless."

Ranjan's statement was a claim to modernity, to the promise of modernization, and to a universalist conception of citizenship. Accordingly, his words eroded the privileges of American democracy by highlighting the humiliations of homelessness. I, who had so arrogantly measured out Third World poverty, now had to peer through a different looking glass. Here, suddenly, the Third World squatter's patched-together home became an icon of the modern nation, while the shopping-cart-pushing, shelter-searching American homeless became the symbol of a perverse modernity. Whitman's commanding gaze had thus been unsettled.



FIGURE 10. (LEFT) Squatter shack outside Brasilia. Courtesy of UC Slide Library.

FIGURE 11. (RIGHT) Planalto Palace, Brasilia. Courtesy of UC Slide Library.

Yet, once again, I must sound a cautionary note. It would be a grave misunderstanding to interpret squatter settlements and their “rehearsal of the legitimate order” as a robust socio-spatial arrangement.⁶⁰ In my work on Calcutta, I have designated such forms of urban informality as a Faustian bargain, for they shift the burden of coping to the poor and often trap them in volatile cycles of patronage and dependence. For me, this was most poignantly reflected in the fact that exactly ten days after Ranjan had so defiantly asked me those questions, he and 900 other squatter families were evicted in a brutal demolition drive by the very same leftist government that had protected them for years.

With this in mind, let me reiterate two points. First, I see Ranjan’s question as a claim to modernity; but I also end his story on the note that it was precisely that: a claim always staked but never fulfilled. It is this ambiguity that marks the myth of the modern. Second, it is not only misleading to read such squatter practices as symbols of tradition, challenging the modern; it is perhaps also dangerous. The fragility of squatting makes it a sad model indeed for imagining a new millennium. Such “spontaneous traditions” present no alternative to the modern, but instead expectations thereof. Here, the end of the modern takes the form of betrayal rather than liberation.⁶¹ To continue the analogy of death, if this is the deathbed at which tradition is being revived, then the resurrection seems to have been only that of a ghost, elusive and devoid of content.

POST / MODERN

And so, if the death of the modern cannot be the occasion for the revival of authentic traditions, how else can this postmodern moment be conceptualized? I will conclude by offering the modest suggestion that the “post” may be seen not as the end of intellectual traditions, but as a surplus present within the modern itself. Indeed, I argue that this excess, the corruptions of the modern, offers renewed privileges of representation.

In some ways this may mean thinking about the end not so much as a temporal marker, but instead, as Gaonkar noted in his introduction to the “Alter/native Modernities” issue of *Public Culture*, as multiple modernities, as the emptying out of master narratives, as an “endlessly fading twilight.”⁶² To assert an abrupt and neat end — a bang, if you will — would be to deny the very spirit of interrogation that I hope accompanies the “post.” Indeed, it was a master of modernist narrations, T.S. Eliot, who wrote not simply of death and living, but of the “Shadow” that falls between.⁶³

There are perhaps two ways of interpreting this shadowed moment. The first is through the trope of waiting. I was reminded of this by a recent piece written by Edward Said on the peace process in the Middle East.⁶⁴ Likening the situation to Samuel Becket’s *Waiting for Godot*, Said wrote of a “frozen state of clown-like, pathetic banality.” My father sent me Said’s piece from Calcutta, writing that this beloved

city of his and mine, this dying and decrepit place, represented another such impasse, a state of perpetual paralysis.

Said goes on to describe another narration of waiting, a poem by the fin-de-siècle poet Constantine Cavafy called “Waiting for the Barbarians.” The poem repeatedly asks: “What are we waiting for?” In response, there is a recurring refrain: “The barbarians are due here today.” And so the senators sit without legislating, and the emperor waits at the city’s main gate, ready with a scroll, replete with titles.

But the barbarians never come. And there are even rumors from the borders that there are no barbarians any longer.

*And now, what’s going to happen to us without barbarians?
They were, those people, a kind of solution.*⁶⁵

Is it possible to act and speak when the traditional enemies are no longer present? When the purity of waiting is shattered?

Perhaps there is another way to interpret the not-coming of the barbarians. This is the recognition that the sudden disappearance of the Other is occasion for a new engagement, a creative liminality. And it is this possibility that I hope to articulate, chiefly through a brief re-presentation of some of René Magritte’s paintings.

There are many narratives, visual and otherwise, that I could have chosen to make this point, but I think the work of Magritte is valuable for a few reasons. First, it brilliantly articulates the tensions between the modern and the postmodern. This is where the “Shadow” falls. Further, Magritte was able to map this liminality because of his corruption of visual images.⁶⁶ In other words, he was able to visually foreground the surplus, the inauthentic, that I have hitherto been seeking to signal.

For example, in *The Human Condition* (1933), Magritte called into question the very possibility of representative affirmation (FIG. 12). Here is a canvas; here an open window. The eye, the longing eye, tells us that the painting corresponds to the outside view that is hidden. But does it? As Foucault rightly noted,



FIGURE 12.
R. Magritte, *The Human Condition* (1933). Oil on canvas, 100 x 73cm. Private Collection, Monte Carlo.

it is the provocative use of the old space of representation that makes the deconstruction, the interrogation, so powerful.⁶⁷

A similar displacement attends the film *Battle of Algiers* and its style of pseudo-documentation.⁶⁸ Pontecorvo deliberately used documentary techniques, creating an air of objectivity. In fact, it was this very claim to objectivity that Louis Malle deployed when he showed the previously banned film in Paris. But Pontecorvo clearly stated at the beginning of his film that not a single documentary reel was used. The tension between this mimetic technique and the staging of content creates an ambiguity that is highly provocative. The screen, like Magritte's canvases, has a "mimetic overflowing" that is at once modern and much more than the modern.⁶⁹

But such questionings of visual representation are now commonplace, particularly in an arena such as this journal and association. I thus present a second Magritte image to instigate an equal complication of the question of speech and text. In perhaps his most famous work, *The Treachery of Images* (1926), Magritte challenged the relationship between word-sign and essential origin (FIG. 13). It is interesting to note that Le Corbusier had, in 1923, held up the image of a pipe as an image of pure functionalism. Some critics like Hughes have speculated that Magritte intended his painting as a rejoinder to this assertion.⁷⁰

What is this image? Foucault described it thus:

A carefully drawn pipe and underneath it (handwritten in a steady, painstaking, artificial script, a script from the convent, like that found heading the notebooks of schoolboys, or on a blackboard after an object lesson), this note: This is not a pipe.

Foucault interpreted the canvas as a challenge to the possibility of textual representation (yes, of course this is not a pipe, but a painting of a pipe). It indicates, he noted, "the penetration of discourse into the form of things." But more importantly, Foucault saw it as a heterotopia, secretly undermining language and stopping words in their tracks. His particular term for it is instructive: a "calligram," a picture-word that is constructed and then allowed to collapse "of its own weight." It is interesting to note that Foucault and Magritte exchanged letters on these matters, and much of their correspondence was concerned with the relation between words and signs, between text and visuality.⁷¹

In this spirit I will end by discussing another calligram, one that also erodes the consolation of utopias, but which raises the hope of more, of the "post" as life and living.



FIGURE 13.
R. Magritte, *The Treachery of Images* (1926). Oil on canvas, 60 x 81cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

My story comes from one of my favorite novels, Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.⁷² Set in a phantasmic town called Macondo on the edge of a vast South American swamp, the novel details the events following the appearance of "Sir Francis Drake, the pirate." At one point, the town comes to be afflicted with a plague that leads to the loss of memory. As the town slowly loses its collective memory, one of its leaders, Aureliano, conceives of a formula: he writes down words on pieces of paper and attaches them to the respective objects. Soon all objects are labeled: table, chair, clock, and so forth. But then Aureliano realizes that these labels make no sense if people forget the use of the objects. And so he is more explicit. He hangs a sign on the cow that says: "This is the cow. She must be milked every morning. The milk must be boiled and then drunk with coffee." And he creates two important signs — one that marks the town, "Macondo," and the other, a larger one on the main road, that says "God Exists."

After a while, even these instructions are not enough to retain for the town the meaning of the written word. Eventually, they turn to the village fortune teller. Once, she had used her cards to tell the future. Now she uses them to tell the past. And so the town begins to live a past reconstructed as the uncertain alternatives of the cards.

The town's forgetfulness is a different kind of calligram. In Magritte unsettled the visual present by attaching the "wrong" word to the "wrong picture," then Garcia Marquez has presented a calligram that collapses because of a corruption of verbal history.⁷³ Here, the past is deeply tainted by forgetfulness, by a fortune teller's imagination, and the ambiguities of the written word. This is an ending, one where the end of modernist and linear time is tied to the end of tradition, the forgetting of the most mundane of traditions. And yet this is also an allegory of living, where the future is made possible through the impossibility of remembering an authentic past.

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 50. Habermas used the term "incomplete project of modernity" to signal the ways in which the imagining of a public sphere can fulfill the promises of the modern. I am using the term to indicate quite the reverse: that the cause for hope lies not in the possibilities of closure and completion, but in the incompleteness — in what always escapes the project.
 51. Wright, *The Politics of Design*.
 52. E. Popko, *Transitions: A Photographic Documentary of Squatter Settlements* (Stroudsburg: Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, 1978).
 53. United Nations, *Habitat Agenda and Istanbul Declaration: Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlement* (New York, 1996); and M. Douglass, "World City Formation of the Asia Pacific Rim: Poverty, 'Everyday' Forms of Civil Society and Environmental Management," in M. Douglass and J. Friedmann, eds., *Cities for Citizens* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998).
 54. L. Peattie, "Aesthetic Politics: Shantytown or New Vernacular?" *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.3 No.2 (1992), pp.23–32; P. Kellett and M. Napier,

- Squatter Architecture? A Critical Examination of Vernacular Theory and Spontaneous Settlement with Reference to South America and South Africa," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.6 No.2 (1995), pp.7–24; and B. Opalach, "Political Space: The Architecture of Squatter Settlements in Sao Paulo, Brazil," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.9 No.1 (1997) pp.35–50.
 55. See Peattie, "Aesthetic Politics," for a brief discussion of the importance of state interventions such as security of tenure or the provision of public services.
 56. Holston, *The Modernist City*.
 57. L. Rofel, "Rethinking Modernity: Space and Factory Discipline in China," *Cultural Anthropology* (1992), p.106.
 58. A special thanks to Nezar AlSayyad for introducing me to this wonderful image.
 59. Peattie, in "Aesthetic Politics," p.9, wrote, in the context of squatting in Venezuela: "The claim to modernity was a claim for respect and for citizenship."
 60. Holston, *The Modernist City*.
 61. For a nuanced discussion of this matter, see J. Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). In this "ethnography of decline," he

- foregrounded the frustrations of Zambian copper belt workers confronted with the shattering of the modern ideal — with a situation where "backwardness" is suddenly the future.
 62. D. Gaonkar, "On Alternative Modernities," *Public Culture*, Vol.11, No.1 (1999), p.13.
 63. T.S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men," in *Selected Poems* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954; the poem was written in 1925).
 64. E. Said, "How Long can Waiting Work?" *Al-Ahram Weekly* 466 (Jan. 27–Feb. 2, 2000).
 65. C. Cavafy, *The Essential Cavafy*, E. Keeley, trans. (New York: The Ecco Press, 1995).
 66. D. Sylvester, *Magritte: Catalogue of an Exhibition of Paintings* (London: The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1969).
 67. Foucault, *This is Not a Pipe*, p.41.
 68. M. Kozloff, "Shooting at Wars: Three Views," *Film Quarterly*, Vol.21 No.2 (1967), pp.27–29.
 69. Foucault, *This is Not a Pipe*, p.8.
 70. *Ibid.*, p.60
 71. Foucault, *This is Not a Pipe*, pp.15–54.
 72. G. Garcia Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (New York: Harper Perennial Classics, 1967).
 73. See, for example, *Person Walking towards the Horizon* (1928) or *The Key of Dreams* (1936).



Home Cooking, Nostalgia, and the Purchase of Tradition

JEAN DURUZ

This article teases out meanings of “home” in everyday practices against a backdrop of anxiety in Western postmodern/postindustrial imaginaries at the beginning of a new century. Exploring reinventions of tradition, it draws on Australian women’s stories of establishing small businesses involved in the production of “homely” food and spaces. It concludes that cultural critics should go beyond simply questioning late capitalism’s flexible purchase of tradition to meet its own ends. In particular, more attention should be paid to the potential contribution of “microinventions” to the design of convivial cities and dwellings, without denying their political complexities.

Cooking is revelation and creation; and a woman can find special satisfaction in a successful cake or a flaky pastry, for not everyone can do it: one must have the gift.

— Simone de Beauvoir, 1949¹

[M]eals can be remembered only by analysing the coloured slick of oil that rings the bottom of each container: green — must be Thursday’s Thai curry; orange — Monday’s chicken vindaloo; livid red — sweet and sour something (when we succumb to a bit of takeaway nostalgia).

— Khym Lam, 1998²

This article draws on the concerns, approaches and theoretical frameworks of cultural studies and cultural geography in ways of interest to those working in disciplines such as architecture, environmental design, and urban planning. Specifically, it traces the purchase of tradition — images and meanings attached to traditional spaces, experiences of duration, food practices, and presiding figures — through consuming “comfort” foods or through the nostalgic appropriations of “public” (nondomestic) space. At one level, for the urban/heritage planner, architect, or designer, the article offers implications for the project of producing comfortable dwellings and convivial cities, as well as some reflection on the interrelationships of “private” and “public” comfort. At another level, it makes a case for recognizing that the

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“lived-experience” approaches and theoretical frameworks of cultural studies and cultural geography might be useful for disciplines concerned with researching traditional environments, and vice-versa. Obviously, the intention is to encourage a fruitful intellectual exchange.

The analysis that follows stresses the need to understand the complex ways in which traditions are appropriated and reworked as commodities. However, this is not simply a story of capitalism triumphing over traditional values and practices, or one of consumer relationships formed solely by the nexus of cash-payment. While there are traces of these arguments in the analysis, there are also stories of women’s inventiveness as producers, creating products and spaces that meet people’s cultural as well as material needs. All in all, the narrative that emerges does not announce the end of tradition, but instead underlines tradition’s flexibility.

Of course, tradition can appear in unexpected places when studying cultural artifacts like food. Therefore, to begin this discussion of home cooking and its purchase, I return to the paper’s opening quotation which, paradoxically, leads me to Parisian café society in the 1940s.

HOME ON THE RANGE?

Simone de Beauvoir was not renowned for her cooking. Although she remembered catching a “glimpse of a housewife’s joys” on a December evening in 1941, as she sat writing in her Paris hotel room, surrounded by the silence of the curfew and the “delectable odour” of vegetable soup simmering on the gas ring, de Beauvoir is more likely to be figured as an icon of twentieth-century French intellectual life, holding court daily in the Café de Flore.³ While the café at this time (the early 1940s) did not serve food, for de Beauvoir it resonated homeliness: here was warmth, a space to work, the company of friends/dependents (“the Family”) at other tables . . . or the occasional pleasure of her being alone with Sartre, “with only the sound of a pen scratching across the paper and the smell of his pipe and her cigarette marking the other’s presence.”⁴

“Personal possessions, a chair, a desk — a place to write. Not much has changed in over four hundred years,” wrote Witold Rybczynski more than forty years later, his recipe for late-twentieth-century *domestic* comfort based in unashamed nostalgia for Western bourgeois traditions of luxury, ease, clutter, privacy and intimacy.⁵ It is in this sense, then, that the Café de Flore was appropriated, for de Beauvoir and for Sartre, as an intimate space — as their home-from-home.

The romance of a writing life, particularly one that is trimmed of complicated domestic responsibilities, has always been an appealing one. Nevertheless, in the current climate of “time-space compression,” the turn to industrial cooking and the globalization of cuisine, there are contradictory cultural moments.⁶ These are ones that render embracing café society or “Monday’s chicken vindaloo” (as its working-class, takeaway

equivalent) problematic. In recent years, in the Australian popular media there has been a minor moral panic in relation to discourses of urban design that predict “time-poor” futures in kitchenless houses and apartments.⁷ Arguments that traditional practices and rituals associated with home cooking and dining are, of necessity, in decline (and, with them, the material spaces of kitchens, dining and sitting rooms) appear to threaten mythical meanings of “home” as a site of place-making and identity formation in contemporary Western imaginaries.

Is home-cooked roasted chicken, for example, a “dying art”?⁸ Does this matter? According to Doreen Massey, the present time is one in which, for First World economies of affluence at least, “things are speeding up and spreading out.” As a result, the discomforts of fragmentation, disruption and “placelessness” have produced nostalgic longings for a secure world and for secure positionings within it.⁹ Certainly, food traditions appear to offer useful “tactics” for fixing “place,” with these practices dominant in migration narratives.¹⁰ Here, daily rituals of food growing, purchasing, cooking and eating become resonant sites for identity performance — for constant renegotiations and “re-settlements.”¹¹ Of course, this argument implies that, essentially, we are all migrants, retracing, through food, our connections to time and place and maintaining the fragile balancing act of cultural positioning. For this project, the “dying art” of home cooking can be revisited (in memories, dreams or, indeed, in practice) as a comforting symbol of who we are, were, and want to be.

This is all very well. However, do “home cooking” and processes of nostalgic “identity resettlement” have a life beyond remembered “pasts,” imagined pleasures, or mourning for that “world we have lost”? What does “home cooking” represent in supposed “placeless” postmodern/postindustrial societies where everyday we are invited simply to “heat and eat” . . . to “eat and run”? What does home cooking mean when food shopping involves our judicious grazing, as global citizens, on the products of a “multiculturalism of availability” (its diverse consumer pickings) rather than a “multiculturalism of inhabitation” (the richness of lived cultures, of everyday interactions)?¹² How has “home” itself become a purchasable “style”? And whose meanings of “home” are on the market?

To explore the Western romance of home, as, indeed, a continually reinvented product of Western anxieties about “time-space compression,” I will draw in a microcosmic fashion on Australian women’s narratives of food and place, told from the Sydney inner-city beachside suburb of Clovelly. These narratives stem from two distinct sites — small businesses concerned with food preparation, with both of these substantially managed by women. However, first of all, I want to set the scene with some recent comment in both print and electronic media from kitchen professionals: architects, food writers, restaurateurs/providores. Does the “end” of kitchens (especially the iconic kitchen table) and of home cooking (the slow cooking of peasants, of rural life) suggest the need to forge new traditions to meet changing cultural conditions? Discourses of domestic spaces and skills under threat provide a compelling place to start this discussion.

ENDANGERED SPACES, ENDANGERED SPECIES

“The dining room and kitchen are under threat,” announced Greg Perlman, a Brisbane architect, early in 2000, both in *The Australian* (the national daily newspaper) and on national radio.¹³ Certainly, debate about the socialization of housework through cooperatives and community kitchens, or about “outsourcing” domestic labor, is not new.¹⁴ All the same, current debate on this topic appears to be taking distinct form within the present climate of postindustrial capital, new information technologies, and changing work cultures. For example, Perlman and his associates, in conjunction with a Brisbane property-research consultancy, conducted targeted studies of the housing needs of “Generation X” (by their definition, young people born between 1965 and 1978). Such needs, the researchers found, constituted a definite “break” with the postwar, suburban “house-and-garden” dreams of their parents’ generation. In contrast to the “baby boomers,” everyday life experiences of the current generation of young people are shaped by contract and casual employment, real wage reductions, diverse household arrangements, renting rooms in share households rather than working toward homeownership, and an orientation toward networks of friends and “public” leisure, rather than the mythical “family unit” and the “home” as a “private” space.¹⁵

In terms of the impact of this generationally specific “style” of living on domestic design, Perlman also noted:

*You can strip kitchens back to one basic appliance such as a microwave, a bar-sized sink without a draining board, a mini-dishwasher . . . and a refrigerator. You still need to prepare breakfast, for which you obviously need a small amount of bench space, but not to prepare anything else. Breakfast is the most common meal prepared in the home by gen X. For them, home is a dormitory.*¹⁶

Without the need for formal meals (either family ones, or the ritual dinner party of home entertaining), the dining room — indeed the dining table itself — becomes redundant. Instead, Perlman’s comments suggest the following portrait of Australia’s urban Generation X at home: seated on the sofa watching television, while “grazing” on a range of “quite sophisticated” takeaway foods spread out on the coffee table. This all takes place at odd hours between work shifts in the culture or hospitality industries, before setting out to meet their “tribe” at a café or the gym, or before retiring to study/bedrooms to surf the Net.¹⁷

Perlman, it should be emphasized, is sympathetic to the changed work and leisure cultures of Generation X and to issues of income that declare fully fitted kitchens and separate dining rooms an unnecessary extravagance. Architecturally speaking, his position seems a sensible one (matching the designed space to everyday life exigencies, rather than to sentimental attachments based on normative family structures and practices). Nevertheless, other professionals argue that the kitchen as an endangered space needs to be protected, as do the skills and sensory pleasures associated with home cooking, at least in its mythical forms.

John Newton, Sydney author and food writer, commenting on the latest stage in fast food’s gentrification — the establishment of e-cuisine (or food prepared for order from the Web) by notable chefs and restaurateurs — found disturbing possibilities in “a more recent trend towards high-quality meals that don’t even need a frying pan, but simply require heating.”¹⁸ Not only are the spaces of the kitchen under threat (all you need is “a fridge full of plastic bags that you tip in a pot”¹⁹), but so are the identity of the cook and the culture of cooking itself.²⁰ Here, cooking means not simply the food on the plate — the final presentation of a “stylish” product, ordered from a Website. Instead, in de Beauvoir’s words, cooking describes almost magical processes — “alchemies” of “enchantment” whereby “matter becomes food.”²¹

The implication here is that those who can’t cook (or won’t cook) suffer forms of cultural impoverishment. This argument, of course, tends to overlook the traditional labor relations of domestic cooking in Western societies, whereby most men could be positioned in a perpetual state of cultural deprivation! Interestingly, Michael Bittman and Jocelyn Pixley, analyzing data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on gendered changes in the allocation of domestic labor within Sydney households in the mid-1990s, noted that although women now spend less time in the kitchen, this does not mean that men spend more. Instead, Bittman and Pixley argued the reduction of time that women spend cooking is more connected to increased use of microwave ovens, increased purchase of takeaway foods, and increased “eating out” in cafés and restaurants. In other words, at home, if women do not cook, their services are, more often than not, purchased in the market, rather than reallocated to other household members.²²

Furthermore, in these (Western) postindustrial times of service-based economies and feminized workforces, this “outsourcing” of women’s domestic labor probably has a nostalgic twist. In Britain, for example, Linda McDowell and Gill Court have noted that “increasingly these ‘new’ occupations rely on marketing attributes conventionally associated with the ‘natural’ attributes of femininity — sociability, caring, and, indeed, servicing — which are marketed as an integral part of the product for sale.”²³ One may conclude therefore that “home” cooking is still available — for a price, of course — with “other” women’s labor required to sustain its romantic associations. In other words, through nostalgic commodifications (the products of “home,” of women’s nurturance), class meanings of femininity are also sustained, indeed strengthened.

Tied to anxieties about women not cooking (at home), and to threats of kitchens shrinking to motel-like alcoves with a bar ‘fridge and tea-and-coffee-making facilities, are concerns about young people not ever learning to cook. Once again, these concerns are not new ones, but they do take a specific shape in the contemporary “time-poor” moment of long working days (for those in employment), disposable income (for those with income to dispose), and accelerating changes in food production/knowledge management.²⁴ In 1998, Lyndey Milan, as president of Sydney’s Wine Press Club, declared, “We are growing a generation of kids who can’t cook because their mums and dads can’t . . . we are

cyber literate, but food illiterate.” The occasion was a recently released national survey which found that, between 1989 and 1994, Australians’ consumption of takeaway foods increased by 58 percent, with one in four meals purchased as a takeaway.²⁵ In this argument, although the “time-poor” Generation X has become the technology-rich one (the development of the microwave chip enabling easy access to both food and entertainment), at the same time it is this generation that displays a definite “lack” in the everyday skills of food preparation.

Stephanie Alexander (chef, restaurateur, providore, cookbook author, food journalist, television celebrity, and doyenne of the Australian food scene) agreed: “Many young people no longer learn to cook at home. Some have little experience of the family table.”²⁶ In contrast, she remembered her own growing up (in the 1950s and 1960s in rural Victoria, south of Melbourne) as a process of learning to cook:

I learnt to cook at my mother's side, and images of her that have stayed with me . . . include Mum bent in front of the Aga oven scooping baked potatoes into her apron, shaping bread rolls for dinner, forking rough troughs in the mashed potato on top of the shepherd's pie, slipping a slice of butter under the crust of Grandma's bramble cake, or in full bee-keeper's outfit setting out to gather honey from the hive.²⁷

Here is not only a catalogue of remembered foods and techniques associated with home cooking in a semi-rural context, but also a palimpsest of “home” itself — the slow cooking of cakes baking, meat stewing, loaves proving; the warmth and aromas of a kitchen with a wood stove as its centerpiece; the iconic figure of country woman, carrying out the rituals of the day or season. These are comforting images of “home” inherited from a long tradition of British and European ruralism, with women in the kitchen at its core.²⁸

Is it perhaps the loss of this phantom figure and its nostalgic comforts that render discourses of the “death of the kitchen” problematic? After all, Gaston Bachelard has written of the significance of the first house of childhood as an emotional screen, filtering meanings of all later dwellings, place-attachments, and acts of remembering: “Through dreams, the various dwelling-places in our lives co-penetrate and retain the treasures of former days.” As well, for Bachelard, this “first house” — the one we carry with us in memories and daydreams — is essentially the maternal one, built on metaphors of women’s nurturing. “Life begins well . . . all warm in the bosom of the house.”²⁹

Leaving aside the question of place-attachments for those for whom life did *not* begin well (obviously, Bachelard is concerned as much with collective memory and myth as personal memories and experiences), the problem of how much danger really exists is worth addressing. Are the spaces of the kitchen, indeed, under threat? Will the maternal figure of the cook disappear? Thus, Akiko Busch, writing about contemporary kitchen design in America, suggested there is currently a revival in kitchens as convivial spaces for

the ritual performances of everyday food preparation. At the same time, these kitchens of the postmodern age serve as display spaces for seemingly contradictory tendencies:

Yet as likely as we are to fill our kitchens with efficient production machinery, we also hold onto the vestiges of old-time kitchens, to cozy symbols of nostalgia. Spatterware plates set the table and antique egg-beaters decorate the walls. For every Sub-Zero refrigerator, there is an antique apothecary chest; for every restaurant-grade mixer, a Shaker box. We want the future in the kitchen, but not at the expense of the past.³⁰

In the absence of “old-time” kitchens, their inhabitants, and the social relations of these domestic landscapes, the products acquired within economies of the “antique” provide comforting references. Needless to say, the position of purchaser of this “stylish” eclecticism is a thoroughly classed one.

Thus, perhaps the kitchen is not “dying” after all — only undergoing cultural and nostalgic renovation. Here, as with those niggling fears about time-space compression, one needs to question whose remembering is at stake when one is mourning the woman at the wood stove or purchasing her symbolic products. Who stands to benefit from nostalgic returns to traditional, gendered divisions of labor embedded in daily shopping, cooking and eating in the industrialized/postindustrialized West? To some extent I have discussed these questions elsewhere (crudely put: it’s often better to eat than to cook, to be served than to serve).³¹ But in this context, given perceived threats to tradition, the more interesting project is to unravel some of its creative reinventions. For the rest of this article, I will be drawing on interview narratives to pursue this task.

IN THE COMPANY OF NONNAS

Mary-Anne DeNavi, in partnership with her husband Michael, runs a small fruit and vegetable shop in the Sydney beachside suburb of Clovelly (named for the other Clovelly — a fishing village in Devon, Britain).³² The DeNavis’ business is sited among a cluster of small shops (mostly selling fresh or takeaway foods) at the top of a hill, on a main road leading down to the sea (FIGS. 1, 2). Standing on the footpath outside Mary-Anne and Michael’s shop, you can see the rooftops of Clovelly spreading out in the narrow valley below and lining the shores of its narrow inlet. Known locally as existing in a “time warp,” Clovelly is seen as a quiet, respectable suburb, unlike its much ritzier neighbors to the north — Bronte, with its café strip, and the iconic Bondi Beach.³³ However, like most Sydney beachside suburbs, Clovelly shows signs of gentrification and a corresponding rise in house prices.³⁴ Meanwhile, its population is predominantly an Anglo-Celtic one, with over half of Clovelly’s residents Australian-born.³⁵ Mary-Anne herself is one of twelve children, Australian-born and of Anglo-Irish descent, while Michael is second-generation Australian with Italian grandparents.



FIGURE 1. *The view down Clovelly Road toward the sea. (Photograph by C. Moore Hardy, 2000.)*

Although the DeNavis' shopfront window proclaims the sale of "Frutta e Verdura," this is not simply a fruit and vegetable shop in which its owners follow the traditional occupation of working-class Italian families in urban Australia (FIG. 3). Since buying the business six years ago, Mary-Anne and Michael have added a range of cooked meals to their stock. With a kitchen installed at the back of the shop and the employment of a full-time chef, these meals are now prepared on the premises. The development of this niche-market is described by Mary-Anne as a narrative of the foods on offer:

We started off making fresh pesto . . . and then went into pasta sauces. . . . We . . . do slow cooking . . . like the mamas use to do . . . and it slowly simmers away until you get that good type of flavor. And then we went into

making . . . lasagna . . . Moroccan lamb and couscous and old fashioned barley and vegetable soup. . . . So there's no preservatives, just how you would like to make it yourself at home — but you haven't got the time. . . .

JEAN: It's a very luscious way of helping out. Like, I'm really interested, say, in your puddings, I noticed you have rhubarb crumble and . . . all the kinds of things I actually remember from my childhood and . . .

MARY-ANNE: Well . . . it's something that I am really passionate about . . . the nurturing nature of food and how it's very important in . . . our day-to-day living and in our structure of our family life . . . bread and butter pudding . . . apple and rhubarb pie, ah, you know, I haven't seen rhubarb



FIGURE 2. *Small businesses lining the southern side of Clovelly Road. (Photograph by C. Moore Hardy, 2000.)*



FIGURE 3. *The DeNavi family outside the shopfront window that proclaims the sale of "Frutta e Verdura." (Photograph by C. Moore Hardy, 2000.)*

for ages, and it's . . . just like my grandmother used to make and . . . pear and apple crumble. You know, it's a healthy sweet that gives the people a bit of comfort food that they can put cream on. They don't feel . . . [it's] too fattening.

JEAN: Yeah. [laughter]

MARY-ANNE: That's what people are looking for, that little bit of . . . comfort that . . . mothers used to be able to give by being at home and having the dinner ready for people, which they don't have now.³⁶

In the absence of the “mamas” and grandmas (or “nonnas,” as Mary-Anne refers to these later), food can provide compensation. While Mary-Anne's account underlines popular concerns about diet (“healthy” food with “no preservatives” and not “too fattening”), and about household practices (mothers that “haven't got the time” and are no longer “at home”), her “meal solutions” are also inscriptions of the rural landscapes of collective Western imagination.³⁷ These are landscapes of childhood and the “past,” images of fertile fields and storehouses of fresh, seasonal produce, and memories of farmhouse kitchens with their rhythms of “nurturing” activity.

“The idea that the rural provides an ‘escape’ from an uncertain, multiracial and crime-ridden world into the timeless countryside, with its social quietude, peace and beauty, is commonly expressed by counterurbanizers,” comments Keith Halfacre, reflecting on the radical potential of nostalgia, reworked, to meet present needs.³⁸ In fact, this rural romance of “natural” serenity depends for its very definition on the counter-romance of urban disorder and moral decay, reproducing, according to Elizabeth Wilson, a “corrosive anti-urbanism” that pervades the development of the modern city. “The result is that today in many cities we have the worst of all worlds: danger without pleasure, safety without stimulation, consumerism without choice, monumentality without diversity.”³⁹

However, if one wants to escape the “corrupting” city, it may not actually be necessary to participate in rural life; possibilities for imaginative travel may lie closer to home.⁴⁰ For the urban middle classes, of course, there is reason to rejoice in capitalism's flexibility in acknowledging changing cultural practices in its commodity production: for now, it seems, they can have the cake and eat it too. In other words, they can taste, selectively, the cooking of the nonnas, or Thai curry, or chicken vindaloo through the marketplace's “multiculturalism of availability,” in which different “pasts,” different places, different cooking “styles,” and different meanings of duration are transformed and packaged as heat-and-eat items of consumer choice. The costs of this choice, on the other hand, reside not only in questions of product affordability, but also in questions of whose fantasies are served by the cooking of phantom nonnas, and in the political complexities that underwrite its labor relations.

To follow the trail of these phantoms, it is not difficult to find accounts of women — wives, mothers, grandmothers, nonnas and grandmères — at work in country kitchens.

Biographies and culinary histories abound in these (including the example quoted earlier from Stephanie Alexander's *The Cook's Companion*). In fact, the maternal figure at the kitchen table and the smells of slow-cooked food emanating from the hearth together become the *mise-en-scène* for much of our cultural remembrance associated with “home,” nurturing and food. Bachelard (born in 1884), for example, described his grandmother's kitchen when he was a child:

From the notched teeth of the chimney pot there hung a black cauldron. The three-legged cooking pot projected over the hot embers. Puffing up her cheeks . . . my grandmother would rekindle the sleeping flames. Everything would be cooking at the same time: the potatoes for the pigs, the choice potatoes for the family. For me there would be a fresh egg cooking under the ashes.⁴¹

Luce Giard, growing up with a feminist consciousness that entailed a refusal of “women's work,” when invited to learn to cook by her mother, realized as an adult that she had, in fact, developed a culinary consciousness as a child. “Yet my childhood gaze had seen and memorized certain gestures, and my sense memory had kept track of certain tastes, smells and colors. I already knew all the sounds: the gentle hiss of simmering water, the sputtering of melting meat drippings, and the dull thud of the kneading hand.”⁴² Meanwhile, Steve Manfredi, well-known Sydney restaurateur and food writer, recalled childhood in his grandmother's kitchen in Gottolengo, Italy, in the late 1950s and early 1960s as a procession of seasonal and sensual delights: “If I close my eyes and think of my grandmother, the memory smells delicious. It was she who taught me to use my nose as other people use their eyes.”⁴³ In a similar fashion, and extending beyond the boundaries of Western imaginaries, Cheong Liew, one of Australia's leading chefs who spent his early years (early 1950s until the mid-1960s) in a multigenerational family living above their shop in Kuala Lumpur, remembered “the many hours when I sat with my aunts in the kitchen preparing sour dough buns, cleaning shark fin, removing the shoots from the lotus seeds, cutting the wood, stoking the kitchen fire and cleaning the vegetables.” Like Steve Manfredi, Cheong attributed his early interest in food to his grandmother “who controlled the kitchen and the ways of the house.”⁴⁴

One may be easily beguiled by the sensuality of these memories. The point to grasp, however, is that the position of the narrator is significant in such storytelling. Intricate details are presented from the vantage of the observing/helping child — a view at practically table-top level of the mysterious actions and sensory processes associated with — in Giard's words — “doing-cooking.”⁴⁵ This is a gaze that effects a return to the world of childhood and to the pleasures of exploring its minute textures — to its tasting, touching, smelling, hearing. However, it is also a return to the primary position of the one who eats, who is nurtured, who is fed.

Reflecting further on Mary-Anne's account, and assuming a different perspective from that of the remembering child or the hurrying purchaser of "meal solutions," one may realize that the answering gaze from the heart of the kitchen is missing. Indeed, a cook's-eye-view might reverse the gaze from being positioned as object of others' fantasies to one that acknowledges the costs of ensuring the comfort of others, whether at home or within market relations. As it is for many people employed in small businesses in Australia,⁴⁶ the working day for Mary-Anne and Michael is a long one, and its personal are costs high. Not surprisingly, these costs include lack of time to spend at home with the family (Michael and Mary-Anne have four children, the youngest is now six); lack of personal leisure time and holidays (the business is open seven days a week, with Michael going to the markets at dawn each day, while holidays are brief and reasonably rare occurrences); and, of course, lack of money (according to Mary-Anne, "I've never been so poor in my life"). It seems ironic that a business dedicated to producing foods shaped by imagery of comfort for the "time-poor" and (presumably) the "resource-rich" (or, in Mary-Anne's terms, "the middle-class . . . sort of corporate [class]") requires its providers to forgo time, resources, and moments for "nurturing" in their own household's daily rhythms.⁴⁷

For those on the receiving end of homely attention, either literally at home or in the market, it might be tempting to romanticize these relations of giving and receiving.⁴⁸ However, for Mary-Anne, it is not a question of mystifying the labor of nurturance. Instead, there is need to acknowledge the material economies of running a business in conjunction with caring for an actual home and household — economies of money, time, human energy, and cultural positioning (and here I'm referring particularly to relations of

class, gender and ethnicity), with all their profits and losses. Mary-Anne says, "it's [been] a very steep learning curve, very steep," and "it's been a really, really hard road."⁴⁹

LIKE YOUR FRONT ROOM

It is now time to walk down the hill from DeNavis' to a second Clovelly site — another small business concerned with the production of homely meanings through nostalgic reinvention. Burnie St., originally a "village" street lined mostly with small shops selling fresh food, is now under renovation, its shops and shopfronts refitted for residential use or, alternatively, for use as "life-style" and media enterprises (FIG. 4). On the northern side of the street (near an art gallery, a computer-graphics business, and a sales office for a wholesaler of gourmet foods) Philippa White and her partner, Jinks Dulhunty, have opened a joint business: downstairs, a café which is Philippa's domain; upstairs, a homeopathic practice established by Jinks (FIG. 5). Philippa describes the development of the café as a "homely" space:

I wanted a really, really nice little café, everyone would come in, all my friends, it would be like . . . um . . . your front room, you know, and you'd have everyone over and give them these delightful things to eat or drink and . . . give them the best coffee in town and, a nice sort of atmosphere . . . so, ah, that's how it started really.⁵⁰

Friendship, hospitality and the illusion of endless time to wile away, daily rituals of food, drink, talk and relaxation . . . this business, in its practices, aims to re-create a caring,



FIGURE 4. Shopfronts on Burnie Street, Clovelly, including the facade of Philippa White and Jinks Dulhunty's business, *The Direction of Cure*. (Photograph by C. Moore Hardy, 2000.)



FIGURE 5. Philippa White and a staff member outside *The Direction for Cure*. (Photograph by C. Moore Hardy, 2000.)

sociable home or the traditional home-from-home — the convivial café or bar in the village marketplace. It seems that, for this particular reinvention, the “style,” pace, and seeming impersonality of the late-modern city is to be eschewed. Instead, there are references to both the “relaxed” spaces and rituals of an idealized domesticity and, presumably, to a nostalgic, imagined British/European “past” of “slower times” and village-centered life.⁵¹

Philippa continues, elaborating on the home comforts the café has incorporated into its design and management “style”:

[Y]ou're comfortable when you're there, you know, you can pick up a magazine or you can chat for three hours on one cup of coffee . . .

JEAN: *And do you find . . . that people do tend to come here and stay and do you have regulars. . . ?*

PHILIPPA: *[Laughter] I do have regulars, yeah . . . [We've] . . . made a beautiful banquette . . . [it's] really comfortable. . . [We] had a group of girls down there last week and they just sat there for about three hours . . . I think they were in a meeting . . . but they just . . . sat on one cup of coffee and just chatted away for the rest of the afternoon, you know, while it was raining and [they were] . . . comfortable where they were.⁵²*

It is possible to lounge on a banquette as on a sofa at home, ignoring the usual requirements of café etiquette that one sits properly (upright) at tables and keeps within the expected confines of one's allotted personal space for “public” eating. Likewise, in a “homely” establishment, there are other rules of public eating and drinking to be broken, or at least challenged by the ambiance of domestic practices. Several times Philippa mentioned a customer's “sitting” on one cup of coffee for hours to stress that this is an unusual privilege in commercial establishment. Here, some fluidity in the “rules”

becomes a “gift” marked by “homeliness.” This is a gift of extended time and welcoming space for the consumer, and one for which the hospitable proprietor receives little financial remuneration. Furthermore, extrapolating from Sharon Zukin's battle cry of “whose city? . . . and whose culture?” one could regard this gift as one made poignant by the increasing privatization of public space, together with its constraining force, on everyday life in the modern city.⁵³

Nevertheless, it is a gift one would expect to be freely exchanged among friends in the privacy of “your front room.” Friends, in this case, include different communities ranging from the “locals,” who Philippa says are “my bread and butter”; and “walkers,” who call in early in the morning for a coffee on their way to the cliff tops; to “a bit of a lesbian crowd,” who mostly come to the café at weekends. Furthermore, in these acts of hospitality, the café guarantees some rewards for the host — rewards that stretch beyond (or serve instead of) purely economic returns. For example, one's own need for sociability can be met at the same time as meeting those of others: “[Y]ou can do the same old jobs, you know, but if you're good at them, you can do them without thinking. You can still be chatting away. [laughter] Gossip, gossip, gossip [laughter].”⁵⁴

However, as with Mary-Anne's story, it should be remembered that the conditions that render this gift of homeliness possible are not unproblematic ones. The following comment from Jinks and an exchange between Philippa and Jinks indicate different ways of reviewing progress, weighing the costs, and anticipating future benefits.

JINKS: *[T]he very charm of Clovelly is that . . . it's . . . relaxed, laid back, and it's like a little . . . lost country town; that is the charm of Clovelly, and it's terrible for business. [laughter] So anyone in their right mind, you know, really wouldn't choose a site like this. . . . But Philippa thinks that . . . it's a sleeper and it's gonna come alive and it will get to the point where it won't be so much effort for us, but basically, you know, we're having to work much harder to earn our dollar.⁵⁵*

JINKS: *It'd be good, I mean it'd be good if you could get Philippa's hours down to a normal person's hours. She's working over sixty hours a week . . . to make it happen.*

PHILIPPA: *Eventually it will happen . . .*

JINKS: *Yeah, if . . . [your] hours got down and you broke even. Basically we're not. . . . But at the moment . . . you couldn't say you were doing it for the life-style, you're really investing in the future . . . where . . . you hope you might have a lifestyle. [laughter]*

PHILIPPA: *But I enjoy what I'm doing, so it's not as if I'm working for a life-style. I'm actually working my life-style into my job. It's a lovely, lovely thing to have . . .*

*people come and see what you're doing and see you . . .
[Meeting people's a fantastic way to live your life.*

JINKS: *Beats nursing. [laughter] Then they're all dying.
[laughter]*⁶⁵

Although the personal costs of running the business are high, the acts of “giving” this requires — long hours, reduced incomes, and a repertoire of repetitive domestic tasks required to produce “yummy food” and maintain homely spaces — do not go unrewarded.⁵⁷

Both women, as they reflect on their current projects, identify moments of potential for meeting their own needs directly, in contrast to the more mediated rewards of caring for others. For Mary-Anne, the work's creative imperatives and personal satisfactions are together expressed as “passion” — a “passion” that includes others' acknowledgment of her culinary expertise (“we're very passionate about what we do, we love to talk about it with our customers”). Meanwhile, for Philippa, these satisfactions are thought of as “life-style” — the intrinsic pleasures and challenges of everyday work, rather than present investment of money, time, energy and skills in the hope of future gratification (“I wake up at 5 o'clock in the morning. I go, OK, now what am I going to do today? . . . and my head's just spinning with ideas”).⁵⁸

In everyday acts of offering meanings of “home” in “public” spaces, there are spaces for both “passion” and “ideas.” According to de Certeau, these are, after all, the “ingenious ways the weak make use of the strong.”⁵⁹ In terms of the story this article traces, these are also clever ways of raiding tradition, generous expressions of giving and receiving pleasure, and sobering moments to acknowledge social power and its constraints.

TALES FOR A POSTINDUSTRIAL KITCHEN

It seems there is no need to mourn the “death” of the kitchen, cooking skills, and traditional country cooking as the loss of an “authentic” past, fixed in time and space and beyond retrieval in the West's so-called postindustrial age. Tradition, it seems, is available — on a plate — for simply the cost of its purchase. However, celebrations of a postindustrial future of slow food transformed into “gourmet” fast food, or of perpetual “eating out” in the “tribal” village, are not entirely unproblematic cultural performances. There are obvious political questions of who can afford to eat, whose labor makes this possible, and whose cultures are being consumed (indeed, cannibalized).⁶⁰ But there are also questions of whose histories and cultures are being privileged in these narratives of the “new.” In response to the current enthusiasm for purchasing “ethnic” (peasant) food and for café dining among the “classy and more often than not . . . ‘Anglo’-cosmopolitan eating subject[s],”⁶¹ one could easily turn to earlier

times — to accounts of medieval cookshops, for example, and to other places — cultures of “eating out” for all classes in mainland China and Hong Kong.⁶² In other words, when reflecting on nostalgic performances of cultural mourning or of “style,” it is important to question the tendency to privilege our own memories and histories, and it is essential to unpack their Eurocentrism. Thus, instead of viewing tradition as either a fixed (perhaps “exotic”) past to be raided for the present, or an equally fixed romanticized future vested in “lack,” this article has sketched images of tradition's flexibility and, through fragmentary tales of “lived experience,” images of the plurality of ways in which tradition is reinvented.

Luce Giard has presented this flexibility, this inventiveness, as a possible route between the dilemmas of “archaic nostalgia” and “frenetic overmodernization.” Between these two extremes:

*. . . room remains for microinventions, for the practice of reasoned differences, to resist with a sweet obstinance the contagion of conformism, to reinforce the network of exchange and relations, to learn how to make one's choice among the tools and commodities produced by the industrial era. Each of us has the power to seize power over one part of oneself.*⁶³

While Giard adopted a more celebratory tone toward “doing-cooking” than perhaps this article allows, her stress on “microinventions” is a useful one. The stories told here do not present these women simply as slaves to their positioning in class and gender relations and in those of ethnicity (or simply as appropriators of tradition on behalf of middle-class palates and identities). Likewise, the stories are not intended as definitive or representative ones. Instead, stories are both complicated and speculative, their details allowing reflection on broader questions of tradition, memory, and the everyday ways of negotiating power — of testing its limits. These are accounts subtly nuanced with women's cleverness at referencing the past in new ways, with their awareness of traditional knowledge and skills while demonstrating flexibility of application, and with their capacity to seek pleasure while acknowledging its constraints. “Passion” and “ideas” become leitmotifs of this inventiveness, along with a recognition of tradition's mobility. After all, according to Giard, “a culture that stops moving decrees its own death.”⁶⁴

For the kitchen professionals — architects, designers, urban planners — the analysis suggests the need to unravel meanings of diversity and their implications. Here I am referring to diversity not simply in the context of a wide range of food products or eating practices, but as an engagement with different meanings of “home” and spaces for “homely” interactions. “Home,” as this argument has shown, has elements of portability, whether the “homely” space is the view of the television from the couch, the comforts of a banquette at the “village” café, or the food talk over the purchase of apple crumble from the local provider of “meal solutions.” In

designing public and private spaces (houses, kitchens, cafés, restaurants, streets, plazas, parks), it seems important to take these diverse and flexible meanings of “home” into account, together with the closely connected ones of comfort, with all its inflections of remembering, dreaming and imagining.

The crucial question, however, is how to design convivial cities and comfortable homes, homes that encourage the sociability and intellectual challenge of a rich “public” life and cities that allow the intimacy and nurturance of a “good” home. Susan Parham, reflecting on the need for a variety of spaces for dining — public, private; indoors, outdoors — has

written: “It is clear that cities need to change. We need human-scale streets for pedestrians, a higher density of people and houses, public outdoor rooms and private indoor rooms that are good to eat and drink and converse in. Communal eating is absolutely basic to human life.”⁶⁵ Taking up Parham’s challenge, one might add the need to recognize tradition as a powerful, spatializing practice that does not necessarily demand conformity and fixity but, alternatively, might offer space for mobility and “microinventions.” At the same time, however, the purchases of its nostalgic products are not without their contradictory moments.

REFERENCE NOTES

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The Ontario Cottage: The Globalization of a British Form in the Nineteenth Century

LYNNE D. DISTEFANO

This article explores the spread of the diminutive, symmetrical, hip-roof cottage throughout part of the British Empire in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It documents and suggests the possible sources for this house form within a specific context (Ontario, Canada), and offers reflections on the issues of globalization and localization as they apply to this particular Ontario form.

The Ontario cottage is scattered across the countryside and clustered in towns and cities throughout the southern part of Ontario, one of Canada's oldest provinces. The story of how this form came to be built in Ontario, and how it then came to be seen as unique to Ontario, is a story of nineteenth-century globalization of a British house form.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the British military systematically established forts in present-day Ontario. English, Scottish and Irish settlers followed the military — some to engage in trade or provide professional services, but most to claim land and establish farms. French and American settlers were also part of the process, but their influence was confined to discrete areas along the southern border that was shared by Canada and America.

It is impossible to know who built the first Ontario cottage. However, it is reasonable to assume that both the British military and British settlers carried with them shared memories — if not architectural pattern books — of building forms that were part of the eighteenth-century Georgian tradition. These forms, with their ordered, symmetrical front elevations and snug hip roofs, had been built by the Royal Engineers throughout the empire, and by private owners throughout England, Ireland and Scotland. By the turn of the nineteenth century, features that were more “exotic,” such as the verandah (an element that was probably of Anglo-Indian origin), were incorporated into cottage design, and these, too, became an integral part of the Ontario cottage.

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THE ONTARIO COTTAGE

The Ontario cottage, at its simplest, is a symmetrical, single-story building with three bays. A door is placed squarely in the middle of the central bay, and windows are arranged symmetrically on either side of the doorway, usually near the middle of the end bays (FIG. 1). However, what most distinguishes the Ontario cottage is the shape of its roof — a hip roof. When a cottage has a square floor plan, such a roof assumes the shape of a perfect pyramid; when the plan is rectangular, the corresponding roof has a ridge.

Symmetry is only one aspect of the Ontario cottage. As a thoughtfully designed Georgian structure, the proportions of its front elevation, in particular, are carefully considered and regularized. These tend to be simple, and the typical relationship of building elements to one another is 1:2 and 1:3. The house is so basic in its tectonic qualities that it is intuitively understood, like the stereotypical child's drawing of a house.

Not all Ontario cottages are three-bay structures. In fact, some of the earliest cottages were graceful five-bay structures, frequently described as Regency cottages. Like its three-bay cousin, the five-bay cottage is also symmetrical and intuitively simple in its tectonics (FIG. 2). An extremely rare variation of the Ontario cottage is the seven-bay variety. The multibay barracks designed by the Corps of Royal Engineers may well have directly influenced this curiously long form.

The elevational symmetry of the Ontario cottage is often mirrored in its floor plan. A central hall frequently divides the

structure from left to right, and in the simplest cottage there are usually four rooms, two on either side of a central hall.

Sometimes, a cottage may have a central hall surrounded by rooms — two on either side and one at the back, making a total of five rooms (FIG. 3). Other floor plan variations exist, but whatever the variation may be, it tends to carry the common theme of bilateral symmetry and strong rationality in its layout.

The kitchen usually takes on the form of an added “tail” attached to the main block at the rear or, less frequently, at the side. There were practical reasons for having the kitchen built as a separate structure — heat and odors from cooking could be easily isolated from the main house, and in the event of a fire, the separation would provide a barrier. However, some cottages have their kitchens tucked neatly into the basement along with service rooms, including sleeping quarters for servants.

THE ONTARIO COTTAGE AND THE VERANDAH

An integral part of many Ontario cottages is the storm porch (less common) or the verandah (more common), both of which add considerable aesthetic appeal and provide useful additional spaces. The closed storm porch serves as an air lock to keep heat in during the cool months, while the open verandah extends the interior space into the outdoors during the warmer months.

Verandahs were used by families for a variety of activities — from resting and reading to enjoying family meals (FIG. 4). In

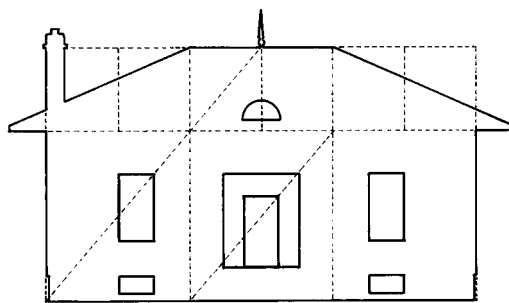


FIGURE 1. Typical three-bay cottage. Note the regularized relation of building components. Hoovey Cottage, Port Hope, Ontario. (Drawing by Lee Ho Yin.)

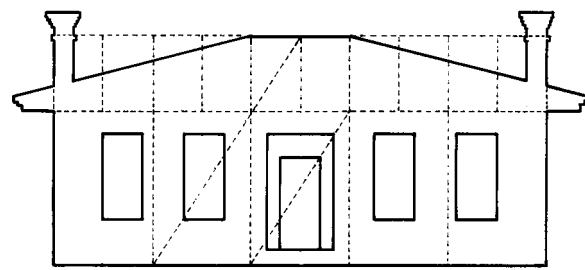
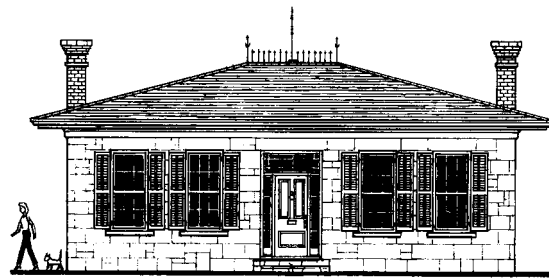


FIGURE 2. Typical five-bay cottage. Note the regularized relation of building components. Yerex Cottage, Guelph, Ontario. (Drawing by Lee Ho Yin.)

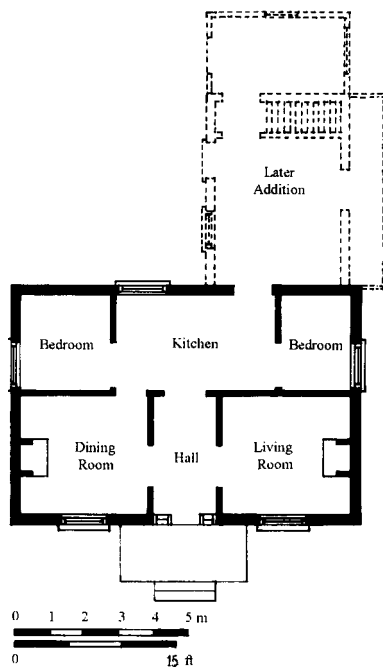


FIGURE 3. Typical cottage floor plan. Windrush Cottage, St. Marys, Ontario. (Drawing by Lee Ho Yin.)

1832, in a letter back to Ireland, a young settler by the name of Thomas Magrath described his family's wide Ontario verandah:

*We pass our leisure hours in it during the fine weather, choosing the shady, and sheltered side, according to the sun, or wind; and frequently sitting there with candles until bed time; with the occasional annoyance, however, of the troublesome moskitoes [sic]; — but where can we expect to find perfect enjoyment?*²

A year later, another early settler, Catherine Parr Traill, described her unfinished Ontario house to her family in England:



FIGURE 4. Cottage verandah. The Cresswells At Home (Cedar Creek, Harpurhey, Ontario). Photograph, c. 1870. (Private collection.)

*When the house is completed, we shall have a verandah in front; and at the south side, which forms an agreeable addition in the summer, being used as a sort of outer room, in which we can dine, and have the advantage of cool air, protected from the glare of sunbeams.*³

The use of the verandah, a building element most likely borrowed from Anglo-Indian architecture, demonstrates the network of influences that tied Ontario forms to more “exotic” countries within the British Empire. The use of the verandah outside British India was probably hastened by the English publication of illustrated histories of India and architectural pattern books that included Asian forms. John Plaw’s 1800 design for a dwelling “with a Viranda [sic] in the manner of an Indian Bungalow,” from his *Sketches for Country Houses, Villas, and Rural Dwellings* was one of the first pattern book designs to include a verandah, and of even more significance, to connect the verandah with the Indian bungalow.³

THE ONTARIO COTTAGE AND THE ANGLO-INDIAN BUNGALOW

Is there actually a connection between the Ontario cottage and the Anglo-Indian bungalow?⁴ The interesting tie between these two very different and yet similar building typologies is that both have connections with a common architectural heritage — the Georgian tradition. The relationship between the Ontario cottage and the Anglo-Indian bungalow is important to explore in some detail, as it raises the important issue about the flow of architectural ideas between distant places in the British Empire during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is only in examining the architectural roots of the bungalow that it is possible to understand the nature of the relationship, if any, between the Anglo-Indian bungalow and the Georgian cottage form.

The Anglo-Indian bungalow, a late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century house form, is thought to be a British adaptation of the Bengali peasant hut known as the *chauryari*, a square structure with a pyramidal roof (or a rectangular structure with a hip roof) that extends on all four sides to create a covered verandah.⁵ As Anthony King has argued, the British appear to have adapted the native house form as a prototype, and by doing so, created a unique form, which was at once Indian and English.⁶ However, a more fundamental question remains: why did the British choose to adapt this particular local house form, instead of the many others they came across in northern India? This is a point that has never been fully explored, and it can be argued that the Georgian cottage form might have been the catalyst that began the development of the Anglo-Indian bungalow.

The argument goes like this: the *chauryari*, with its thatch-covered, pyramidal or hip roof, could well have reminded early colonists of English cottage forms. An army officer, writing in 1803, described the army accommodation this way:

The Englishmen live in what are really stationary tents which have run aground on low brick platforms. They are 'Bungalows', a word I know not how to render unless by a Cottage.⁷

Such a comment suggests that the British found familiarity in the Bengali peasant hut, as it reminded them of the Georgian cottage. It was undoubtedly difficult for British colonists in India to build in their own architectural idiom, but here was a convenient local architectural tradition that uncannily resonated with memories of home. It was only a matter of expediency for the British to adapt a familiar house form and make it their own, and such is the power of the persistence of architectural memory, a phenomenon that occurs in every immigrant community.

And what about the verandah? In this case, the Anglo-Indian origin theory appears to have merit. Some of the earliest cottages in Ontario were constructed by Royal Engineers (this aspect will be discussed in greater detail in the next section), and it is probable that some of the engineers were familiar with the Anglo-Indian bungalow through their training in England or through their postings to other parts of the British Empire. If this was the case, it helps explain the close resemblance between many of the military-constructed cottages and the Anglo-Indian bungalow form, particularly in the use of the integrated verandah, which is a distinctive feature of the bungalow (FIG. 5).

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MILITARY

The Corps of Royal Engineers, the building arm of the British military, was responsible for

. . . the construction and repair of the whole of the Fortifications and Barracks, and of all the other Military Buildings in Great Britain and Ireland, as well as those of the Colonies of the British Empire. . . .⁸

The Royal Engineers were well trained for their work. The officers, in particular, were rigorously schooled at two separate institutions. Their training started at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich (England), where they received a “theoretical and mathematical education.”⁹ Their education continued at the Ecole d’application at Chatham (England) where

. . . the officer becomes a good practical Surveyor, and is instructed in the principles of Reconnoitring [sic], besides being practised in Military Drawing.

He goes through a Course of Instruction in all theoretical matters connected with the Art of Building, and is taught the principles of Carpentry, Bricklaying, Masonry, etc., and in short of [sic] all those arts which are necessary in the construction of Military Edifices.¹⁰

Rather frustratingly for this author, the Corps of Royal Engineers seems to have left no records documenting the reasons for its specific use of hip-roof forms for military structures. However, in Ontario, extant fortifications and those depicted in nineteenth-century graphic images clearly show the repeated use of hip roofs for a variety of military buildings, including gatehouses, barracks, officers’ quarters, and small defensive structures along the Rideau Canal. The following three examples may help illustrate the Royal Engineers’ widespread use of the symmetrical one-story hip-roof form in Ontario.

In 1799–1800, Government House, the residence of the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada (present-day Ontario) was built in Toronto (which was named “York” at this time). The building, a symmetrical nine-bay structure topped with a hip roof, was sited in the Toronto garrison and built to the design of Captain Robert Pilkington. As architectural drawings show, the ample residence had two deep wings extending from the rear of the main block, and each wing had an integrated verandah along its outer face.¹¹

In Kingston, the garrison included a residence for the Commissioner. Built before 1815, this residence — a five-bay hip-roof building — had an extensive verandah that wrapped around the front and sides of the building (REFER TO FIG. 5). Here, too, the verandah was integrated with the roof; in other words, the verandah and the rest of the building shared the same roof.¹²

Later, during the 1840s, thirteen “defensible lockmasters’ houses,” essentially three-bay hip-roof cottages with thick masonry walls and strategically placed loopholes (firing and observation ports), were built along the Rideau Canal.¹³ Unlike the other examples cited in this section, these sturdy structures were built without verandahs, but they were given spectacular views of the canal — technically, of course, for reasons of defense.

All three of the above examples show the consistency with which the Royal Engineers used the Georgian one-story hip-roof form for a variety of building types both for domestic and institutional purposes. Two of the examples also show the sophisticated incorporation of the verandah into military building design in Canada. The use of the verandah by the Royal Engineers is especially indicative of the transfer of architectural ideas among Royal Engineers from different parts of the empire, and particularly, it would seem, from the East.

Domestic architectural ideas, however, traveled to Ontario in more immediate ways, especially in the minds of early settlers and in the images found in a variety of architectural pattern books and emigrant guides.

THE INFLUENCE OF BRITISH SETTLERS: THE ENGLISH AND THE IRISH

It is a somewhat difficult exercise to establish which group of British settlers — the English, the Irish, or the Scots — was most responsible for the initial dissemination of the Ontario cottage in Canada.



FIGURE 5. Typical integrated verandah of a bungalow. Emeric Essex Vidal, Commissioner's Residence. Watercolor, 1815. (Courtesy of the Massey Library, Royal Military College of Canada.)

The English, in particular, had a long tradition of producing architectural pattern books, some of which included designs for utilitarian and ornamental cottages. Between 1790 and 1835, for example, more than sixty English and Irish architectural pattern books were published on domestic architecture, some of which included designs for cottages.¹⁴ The cottage designs featured in these books ranged from those of one story to those of one-and-a-half or two stories. Roof forms were as varied as the number of stories, but the majority were clearly based on the popular gable and hip roofs. However, for unknown reasons, the gable-roof cottage was more frequently featured in pattern books than its hip-roof counterpart, even though neither is specifically advocated. One notable exception was the seemingly more balanced use of both gable and hip roofs for estate gatehouses. This could well be explained by the almost perfectly square floor plan of many gatehouses, a shape most agreeably capped by a hip roof. For the purposes of this essay, it is instructive to understand the range of cottage designs through specific examples.

The first architectural pattern book to promote utilitarian cottage designs for laborers was John Wood's *A Series of Plans for Cottages or Habitations of the Labourer*, published in 1781. In his attempt to address the appalling housing conditions of the lower class in England, Wood designed a series of cottages, from single-room to four-room types. Interestingly, he included hip- and gable-roof options for the one-, three- and four-room designs, but used only a gable roof for the two-room designs.

Wood's designs for three-room cottages are of direct relevance to this article. "Plate XII" showed two three-room designs (FIG. 6). One of these, "No.2," was for a three-bay, hip-roof cottage with the entrance placed at the side — an unusual placement, but one that did not detract from the rigid symmetry

of the primary elevation. The significance of design "No.2" is that it marked the formal debut of the simple one-story, three-bay cottage with a hip roof in an early English pattern book.¹⁵

By the 1790s, pattern book designers distinguished between functional cottages for laborers and ornamental cottages intended for people of taste but limited means. For example, Charles Middleton, in *Picturesque and Architectural*



FIGURE 6. "Plate XII — Cottages with three Rooms," from John Wood, *A Series of Plans for Cottages or Habitations of the Labourer* (Westmead, Farnborough, Hant., England: Gregg International Publishers, 1972; orig., 1806), n.p. (Courtesy of the J.J. Talman Regional Collection, D.B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.)

Views for Cottages (1793), ignored the need for well-designed cottages for “the poorer sort of country people,” and concentrated instead on cottages “which are built at the entrance, or in different parts of parks or pleasure grounds.” His one-story, three-bay rustic cottages, some complete with thatched hip roofs and “rude trunks of trees” for columns, remain among the most aesthetically charming of the period (FIG. 7).¹⁶

This fascination with the ornamental cottage continued through the 1830s, while the simple laborer’s cottage, at least in England, received less and less attention. An exception to this shift was the 1805 publication of two pattern books by Joseph Gandy: *Designs for Cottages, Cottage Farms, and Other Rural Buildings*; and *The Rural Architect; Consisting of Various Designs for County Buildings*. The imaginative designs featured in these books, which employed refreshingly simple geometric forms, stood apart from the period’s penchant for more complex forms. One of his most delightful elevations was contained in the first cited book, *Designs for Cottages*. Here, in “Plate XII,” Gandy created a novel one-story three-bay cottage with a hip roof that included a “Piggery under the Steps,” and a “Cow-shed . . . under the same Roof as the Dwelling.”¹⁷ The functional adaptability of the cottage form was remarkable.

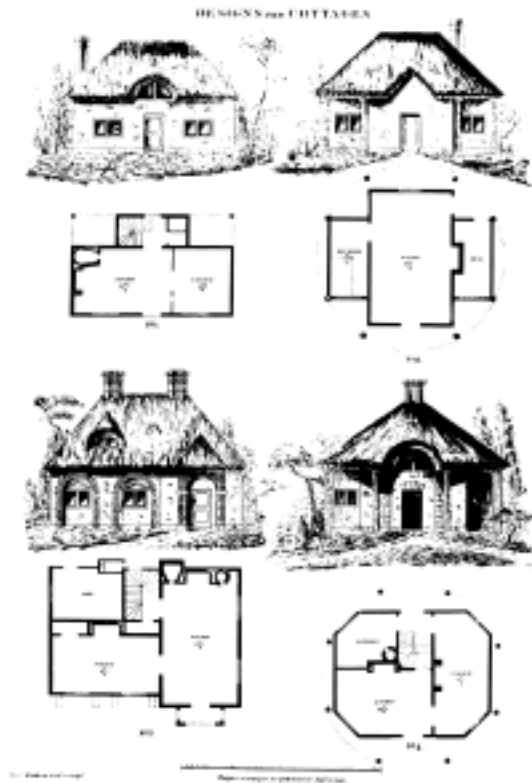


FIGURE 7. “Plate I — Designs for Cottages,” from Charles Middleton, *Picturesque and Architectural Views for Cottages* (Westmead, Farnborough, Hant., England: Gregg International Publishers, 1972; orig., 1798), n.p. (Courtesy of the J.J. Talman Regional Collection, D.B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.)

English architectural pattern books on domestic architecture also featured designs for essentially one-story hip-roof cottages with five bays. These cottage designs, very much in the Georgian tradition, clearly relate to the five-bay version of the Ontario cottage. One of the handsomest examples was contained in Richard Elsam’s *An Essay on Rural Architecture* (1803). This design — “Elevation of an Entrance front for a Gothic Cottage,” which includes an entrance portico with a room above — epitomized the regularity and order of the Georgian tradition in what appears to be, from the front, a one-story structure.¹⁸

In Ireland, there were at least two architectural pattern books published in the early nineteenth century that dealt with cottage design and construction. Under the patronage of the Farming Society of Ireland, William Barber published *Farm Buildings*, which could well have been the first Irish pattern book to address “a regular system of rural building.” Published in 1802, the author recommended “this Work to the consideration of the man of taste, whose eye seeks for gratification; and to the man of feeling, whose heart delights in the comfort and enjoyment of his neighbors or his tenantry.” Included among his designs was one for a small one-story, three-bay cottage with a hip roof, although in this example the entry was located in one of the end bays.¹⁹

Barber’s appeal to “the man of feeling” may have had some effect. Some 39 years later, Arthur C. Taylor similarly observed in his *Designs for Agricultural Buildings Suited to Irish Estates* (1841):

. . . many proprietors have given encouragement to their tenantry to build houses, etc., by granting leases and giving in part materials, etc.; but that as there exist no model plans suited to this country to erect from, these houses have been generally very defective in construction, and deficient in accommodation and convenience.²⁰

Taylor’s book, which included cottage designs for laborers and farmers, also offered a design for a farmhouse: “Plate XIII — Plan of a Farm House and Offices.” Although called a “Farm House,” the structure was actually an elegant hip-roof cottage whose three front bays, defined by “three flat arched recesses,” reflected the influence of Neoclassical ideas. The floor plan of the ample cottage, which measured 34 feet wide by 28 feet deep, included three bedrooms (two of which were so-called “slip” bedrooms), a parlor, and a kitchen. This cottage, with such sophisticated tectonic features as eaves “with a good projection,” inset paired chimneys, and a relatively low-pitched roof, would certainly have appealed to people of taste but limited means.²¹

It is hard to substantiate the degree of direct influence that English and Irish architectural pattern books had on cottages found in Ontario. However, the fact remains that many nineteenth-century Ontario architects were trained in Great Britain, and some of them possessed the most popular pattern books in their library collections.²² Notwithstanding the training of architects and their access to pattern books, it is reasonable to assume that English and Irish settlers in Ontario were familiar with Georgian house forms in their home countries.



FIGURE 8. (LEFT) Gate Lodge, Stubb House, Winston, near Darlington, Durham, England. (Photo by author.)



FIGURE 9. (RIGHT) Gate Lodge, Kinoith, Shanagarry, Cork, Ireland. (Photo by author.)

Another source of probable direct influence was the memory of those Georgian gatehouses that marked the entrance to the properties of landed gentry in England and Ireland (FIGS. 8, 9). In Ireland, in particular, gatehouses and other estate buildings would have been one of the best sources of Georgian design.

THE INFLUENCE OF BRITISH SETTLERS: THE SCOTS

Although the Scots produced relatively few architectural pattern books compared to the English, two of their books may well have had considerable influence on building practices in Ontario, and specifically on the production of three-bay cottages. The first was Robert Lamond's *A Narrative of the Rise & Progress of Emigration, from the Counties of Lanark & Renfrew, to the New Settlements in Upper Canada, on Government Grant*, which was published in 1821. The second book, J.C. Loudon's *An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture*, was first published in 1833.

Both books, essentially architectural pattern books (strictly speaking, the first book was a guide for emigrants), contained important elevations of symmetrical one-story cottages with three bays and hip roofs. The earlier publication, Lamond's *Narrative*, is an astounding document for understanding the possible "emigration" of the hip-roof cottage form through Scottish settlers. This slim book included an insert entitled "Designs for Cottages" that featured nine cottage designs, five of which were symmetrical three-bay, hip-roof cottages of one story. What is fascinating about the nine drawings as a whole is the way they were sequentially arranged — from the simplest design to the most complex. The first design was for a very basic conical-shaped structure, while the second was for a straightforward shed roof structure with a symmetrical façade. The third design was for a symmetrical gable-roof cottage with raised gable ends, one that was very Scottish in character.²³

The fourth design introduced the hip-roof form; termed a "Log-Cottage" or "Frame-House," it was a symmetrical cottage with four rooms on the main floor (FIG. 10). The fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth designs appeared to be slightly smaller variations of the "Log House." Each of these drawings, including the fourth, was distinguished by the application of different decorative details. These details included elements that anticipated the late-nineteenth-century American Stick Style, and most curiously, "rustic" elements such as columns decorated in the manner of "two trees in their natural state" and "trunks of trees."²⁴

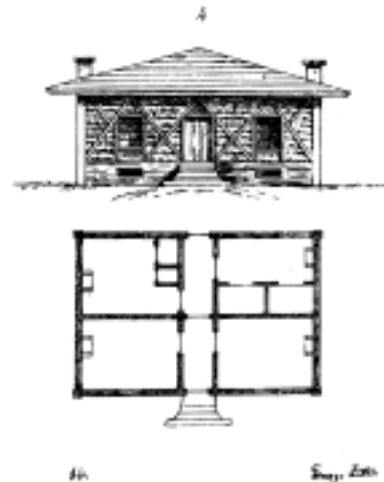


FIGURE 10. "Plate 4 — Plan and Elevation of a Log-Cottage, or Frame-House," in R. Lamond, *A Narrative of the Rise & Progress of Emigration, from the Counties of Lanark & Renfrew, to the New Settlements in Upper Canada, on Government Grant* (Glasgow: Chalmers & Collins, 1821), n.p. (Courtesy of Special Collections, D.B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.)

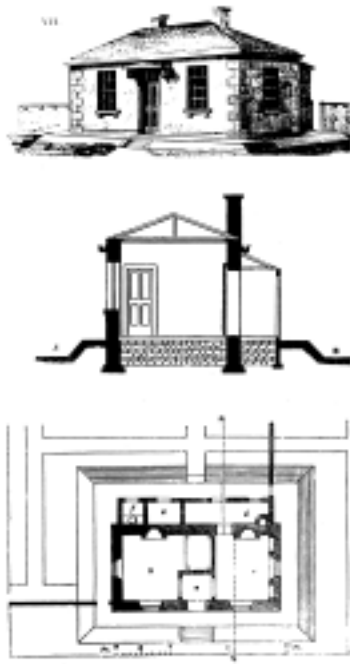


FIGURE 11. “Design VII,” from J.C. Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1853), p.34. (Courtesy of Special Collections, D.B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.)

The grandest of all was the ninth design, which called for a three-building master plan reminiscent of a three-part Georgian (Palladian) composition. The main cottage, located in the center of the composition, was flanked on either side by a hip-roof cottage of a similar size. However, these two cottages were slightly set back from the central cottage, creating the illusion of smaller and less important buildings, and thereby establishing a clear architectural hierarchy.²⁵

It is impossible to know how influential these designs were, but the fact that they were included in a guidebook for emigrants suggests that they were considered practical housing options for use in Ontario. The predominance of cottage designs using a hip roof further suggests that this cottage type, in particular, was the most favored.

J.C. Loudon’s *Encyclopaedia* has long been assumed to have been very influential in establishing architectural taste throughout the British Empire. In this extensive compendium of architectural designs, Loudon first concentrated on the design of modest cottages. As he made very clear in his introduction, his goal “is to improve the dwellings of the great mass of society.” In “Book I,” “Chapter I,” “Design I,” Loudon presented his first model design, which he described as “A Cottage of One Story, combining all the Accommodation and Conveniencies of which human Dwellings of that description are susceptible.” This model cottage was none other than the symmetrical three bay, hip-roof cottage. But like his predecessor Lamond, Loudon was not content to provide just one variation. For example, he created a variation of “Design I” by adding porch pillars, ornamental chimneys, and a parapet on the terrace. For “Design II,” which is based on “Design I,” he added a verandah, and to this variation, he added ornamental

chimney pots and “a light iron parapet to the terrace.” There are, throughout “Book I,” a number of additional model cottages using the hip roof. “Design VII” is among the most compelling of the variations because of the simplicity and boldness of its compact form (FIG. 11).²⁶

It is tempting to suggest that the Scottish influence in Ontario was most clearly seen in the proliferation of three-bay, hip-roof cottages, a form that comes closest to the prototypical three-bay Ontario cottage. Five-bay cottages, and those of even more bays, were probably more directly connected with the graceful English Regency cottage and the hip-roof military buildings constructed by the Royal Engineers. However, the situation is not clear-cut, as the three-bay, hip-roof cottage form was featured in English and Irish pattern books as well as adapted for gatehouses in England, Ireland and Scotland (FIG. 12; REFER TO FIGS. 8, 9).

THE CANADA FARMER AND THE PERSISTENCE OF SCOTTISH INFLUENCE

By the 1860s, the major influence for the persistence of the cottage form, especially in its three-bay guise, became clearer. In 1864, the first issue of *The Canada Farmer* was published. This periodical, which appeared until 1877, probably did more to promote the widespread use of the three-bay cottage in Ontario than any other publication in either Great Britain or Canada.²⁷ *The Canada Farmer* was primarily intended for the agricultural community, and dedicated itself to educating farmers in a number of areas, including farming practices and the design and construction of farm buildings.

The first section on architecture appeared in an early issue of *The Canada Farmer* — that of February 1, 1864 — under the heading of “Rural Architecture.” The first buildings to be included were “A Log House” and “A Small Gothic



FIGURE 12. Gate Lodge, Strathtyrum House, St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland. (Photo by author.)



A LOG HOUSE.



A SMALL GOTHIC COTTAGE.

FIGURE 13. (LEFT) “A Log House” from *The Canada Farmer* (February 1, 1864), p.20. (Courtesy of the J.J. Talman Regional Collection, D.B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.)

FIGURE 14. (RIGHT) “A Small Gothic Cottage,” from *The Canada Farmer* (February 1, 1864), p.21. (Courtesy of the J.J. Talman Regional Collection, D.B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.)

Cottage” (FIGS.13,14). The log house, a one-story three-bay structure with a gable roof, was “made tasteful” by adding a gable over the front door and a “rustic” verandah at the front. No floor plan was included for this house, as the intent was probably to improve the appearance of the ubiquitous log house that had been constructed for decades by emigrants.²⁸

The small Gothic cottage, on the other hand, which was a solid one-story, three-bay structure with a hip roof, was presented in both elevation and plan, and described in detail and with considerable enthusiasm (FIG.15).²⁹ The selection of a cottage for the first section on architecture is significant, especially given the broad range of house types included in later issues. Of even more significance is the reprinting of the cottage elevation and plan in a later issue — that of January 15, 1873. This was not standard practice, and it probably reflected the continuing popularity of the form throughout much of the province.

An intriguing aspect of the design for “A Small Gothic Cottage” is the very real possibility that it was designed by James Avon Smith (1832–1918), a Toronto architect, who was originally from Scotland. The documentation for this assumption is a little vague, but reasonable. The editorial for the first issue of *The Canada Farmer* commented that “Mr. Smith, a successful and rising Architect of Toronto, will make important contributions to the Architecture department.”³⁰ Whatever its immediate legacy, “A Small Gothic Cottage” perpetuated the image of the prototypical one-story three-bay cottage with a hip roof. In addition, this legacy bore the greatest resemblance to cottages included in Scottish architectural pattern books and found throughout Scotland.

THE ONTARIO COTTAGE: LOCALIZING A GLOBAL FORM

What sets the cottage in Ontario apart from cottages in Great Britain — and, indeed, from other parts of the British Empire?

Although its ancestry can be traced to the Royal Engineers, and to design influences from England, Ireland, Scotland and even India, cottage builders in Ontario showed



FIGURE 15. Plan for “A Small Gothic Cottage,” from *The Canada Farmer* (February 1, 1864), p.21. (Courtesy of the J.J. Talman Regional Collection, D.B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.)



FIGURE 16. *Carfrae Cottage, London, Ontario. (Photo by author.)*

a strong preference for one-story three-bay cottages capped by hip roofs (FIG.16). The probable reason for this was almost certainly economic, although the preference for the hip over the gable roof cannot be explained, surprisingly enough, on economic grounds. The hip roof, which is stronger than the gable roof under certain conditions, actually uses more framing materials.

In addition, and predictably, these cottages made use of an immense variety in building materials, ranging from wood framing faced with clapboard or stucco to structures built of brick, sandstone or limestone. Wood shingles or slates were originally used to protect roofs, although asphalt shingles have increasingly been used as a replacement material. The choice of building materials, until the late nineteenth century, generally reflected the availability of local materials. In addition, eaves, of varying depths, were used to give protection to the upper parts of walls. Likewise, storm porches, when built, offered protection during cold and wet periods, and the more prevalent verandah offered shade during the warm months.

Decorative elements were as varied as the range of building materials. Although the Ontario cottage form remains Georgian in its regularity and symmetry, the window, door and eave trim reflected both the Georgian and Victorian traditions, with a distinct predilection for Georgian, Neoclassical, Gothic and Italianate details. Early nineteenth-century cottages were excessively “polite” in their careful and conservative use of decorative trim — much like a proper English lady or gentleman. But by the mid-nineteenth century, with increasing influence from the United States, some trim came to assume a more exuberant American accent, especially in the use of ornate Italianate details.

Floor plans were as varied as the range of building materials and decorative styles. The typical cottage was one story, but the geography of Ontario created a class of cottages that might adjust to the terrain by becoming two stories at the rear or front, or even the side. The all-important kitchen, an

essential element of any Ontario cottage, was sometimes integrated within the main block of the cottage, although it was more frequently attached to the main block like the tail of the letter “T.” Within the main block, the kitchen might be found in the basement or on the ground floor; outside the main block, it might project to the rear or to one side. However, whatever the shift in the placement of the kitchen, the core of the cottage remained fundamentally symmetrical, both inside and out, its adherence to the ideals of the Georgian form unimpaired by concessions to functionality.

Does the adaptation of the Georgian cottage to Ontario conditions make the Ontario cottage uniquely Ontario? In many ways, the attempt by settlers in Ontario to adapt a British house form to suit such local conditions as the state of the economy, the availability of building materials, climatic considerations and the nature of the land form, did ultimately modify a house form sufficiently to produce an architecture that is distinctively “Ontario” in character. But the adaptation was by no means a conscious effort, and it happened over a considerable period of time. In the end, the cottage, as a house form, remained clearly Georgian, but it was Georgian with what can be called an unconscious local accent.

A LAST WORD ON LOCALIZATION

One Ontario cottage did exhibit a conscious attempt to try to be uniquely Canadian. Unfortunately, it appears to have existed only on paper. Sometime between the 1830s and the 1850s, the prolific Canadian artist Paul Kane (1810–1871) painted a hip-roof cottage, which one of his friends named “Paul Kane’s Wigwam.”

Although the cottage form was unmistakably British, it nevertheless did express in its localized name and in a distinctive detail the artist’s naïve desire to localize a British architectural form in Ontario. That detail is the head of a Canadian Native Person depicted on one of the door knockers. And however feeble it may seem today as an attempt in architectural localization, it did address the immediacy of the Ontario experience.³¹

Here, then, the Ontario cottage spoke beyond the predictable accommodation to local conditions — economy, materials, climate and terrain. Instead, the cottage acknowledged the local culture, in this case the culture of the Canadian Native People, and gave them pride of place — on the front door knocker.

The vast majority of builders and designers, of course, made no such literal attempt to localize the cottage form; instead, they relied on their own skills and knowledge to adapt, subtly and gradually, a global form to local conditions. In time, what was originally a foreign architectural form became so well assimilated to its adopted land that it became part of the local vernacular. Today, the Ontario cottage, as its very name implies, is part of the Canadian architectural tradition.

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31. *Paul Kane's Wigwam* is in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum. The title of the watercolor was written directly on the front of the work, although not in Kane's handwriting. This was not unusual; others frequently labeled his works. It has been suggested that the watercolor could well have been titled during the period when Kane became devoted to recording Native People in Canada (after the early 1840s). It also appears that the head of the Native Person could have been painted after the work was labeled, which suggests, perhaps, not only a later naming of the piece, but an even later incorporation of the door knocker design.



On Design

House Hunting, or I've Never "Lived" in My House

ANDRÉ CASAULT

Less than fifty years ago, the Innu of Unamen Shipu, a Northern Quebec native community, were still a nomadic tribe, hunting, fishing, and gathering food across the vast reaches of northeastern Canada. Since 1954, the year in which the government of Canada officially created an autochthon reserve at Unamen Shipu, the Innu have largely moved into permanent houses. This article begins by examining the relationship between the Innu and their reserve dwellings. It then presents an exploratory design exercise, the goal of which was to develop sustainable housing prototypes adapted to the Innu's present way of life. The exercise raised several interesting questions as to the persistence of tradition and the importance of place and territory in the design of dwellings.

The Innu once pursued a nomadic life-style across the vast unsettled lands of northeastern Canada.¹ More recently, the Canadian government has tried to encourage them to settle in permanent communities. Toward this goal, one important initiative was the creation of autochthon reserves.² The reserves were designed to serve as a temporary alternative to the nomadic native way of life, a kind of transition phase before the total integration of the Innu into Canadian society.

Created in 1954, the reserve of Unamen Shipu is located at a site (also commonly known as La Romaine) that the Innu had been occupying seasonally for thousands of years. Settling on the reserve meant the Innu could look forward to an easier life: permanent houses were built for the members of the community; local recipients of the Canadian government's welfare program began to receive monthly allowance checks; children were sent to school from September to July

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in the city of Sept-Îles, several hours away by boat; and a new church was erected, and the first Catholic priest came to live in the community. Unamen Shipu's population has grown from less than 200 in the 1950s to more than 800 today.

Although the majority of Unamen Shipu's population continues to take part in traditional activities such as hunting and fishing several months a year, they maintain permanent residences on the reserve. However, their houses were planned according to standard North American divisions — with a living room, kitchen, dining room, and two or three bedrooms. The living room contains a large bay window; the kitchen is of the laboratory type; and there is neither an entry vestibule nor an adequate place to install a wood stove on the ground floor (FIG. 1).

There has been little explicit criticism of these houses by the Innu, and the majority of community members, if not all, would not give up the comfort of modern homes. Televisions, washing machines and dryers, skidoos, and trucks are likewise consumer goods the Innu cherish — in the same way most North Americans do. However, upon visiting the reserve, one cannot help observe an implicit, but strong reaction against the North American-style housing. As far as the government is concerned, whatever problems the Innu have with these houses stem from a lack of maintenance. But might one not also interpret the strong reaction of the Innu against these houses as an expression of traditional and cultural vivacity?

The Innu have been alienated from their traditional way of life by a centuries-old relationship with the white man. Even today, they still encounter resistance when it comes to recognition of their traditional fishing and hunting customs. Much more importantly, recognition of ownership and jurisdiction over lands they have occupied and used for centuries is still a major issue.

During the first half of 1999 the author collaborated with members of the Innu community in their search for a more adequate and sustainable dwelling — a house that would correspond to and respect their way of life and their aspirations. A



FIGURE 1. *The House of Théo Mark on the reserve, a small house built soon after 1954 (this example has been renovated since). (Photo by André Casault, 1998.)*



FIGURE 2. *A large territory of relatively flat land, arid and austere, dotted by thousands of lakes and rivers. A land where conifers grow, and where, further north, the biggest trees are rarely taller than a man. (Photo by Louise Bellemare, 1999.)*

major part of this effort was a design exercise by sixteen students in the Cross-Cultural Design Studio at the École d'Architecture of the Université Laval, Quebec City. This article reports on that exercise in the winter of 1999. It has been structured to reflect the working organization of the design studio.

BEFORE THE RESERVES: THE NOMADIC LIFE

For thousands of years the Innu hunted and fished on the lands north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, near Anticosti Island. This huge territory, made up of thousands of square kilometers, is relatively flat, arid and austere. It is a land dotted by thousands of lakes and rivers and covered with conifer forests, where, toward the north, even the biggest trees rarely grow taller than a man (FIG. 2). The Innu believed this land did not belong to anybody — apart from the gods — and had no divisions. It was a land without limits, where moose and caribou (the Innu's main game) roamed in large numbers. Nothing and nobody put limits on the Innu's search for food. After all, wasn't it a territory nobody else wanted?

In their search for game, the Innu traditionally moved from site to site in small family groups. Depending on the availability of wild game, they would settle for a period of anywhere from a few days to a few weeks, but rarely longer. Two, three or four tents would form a campsite for about 20 to 40 people. The tents would be set up in a row along a riverbank or on the edge of a lake (FIG. 3).

When they became available, canvas prospector tents brought by European explorers replaced the Innu's traditional bark summer tents and caribou hide huts. Easier to use and lighter to carry, canvas, resistant enough, made life a little easier for the Innu. Their first canvas tents had the same cone or dome shape as their fur or bark shelters.³ However, the tents soon took on a rectangular form with a two-slope roof. Open at one end,



FIGURE 3. A few tents mounted in a row on the edge of a lake in the fall. (Photo by Louise Bellemare and Théo Mark, 1999.)

they were equipped with a small handmade wood stove during the winter. The stove was located near the entrance, far enough from the door to allow people to pass in and out easily (**FIG. 4**). The stove, and the chimney pipe that went out through a hole in the fabric above it, were made from sheet metal. This heating device was rather small and light, making it easy to carry. A little bit of sand put inside the stove corners prevented the wooden legs from becoming too hot and burning the floor.

A further remarkable aspect of the Innu tent was its floor. Called *sapinage*, it was made of fir boughs, and could be more than a foot thick in winter (although during other seasons it was usually half as deep). During winter, the snow-covered ground was first carefully packed down. Then large fir branches were laid down with the inside of the branch curve facing the snow. This first layer was next covered with smaller fir branches, and finally the entire assemblage was covered with carpets. Originally, the Innu covered their floors with caribou furs, but the introduction of the *utatnun* (a box-like long and narrow sleigh attached to the back of a skidoo) made it relatively easy for the Innu to transport luggage (**FIG. 5**).⁴ A floor



FIGURE 4. A canvas tent viewed from the inside, with the stove near the entrance. (Photo by André Casault, 1998.)



FIGURE 5. Skidoos in front of a campsite (the *utatnun* is pulled by the skidoo second to the left). (Photo by Louise Bellemare and Théo Mark, 1999.)

constructed in this manner provided excellent insulation from the cold, and turned the most uneven ground into a flat, soft, and very comfortable surface. However, no description of this floor would be complete without mention of its extraordinary, permeating fragrance. Who has not smelled the wonderful aroma of freshly cut fir branches?⁵

Traditional practice was to pack snow again the outsides of the tent for insulation from the cold. On the inside, bedclothes, blankets, small mattresses, and clothing would be carefully tied up on the tent walls during daytime (**FIG. 6**). Not only did this help keep heat in, but it provided a very comfortable surface to lean back on!

The actual fabric of the tent — the canvas — further contributed to the special interior atmosphere. Since the canvas was white (or natural light beige) and translucent, it allowed light to filter in. On nights when the moon was full, the inside of the tent would be slightly illuminated. Another interesting characteristic of the tents was that exterior noises could be heard inside. These features brought the living space into close contact with surrounding nature.



FIGURE 6. Things are carefully tied up along the interior walls of the tent. (Photo by Louise Bellemare and Théo Mark, 1999.)



FIGURE 7. Aerial photograph showing La Romaine and its two settlements, ca. 1985. The spot in the middle is the Innu reserve. Underneath it is the white people's village on the peninsula. (Photo courtesy of Ministère des Ressources Naturelles du Québec.)

The traditional tent is still used today by the Innu for hunting and fishing expeditions. Families sometimes also set up camp near the reserve to trap animals such as beaver, lynx, seals, foxes, wolves and martens — either for their meat or their fur. Alternatively, Innu may visit the camps for a few days, or even just for a few hours, to relax and be closer to nature.

THE RESERVES: THE FIRST HOUSES

Reserves were initially created for Quebec's autochthon population to concentrate them in a smaller area. Since colonial times, the Catholic Church had been interested in concentrating the autochthon population to facilitate its evangelization efforts. Concentration also served the interests of the allochthon population (the white people), who had become aware of the many resources in Canada's vast north-east. Wood was one of the first resources to interest the white community. (To be precise, fur was the first resource the whites were interested in, but they were dependent on the natives to obtain it.) In the case of Unamen Shipu/La Romaine, men from the south were also interested in the local hydroelectric potential and in the area's mineral resources.

For several decades the Innu had been pushed further and further north, far away from the cities. Because of its isolated location, the creation of a reserve at La Romaine came quite late, compared to certain other sites. Even today there are no roads leading to La Romaine. The great number of lakes and rivers in the region and its low population density make roads extremely costly to build. Located several hundred kilometers from the nearest road-serviced village, in summer one has to take a boat or plane to reach the settlement. But in winter things are different. After the lakes and rivers freeze over, it becomes much easier, if not a pleasure, to circulate. Nearly everyone uses a snowmobile or skidoo to get around, and over-snow routes are well maintained and marked.

As already mentioned, La Romaine had served as a site for seasonal Innu gatherings for many centuries. When large families came and fished together near the Unamen River, it was often the occasion for great festivities. Attracted by such large gatherings, trading companies saw the chance to exchange a variety of goods with the native people, and the site gradually became a trading post — called Nitassinan by the traders.⁶

Today, the settlement of La Romaine is made up of two distinct villages that coexist side by side.⁷ To the west lies the allochthon or "white" village; to the east, that of the Innu (**FIG. 7**).



FIGURE 8. A road, a few houses, and the church in the western part of La Romaine. (Photo by Louise Bellemare and Théo Mark, ca. 1993.)

The allochthon village is a rather spontaneous settlement where all the houses are different from one another. They stand on lots that may or may not be bordered by fences, and the village as a whole is criss-crossed by a few narrow streets that hug the contours of the landscape. It is clear in the allochthon section of La Romaine that the houses have been built and progressively transformed by their owners, with every action under control of the inhabitants. When we made our initial survey of the village in early November, however, the wind was quite strong, and it was also clear that vegetation has an extremely difficult time. Nothing luxurious was growing around the houses. Only simple natural vegetation has a chance to survive in such a climate (**FIG. 8**).

Street layout and housing design are very different in the autochthon part of La Romaine (the allochthon village is not part of the reserve). The streets here are aligned and form a gridiron pattern. They are also much wider and bordered by ditches (**FIG. 9**). Many houses are identical. In fact, after a quick walk around the Innu settlement, it became apparent that the couple of hundred houses on the reserve had all been built in four or five styles. In addition, all the houses are set back more or less the same distance from the street, and are equidistant from one another. It is obvious that the whole site



FIGURE 9. A dirt street on the reserve bordered by ditches, with the houses well aligned. (Photo by André Casault, 1998.)

was bulldozed prior to construction, since it is all sandy or covered by a scarce and fragile vegetation.

Around the houses, one frequently sees small sheds or hangars, which have largely replaced the traditional conical tents (**FIG. 10**). Skidoos and canoes are stored in yards or in the sheds and hangars, which are also often used to repair them. A small piece of land, just at the back of the house, is frequently reserved for preparation of traditional bread, or *Innu pakueshikan*.⁸ Women cook this bread directly in the hot sand. A few clotheslines can be seen here and there. At the back of many houses, wood is stacked for the stove.

In addition to their use as storage places, elderly people sometimes use the sheds or hangars as “retreats” — or less often, as secondary houses. The sheds and hangars have the same dimensions as the canvas tents, and the Innu usually install a small handmade wood stove in them and spread a few old carpets on the floor. The elderly like to meet there to smoke a pipe, chat with friends, or repair fishing nets, snowshoes, etc.

In the Innu part of La Romaine it is very rare to see fences around lots. The typical North American lawn is also practically nonexistent.⁹ In fact, only a few families have even attempted to landscape the areas surrounding their houses.¹⁰ Marks of territorial appropriation seem to be more temporary than permanent. As a result, without the obvious and clear street pattern and the rigid alignment of houses, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to recognize the limits of any plot areas. In reality, plots do not belong to individuals, but to the tribe. The band legally owns the land.¹¹ Demonstrations of property limits are therefore relatively absent. In fact, it would be interesting to take an aerial photograph of the reserve in the winter, just after a snowfall, to see how people circulate from house to house and in and out of the reserve, walking or using skidoos. Such a photograph would probably confirm what we saw during our November survey: that pedestrian paths and small all-terrain-vehicle trails totally ignore official plot divisions — at least the ones that exist on paper.

Access to the houses, themselves, is generally by means of wooden stairs and small balconies or porches, designed and constructed quite simply. Sometimes, on the porch roof or balcony, people will install a few poles to be used to dry



FIGURE 10. At the back of a house, an all-terrain vehicle, a traditional tent, a skidoo, and a small shed. (Photo by Louise Bellemare and Théo Mark, ca. 1993.)



FIGURE II.
A roofed porch with a few poles used to hang small game or pieces of meat. Also notice the high level of the ground floor. (Photo by André Casault, 1998.)

small game or pieces of meat (**FIG. II**). There are no carports or garages. If people own a car or truck, they park it in front of their house or just beside it.

Because they must be built on deep foundations (a depth of at least five or six feet must be reached to get beneath freezing level), every house has a basement (a very common way of building in Canada). The first level above ground is also quite high (**REFER TO FIG. II**). Yet in most cases the basement is practically empty, except for a wood-burning stove. The elderly may use this space to prepare caribou hides and dry caribou meat. Alternatively, this space may be claimed by teenagers, who like to play their loud music without disturbing their parents (too much), and where they can have their own private entrance.¹²

Inside the houses, people usually gather in the living room. In a typical living room one may see a sofa, a television set, a carpet, and nothing (or almost nothing) on the walls. In the bedrooms, wardrobe doors have often been removed, and there are no clothes hanging on hangers; clothes are instead stacked in the corners of the room. Very often the only piece of furniture in a bedroom is a mattress on the floor. These rooms seem to be underutilized.¹³

Usually, a kitchen is the space in a house where food is prepared and cooked, and where, in some cultures, people eat. It is therefore the space in a house where the dwelling habits of a given culture are most strongly expressed. However, the kitchens in the autochthon houses of La Romaine, are of the laboratory type. They are neither adaptable nor flexible; the counters are too high for most of the women; and the space is too small to allow more than a few people to be there at the same time. It would be impossible — or at the very least very difficult — to properly and safely install a wood stove.

All building supplies come from outside the reserve, and they must be ordered months in advance. Most of the time they are delivered by boat. As with all other imported goods, construction materials are expensive. This definitely has an impact on the quality of the general maintenance of houses in La Romaine.

One does not need to have much experience to realize that the design of these houses has simply been imported from the south. One can recognize no attempt to adapt these houses to the Innu way of life. In fact, the layout of the reserve, as well as the design of the houses, was planned by outsiders from the Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation or the Ministry of Indian Affairs.¹⁴ Until now no participatory process has preceded the design or construction of dwellings on the reserve. What kind of control, if any, do the Innu have over the construction of their settlement and dwellings?

THE DESIGN EXPLORATION: OUTLINE AND UNDERLYING PREMISES

In response to this situation, the Université Laval design studio sought to discover the basis for a sustainable dwelling better adapted to the Innu's contemporary way of life. The studio and the research that underlay it were based on three major premises. First was that house form is greatly influenced by a community's culture and daily life. Second was that Innu socio-cultural aspirations should play a very important role in shaping dwelling form. Third was that it is extremely important for the Innu to regain some measure of control over design, construction and transformation so that their houses may once again reflect their particular needs.

These three premises and the design studio's general structure and activities derived from my own experience in teaching design in cross-cultural situations. They also derived from a diverse set of theoretical works. Among them were those by John N. Habraken on the importance of syntax, territorial boundaries, and control concepts and rules versus space deployment; by Christopher Alexander on rules and design patterns; by Amos Rapoport on the influence of culture and domestic activities in modifying house form; and by Augustin Berque on the ethical notion of territorialization/deterritorialization in association with the Innu's relation to their natural and built environment.¹⁵

The design studio began by having the students research the topic thoroughly. All aspects of the subject were investigated: the life of the Innu in primitive times; their lives during the colonial period; the history of the reserve; the nature of the first permanent houses and of the current ones; and the existence of precedents (either similar projects, if any, or other people's experiences of the transition between a nomadic and a sedentary way of life).

After the research, the first phase of the design process consisted of a search for principles or patterns that could be used to define rules to guide the design of the first prototypes. The objective was to help the designers (here, the stu-

dents in a learning process) by giving them guidelines. These would ensure that Innu cultural traits were respected during the design exercise, thus helping to create a certain uniformity between the prototypes proposed.¹⁶

After they were formulated, the rules (we called them “rules of deployment”) were presented to a few members of the community for discussion and evaluation. They were then experimented with during a quick exercise session — about a week — during which the first sketches were produced. During a meeting and a few informal discussions, the sketches were presented and discussed, and comments were given to reorient the design work.

Throughout, particular effort was made to encourage the students to follow the rules (the general tendency among the students was to revert to their habitual and much more idiosyncratic methods of design). This was not particularly popular in the beginning.

Toward the end of the studio, intermediary and final design proposals were produced and evaluated with the participating community members. Sixteen prototypes were prepared (sets of drawings and models) to be presented to the entire community for discussion.

THE RULES OF DEPLOYMENT

For about a week, the students worked in groups of four to explore four different categories of rules. The first category consisted of rules regulating the large-scale relationship between the dwelling and the site, and it involved consideration of such concerns as orientation to sun and wind, overall configuration, and relationship with neighbors. The second category was made up of rules regulating indoor activities, such as sleeping, cooking, eating, working and playing. The third category dealt with rules regulating the narrow relationship between the house, its immediate surroundings, and outdoor domestic activities. Concerns here included access, entry, threshold, view (through windows and other openings), light, etc. The final category consisted of rules regulating construction. These last had to do with such important issues as building materials and techniques, labor skills, maintenance, transportation, feasibility and sustainability.

As mentioned before, the students defined the rules after thoroughly researching the subject and according to observations made while visiting Innu campsites and houses on the reserve. The following enumeration of rules is by no means exhaustive. Rather, it lists the most important — those that were most often used in the design process. Since the studio concentrated mainly on the design of the dwelling, I will introduce these rules first. I will then mention the rules guiding construction.¹⁷

One of the most important rules the studio proposed dealt with the development of a large, central and versatile room. This room should be located on the main floor, be

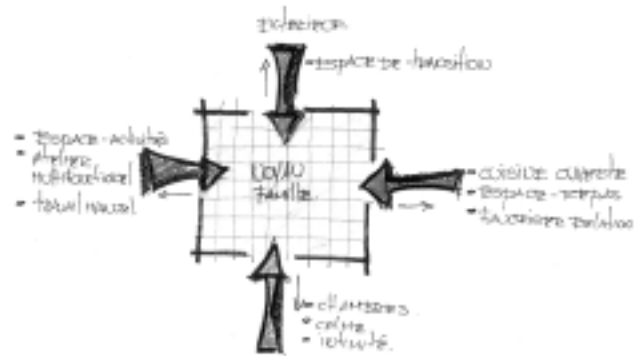


FIGURE 12. An example of a rule: the need for a central room. (From the rules elaborated by Karine Fournier, Marie-France Biron, and Karine Simard, students from the Cross-Cultural Design Studio, winter 1999.)

well connected to other rooms in the house, and be large enough to accommodate a large family gathering (FIG. 12).

A second important rule concerned the presence and location of a wood stove. I have already described how wood stoves were situated in Innu tents. While visiting the reserve we also observed the place they occupied in shelters people built behind their houses. Based on these observations, it was decided that the house should be able to accommodate a wood-burning stove and everything that goes with it (proper base, tools, wood bin, etc.). The stove must be in a central location, convenient for family gatherings. Furthermore, it must be close enough to the cooking area so that meals could easily be prepared on it.

Another important rule the studio formulated had to do with house access. It specified that at least one access (if not two) should be via a large enclosed vestibule, big enough to allow two or three people dressed in heavy winter clothes and boots to come and go from the house together. This hall should have two doors to create an “airlock” type of space. Such an arrangement would prevent heat loss from the house and limit the intrusion of wind and snow. The hall should also be large enough and adaptable enough to contain a large freezer and a deep maintenance sink.

Another rule concerned the “transition space” linking such halls or vestibules with the surroundings and nature. It was felt to be particularly important that house entrances be as close as possible to ground level (i.e., that the main floor of the house be in close relation with the exterior, neither too high nor too low). A low entrance would create problems with snow during the winter, and a high entrance was undesirable for the elderly. Furthermore, every room in the house should have a good view of the outside in order to allow the residents to be in close contact with their surroundings and easily feel daily and seasonal transformations, as well as changes in the weather.

Yet other rules dealt with the floor and the character of sitting rooms. It was determined that flooring materials in the Innu houses needed to accommodate a wide variety of activities. For example, the Innu usually prepare their furs in the house, and the floor must be durable and easy to wash. While in their tents, the Innu sit on the comfortable *sapinage* floors, and in much the same way they also often work, play, watch television, or simply chat with friends while sitting on the floor in their houses. The layout of rooms and the design of floors must therefore allow comfortable floor-sitting areas where the Innu could still be in contact with people involved in other activities in the house, and with the outside. Contacts with the WC, however, should be minimized. The Innu (as they willingly admit) are rather prudish. The toilet and bathroom should therefore be segregated from the main room of the house, and in retreat from other activities.

Rules were also written on work space(s), cooking and sleeping areas, and storage devices. Spaces that are convenient to use for all traditional Innu activities, with the appropriate dimensions and surfaces, should be integrated into the house or be very easily accessed from it. Rooms should be set aside for the repair of skidoos, canoes, fishing nets, etc.; for the preparation of skins (tanning, drying, smoking and cutting); and for sewing mittens, moccasins, and other objects. Cooking areas should be flexible and adaptable in order to allow different traditional cooking methods. And, as mentioned, the wood stove must be installed so as to be accessible for different cooking activities. By contrast, sleeping areas should be in retreat from the main activity area of the house, but they did not necessarily need to comprise separate rooms. Standard North American bedrooms seem underutilized, at least during the daytime.

Many cultures store clothes differently than Western cultures. The Innu are no exception to this and do not seem fond of the standard North American wardrobe. Perhaps they simply needed a different storage device. For this reason the students were encouraged to explore other storage systems that would be better adapted to the needs and traditional habits of the Innu — for example, the way they store their clothes and other objects in their campsites.

Other rules emerged with regard to house shape and size. The most important of these was that the overall house shape should be simple and economical, with a two- or four-slope roof. The house must also be energy efficient, and its shape should not create any undesirable accumulation of snow around it (for example, making access difficult). The proposed prototypes should further be of approximately the same size and price (or less expensive) than the ones presently built on the reserve. By no means should they be bigger or more expensive.

Finally, the studio established a few rules concerning building methods, construction techniques, and construction materials. Among these were that all building methods and construction techniques should be easily applicable in and by the community. Maximum participation of local manpower should be encouraged. Building supplies should be easy to transport by boat (neither too heavy nor too big). And building elements and

components needed to be easy to maintain and repair, and must be easy to access when replacement became necessary. Finally, construction materials should be ecological and sustainable.

The above rules, as defined by the students, were presented to members of the community and to a group of teachers for discussion and evaluation. A final selection of the appropriate rules was then made and used in the elaboration of the first sketches.

THE FIRST SKETCHES

The students were required to use the rules elaborated. In teams of two, they were given a week to prepare their first sketches. On the one hand, the rules served as “runway lights” or “beacons” to guide the designers’ work. On the other hand, the relatively short time allotted to this phase brought a dose of spontaneity and intuitiveness to the process, which we believed was a good complement to the rational aspect of the rule method (and perhaps its shortcoming).

Following the short design period, the first sketches were presented and discussed at the school of architecture, with a few residents of La Romaine and teachers present. The residents who participated had the mandate to bring the sketches back to the reserve and present them to a small group of people interested in the project. The sketches were also discussed informally with friends and relatives. Neither the teachers nor any architects or construction professionals were supposed to take part in these discussions. The intent was that the evaluation would be as free of outside influences as possible. Professional advice and consultation would be reserved for a later phase.

Sixteen schemes (one per student) were prepared during the sketch phase. In the paragraphs below, I will describe the main characteristics of these schemes, what made them stand out, and what aspects raised the most discussion among our Innu “clients.”¹⁸ Some schemes reflected one or several facets of the traditional setting (the campsite) — among these were the conical roof, the circular plan, and the use of local construction materials such as log walls. Some others were more influenced by the settlement as it exists today and the way the Innu live in it. These schemes were more contemporary in their approach, and often integrated modern reinterpretations of tradition with complex forms (for example, several had flat or sloped roofs, large glass openings, or a fashionable look). Still others took a more “modest” approach, and were more preoccupied with creating interesting spaces for domestic activities. Generally, these last schemes featured simpler house shapes.

The houses proposed had one or two stories; some had basements, others not. Some had mezzanines incorporated in their design. Some schemes had a pit around the wood stove in the central room, while others proposed a long built-in bench along the wall. Some had vestibules; others not. Some proposed a flat ceiling, while others left the roof structure visible, generally with a sloped ceiling. Some had built-in tables and seats in the kitchen. A variety of bedroom

layouts were presented — some enclosed, some set apart from the rest of the house. Certain houses had a patio or a terrace, and some had a shed or a small hangar in the yard.

To the great disappointment of my students, all complicated shapes, either for the house itself or for the roof, were discarded. Fashionable designs and new and sometimes inventive or intriguing design ideas (often put forward by good students) were not discarded, but simply ignored — at least the ones that seemed to derive from an architectural “culture of taste.”¹⁹ Flat-roof dwelling schemes were rejected, as if a dwelling could not be lived in if it had a flat roof. One-story houses were preferred to the two-story ones, while houses with mezzanines were seen as a curiosity and raised a certain amount of interest. The design of outdoor elements such as patios or terraces did not seem to attract any interest or attention.

The schemes that were most popular among the Innu were the simplest: a simple rectangular shape, a two or four-slope roof, a relatively “plain” appearance. My students were not depressed, but almost. I remember some of them saying: “What the Innu really want are the bungalows they are presently living in!”²⁰ In fact, the resemblance between their bungalows and the schemes they chose was striking, but not surprising!

Looking more closely at the selections made, it became obvious that they were greatly influenced by what the Innu were familiar with in terms of dwellings — what they have been exposed to in real life (in contrast to just seeing on television), that is to say, canvas tents and bungalows. At this stage, I had to make a choice. I could either leave the students free to design houses they would themselves like to live in (and me as well in some cases!), and more or less ignore the wishes of our clients; or, and this is what I decided to do, we could stick to our initial objectives, and I could ask the students to develop simpler-shaped dwellings. The focus had to be on finding the right solutions to the Innu’s spatial needs for traditional and domestic activities and to better develop and clarify the design of details.

All this said, I must point out that many features presented by the students in these first sketches were seen as being very positive, such as the design of central living areas, the space allocated to wood stoves, and the consideration given to house access and the need for vestibules. Nevertheless, most of these ideas had to be refined and developed in more detail.

FINAL PHASE

Using the first sketches and comments we received from the community, we continued to work in the direction mentioned above, developing each scheme.²¹ I was very encouraged by the improvements brought about by the students. They had obviously seriously thought things through. Unfortunately, community members did not participate in this intermediate review. We simply had a few telephone conversations during which they were made aware of the general orientations that the design of the prototypes had taken.

At the final review, at first glance the different schemes may have appeared little more than standard (and elegant!) bungalow designs. However, for me, for my students, for our guest reviewers, and, most importantly, for our clients, the reaction was very different: they were “special bungalows.”

In fact, looking at each proposed prototype individually, one noticed that special emphasis had been given to the planning of the houses. Great care had been given to such features as entrance halls, the central room with its wood stove, the working place, sleeping areas, storage devices, and exterior sheds and their link with interior spaces. The accompanying illustrations briefly present an overview of the final prototypes (FIGS. 13–17).



FIGURE 13. (TOP) The plan of a proposed prototype, with two large vestibules, a large central room, a wood stove between the kitchen and central room, a sleeping area in the retreat, and a hangar next to the house. (Project by Frédéric Bataillard, Cross-Cultural Design Studio, winter 1999.)

FIGURE 14. (BOTTOM) Two elevation drawings showing the two-slope roof, the simple shape of the house, and the hangar next to it. See the plan in Figure 13. (Project by Frédéric Bataillard, Cross-Cultural Design Studio, winter 1999.)

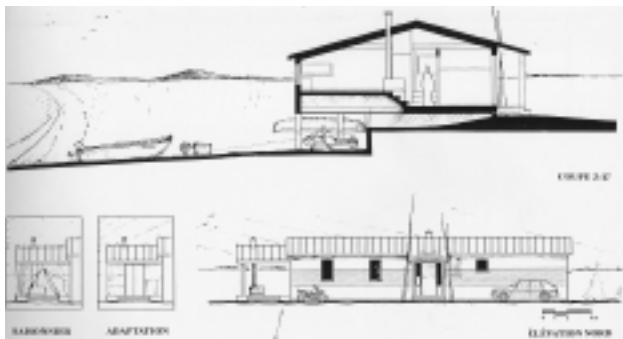


FIGURE 15. (TOP) Another plan showing the main vestibule leading to the central area, which is slightly elevated, with the wood stove in the middle. In this scheme, the second vestibule is equipped with a stove and can be used as a working space. Here, the bedrooms are more conventional. (Project by Pierre Duguay, Cross-Cultural Design Studio, winter 1999.)

FIGURE 16. (MIDDLE) Section and elevation drawings showing the general shape of the house the use of the crawl space underneath the house, and the elevated central room. See plan in Figure 15. (Project by Pierre Duguay, Cross-Cultural Design Studio, winter 1999.)

FIGURE 17. (BOTTOM) A model showing the central translucent vestibule linking the hangar to the left with the main body of the house, including the kitchen and central room, to the right, and the sleeping pavilion at the back. (Project by Karine Fournier, Cross-Cultural Design Studio, winter 1999.)

NEXT STEPS

A design process such as that described above is very slow. The sixteen models were recently shipped to Sept-Îles and presented to three Innu band councils, including the Innu chiefs of Unamen Shipu. The work must still be pre-

sented and discussed with the local population. This should be followed by construction of a one-to-one scale model. A first prototype will be built and tested . . . someday!

Obviously, this rather simple and short first-phase exercise could not lead us (or anyone) to any profound conclusions. The problem is extremely complex, and a great deal more investigation and experimentation must be undertaken, in close relation with the Innu, before any lasting solutions can be found. A lot remains to be done. However, both the “designers” and the “clients” have now learned to work together, defining vocabularies and clarifying objectives. For the time being, the Innu are much more concerned (and rightly so) with self-government and control over their territories.

THE END OF TRADITION(?), DETERRITORIALIZATION(?), A PLACELESS CULTURE(?)

Autochthons are fighting all over the world for recognition, struggling to define themselves in an increasingly globalized milieu. In their fight, however, they have turned to aboriginal people in other countries and to the United Nations for support, and the definition of their traditions and culture now must pass through an international “filter.” The way in which they perceive and therefore define themselves must necessarily now be much vaster than the limits of their own territory.

It would be highly unrealistic to think that the Innu could go back to their traditional way of life. However, although their complete assimilation into the mainstream of Canadian society is highly possible, it is not inevitable. It is not inevitable if the Innu themselves, as many other cultural groups in the world, fight for the recognition of their way of life, fight for their own self-government. Basically, it comes down to nothing less than the right to be different. New means of communications (television, Internet, etc.) globalize this fight, while at the same time underlining the importance of differences.²²

The built environment is perhaps becoming more uniform worldwide. This uniformity cannot be enriching if it results in everyone giving up cultural specificities, and even idiosyncrasies, in an attempt to follow the strongest and most influential ones. This uniformity can, however, also be rich, vast, complex and diverse if we let it be. It all depends on us.

In coming years the Innu of La Romaine will continue to be able to define themselves geographically and territorially. But to do so, they need to take full control of their built environment. Control over the deployment of the built environment is the major guarantee that the dwelling form will correspond to a local culture — whatever it is.

Of course, as is the case with every other group, the Innu will have to find their place, explicitly and implicitly, in relation to an increasingly vaster world. This part of the redefinition of their identity is placeless. Their “house hunting” will continue.

REFERENCE NOTES

1. In this article the terms native people and autochthon are used to describe the type of ethnic group to which the Innu of Unamen Shipu belong. The Innu and all the other autochthon groups of Canada are so called because they are considered to be the first inhabitants of Canada, having been established long before the arrival of the first European settlers.
2. Please refer to *Les indiens montagnais du Québec: entre deux mondes* (Paris: Les Éditions Sépia, Musée de l'homme, 1995), pp.11–34.
3. To see a few examples, please refer to H. Bédard, *Les montagnais et la réserve de Betsiamites 1850–1900* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1979; Collection Edmond-de-Nevers, 1988), p.61.
4. The difference lies in the fact that the furs were not brought back to a permanent storage site when no longer in use. Rather, they were transformed into moccasins, mittens, or others leather goods, as needed.
5. Traditionally, North American Christmas trees are fir trees.
6. D. Charron and R. Boudreault, *La Romaine: Unaman-shipit* (Québec: Conseil de bande de La Romaine, Institut culturel et éducatif montagnais, 1994), p.12.
7. The name La Romaine, comes from the Innu words *orumen* and *olumenne*, which mean painting, red earth, red ochre, and represent the color of the earth on the river edge. From Charron and Boudreault, *La Romaine: Unaman-shipit*.
8. J. Fortin, o.m.i., (1954–1980), *Coup d'œil sur le monde merveilleux des montagnais de la côte nord* (Québec: Institut québécois de la culture montagnaise—ICEM, 1992), p.76.
9. An exhibition of the Canadian Center for Architecture (CCA) in Montreal a few years ago presented an exhibit on the “American Lawn,” and how over the last decades it has become an object of cultural representation used to demonstrate social status and delimit territory.
10. To grow grass around one's house may sometimes be laughed at by other members of the community, and is seen by some white people as something that Indians cannot do.
11. The government calls the tribe a band, and the equivalent of the Municipal Council is called the Band Council.
12. As do a lot of their young white counterparts.
13. These observations and remarks may appear to be intuitive rather than based on real fact. I cannot deny the intuitive aspect of the survey work. Although I wish I could have undertaken an extensive survey before starting the design exercise, I believe that three things allowed me to go further and participate in this explorative design exercise with my students. First of all, these observations were made during my visit to La Romaine during the fall of 1998. I had the chance to visit the reserve and about thirty houses and be guided by a few local people from the reserve. These people included Sylvestre Mullen, the person in charge of housing construction, renovation and maintenance in the reserve and our local partner in the exercise, and Louise Bellemare and Théo Mark, also from La Romaine, who actively took part in the design exercise and helped us during the entire semester. Second, over the years I have accumulated a fair amount of experience as an architect, professor of architecture, and researcher in the field, not only in my own country but in many other countries where I have lived or which I have visited extensively, and where I regularly have the chance to work and to participate in design exercises or field research with local colleagues. Third, the literature on the subject of the Montagnais or Innu, though not yet very extensive on architecture and dwelling culture, has been a valuable source of valid information. All of this greatly helped minimize the gratuity or fortuitous nature of some of our observations.
14. Or by private firms they commissioned. See also Fortin, *Coup d'œil*, p.50.
15. In addition to the following note, the following are the references used for the design exploration and research: A. Berque, *Etre humain sur le terre* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1996); *Écoumène, Introduction à l'étude des milieux humains* (Paris: Éditions Belin, 2000) (for the writing of this article); and A. Rapoport, *House Form and Culture* (Paris: Dunod, 1972) (for the French translation).
16. Our main point of reference is the work of John Habraken (mainly N.J. Habraken et al., *The Grunfeld Variations: A Report on Thematic Development of an Urban Tissue* (Cambridge, MA: Ed. Dept. of Architecture MIT, 1981). We also looked at the excellent research project undertaken by the Minimum Cost Housing Group of the School of Architecture of McGill University: V. Bhatt et al., *How The Other Half Builds* (Vols.1,2,and 3) (Montreal: Ed. MCHG, McGill University, 1990). The works of Christopher Alexander, Thomas Thiis-Evensen, and Giancarlo De Carlo were also examined.
17. The students did not have to follow all the rules. They were free to choose, among the rules defined, a set of rules that they judged pertinent. They could, of course, adapt or modify them, and even create new ones. But they had to be critical with respect to the rules they were working with, explaining their choices and why and how they were using them.
18. For the architects and teachers involved either in the exercise or in the reviews, the preparation of the first sketches was an occasion to raise appropriate questions with a large number of community members.
19. Here, we are referring to a “culture of taste” that is propagated in the world of architecture by international architectural magazines (some say the glitzy ones), and that have a huge influence on architects and architecture students.
20. Here, we must specify that the term “bungalow” refers to its common and popular meaning in the eastern regions of Canada.
21. In most cases, I encouraged the students to keep their initial ideas, adapting and developing them, instead of asking them to start from scratch.
22. In the last decades, the redefinition and recognition of ethnic minorities have necessarily passed by some international institutions under the eye of world's television networks.



Field Report

Multiple Courtyard Mansions of Dhaka: Form and Context

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN and FERDOUSE ARA HAQUE

A number of splendid mansions were built in Dhaka in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A hybrid of cultural patterns, they borrowed monumental formal elements from contemporary and classical European styles at the same time they employed indigenous spatial arrangements. In particular, as in traditional Bengali houses, their interior areas were laid out around courtyards, which played many roles and allowed the mansions to maintain an internal human scale. Today, such dichotomous houses remain the socio-cultural testament to the peculiar circumstances of the native social elite of the period. This article analyzes the form and spatial arrangement of the multicourt mansions and attempts to link them to their socio-cultural context.

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The architectural vocabulary of Bengal (understood to include both contemporary Bangladesh and Indian West Bengal) has emerged over several periods of socioeconomic and political development. The city of Dhaka flourished as the area's capital on several occasions, and as a significant center of trade, education and culture. Many intricately decorated mansions were built during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, distinguished by their huge floor areas, articulate details, and superb craftsmanship. These mansions adopted a monumentality expressive of imperialism, yet their spatial arrangements largely conformed to the patterns of traditional Bengali houses.

Today many of these mansions have either been abandoned by their original users or have been left in a dilapidated condition due to misuse, disuse and neglect.¹ Nevertheless,



FIGURE 3. Regular plot division with lanes and by-lanes in typical Dhaka mahalla.

pied the first type (and were predominantly Hindu). Well-off people and nobles related to administration, agriculture and trades (or foreigners, such as Europeans, Armenians and North Indians) usually inhabited the second type.¹²

COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE IN BENGAL

The architecture of Bengal evolved over thousands of years in response to local social, cultural and climatic demands.¹³ But as a result both of direct impositions and changes in social context, British colonial rule led to certain deviations from this evolution. In particular, attempts were made during the colonial period (1765–1947) to fit imported styles and forms to the Bengali context.¹⁴

In Dhaka no evidence remains of houses from the Mughal period (1608–1765). Civic and religious buildings like fort-palaces, mosques and *kuttras* were generally the only buildings made of permanent materials before and during this period.¹⁵ However, urban houses are thought to have been similar to their rural counterparts, except that they were relatively more densely built.¹⁶ British rule, however, introduced various policies that affected the life-style of many of the local people in the urban areas, and hence the houses they lived in.

Early colonial buildings were executed in the Neoclassical styles popular in Europe at the time.¹⁷ In Dhaka, this style first appeared in the city’s seventeenth-century churches, but it was subsequently applied to secular buildings as well. Eventually, by the middle of the colonial period, a new hybrid of Mughal and European-style architecture emerged. To some extent this overlooked the existing rich local tradition of architecture in brick. Even though brick was still extensively used, even in delicate patterns, it was usually plastered over with lime and mortar in the colonial manner to give the appearance of stone construction. The new style introduced such foreign stylistic elements as semi-circular and segmental arches; triangular

pediments over Corinthian, Ionic or Composite columns; battlement parapets; traceroid windows; molded plinths; rusticated walls; and foliated decorative motifs. However, the buildings also made definite concessions to their location, and climate was a major inducement leading to the fusion of local and foreign elements. This eventually led to strange mixtures — for example, forcing imported styles to incorporate such local elements as overhanging eaves, wooden lattices, and verandahs. Such popular forms were gradually integrated into even the most grand and permanent buildings.

The emerging hybrid style, called Indo-Saracenic, became popular among those who could afford it and wished to display their power and status. Such buildings were built and used by the British, other Europeans, and the local elite. A number of influences contributed to the popularity of the new style among native Bengalis: the emergence of a local bourgeois class, the prestige attached to alien European forms, and government-encouraged Westernization in all fields. However, an in-built mental map always remained among local users, acting as a guide in their building activities. Buildings erected by the local elite were rarely direct translations of European models, but rather an exegesis of complex socio-cultural and political forces.

Colonial influences eventually led to the creation of two distinct new residential building types: the bungalow and the mansion. The bungalow was the first residential building type adopted by the British in colonial India. In contrast to crowded “native” dwellings, it embodied spatial separation and expressed the social and political divide between ruler and the masses.¹⁸ Located on open land with a front garden, early bungalows were single-story structures of simple symmetric composition, with a large hall or parlor in the center. Many had porticoes for carts — and later, cars. Bungalows expressed a clear separation between the ruler, or “sahib,” and native servants. In particular, the kitchen and the servants’ quarters were located behind the house. In this sense, the bungalow imitated the bipolar concept of traditional Bengali houses (even if toilet and washing facilities were located on the outside walls, attached to the bedrooms) (FIG. 4).

Although based loosely on the British cottage, bungalows also integrated many local characteristics, including large verandahs. To the colonizers, these were primarily a climatic device,

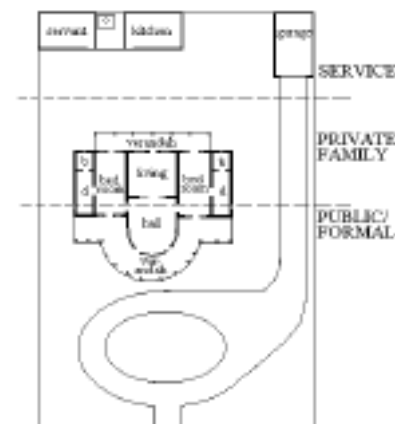


FIGURE 4. Typical colonial bungalow plan. (Based on A.D. King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, p.29.)

but for the local people they also served as an important semi-private space. As a building type, bungalows eventually influenced local house form to the extent that they encouraged it to become more consolidated — i.e., to bring formerly detached rooms together under one roof. With the inception of social and technological changes, the bungalow form also became increasingly imposing and grand. However, the extroverted spatial arrangement of the colonial bungalow in the middle of an open plot, its consolidated form with rooms sharing common walls, and the attachment of sanitary areas to private rooms were all stark contrasts to the traditional Bengali house (FIG. 5).¹⁹

The mansion was the other main typology that resulted from colonial influence. By the end of the nineteenth century, many native Indians had begun cautiously to adopt European values and aesthetics. The first structures to undergo transformation were large local houses, which started to borrow facade elements and styles from colonial civic and administrative buildings. However, with further urbanization and the introduction of rudimentary town planning, new types of houses on regular plots also emerged.²⁰ These small villas were draped with foreign decorative elements and were mostly owned by members of the local elite, and later the emerging middle class.²¹ However, spatially, they

were still organized around internal courtyards for functional, planning and climatic reasons. Thus, even though they featured spaces such as entrance porticoes and living rooms or parlors furnished in European style, they still expressed a local sense of privacy — particularly for women.²²

THE URBAN ELITE AND THE MIDDLE CLASS

The spread of new house typologies among native Bengalis was facilitated by the creation of new social classes under colonial rule. With the decline of Mughal control, a new society gradually emerged in Dhaka on the ruin of the old royal aristocratic order. Prior to the colonial period, land had been the main form of property, and patterns of landownership formed under Mughal rule had determined the structure of society. But the arrival of the British changed this leadership structure markedly and eventually led to the creation of a new social elite based on mercantile activities.²³

Even though relatively similar numbers of Hindus and Muslims lived in this predominantly agricultural region, Hindus were the first to realize the possibilities for social mobility afforded by the new mercantile emphasis. Within

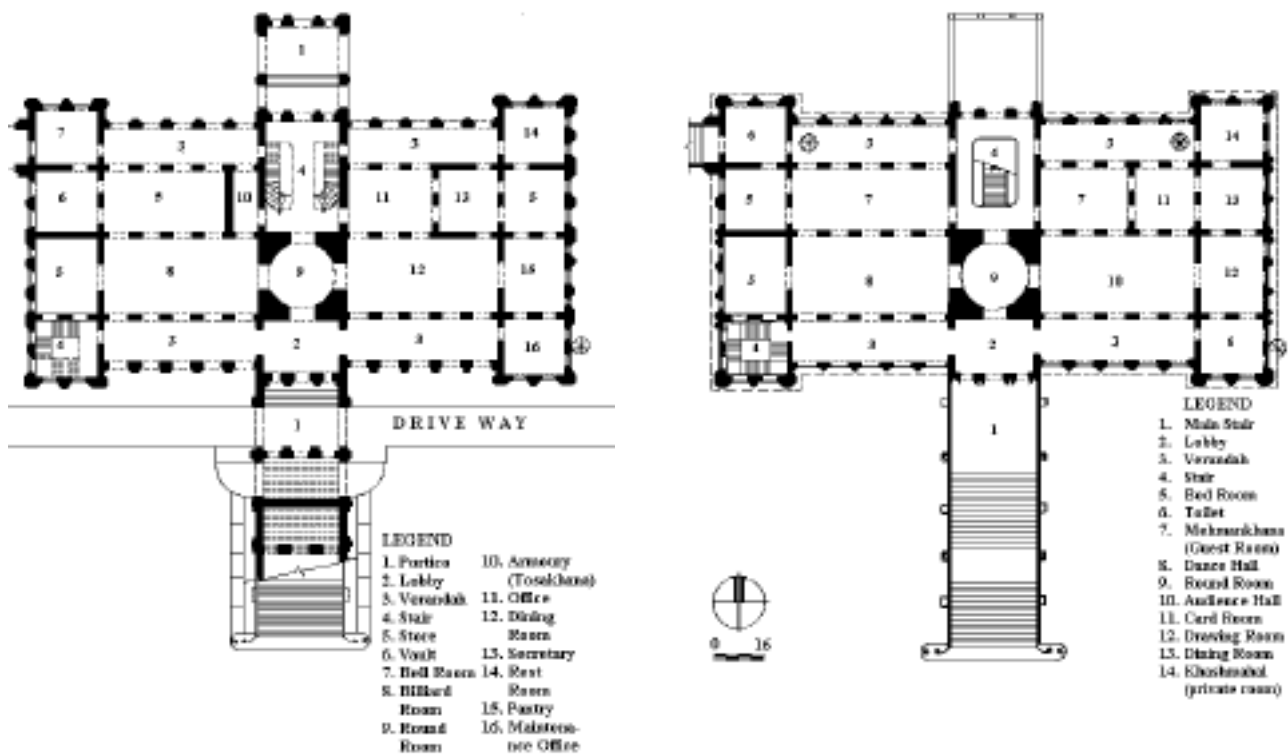


FIGURE 5. Ahsan Manzil, one of Dhaka's largest mansions, was the largest bungalow-style residence in Dhaka. Unlike most other mansions, it had no internal courts. Originally built by French traders, it was eventually bought, repaired and extended by Zamindar Ali Mian and used by the Nawabs. The mansion features a big living room, library, billiard room, and dining hall, all furnished in European manner. (Redrawn from S.A. Zahiruddin, "History of Architectural Conservation and Government Initiatives in Bangladesh," in A.H. Imamuddin, ed., *Architectural Conservation Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1993), pp.86,88.)

their otherwise rigid birth-ascribed caste system, leeway for social and occupational mobility did sometimes exist — most significantly in the upper and middle castes.²⁴ Thus, when their incomes could not support their desired life-styles, many Hindus left their traditional occupations and sought new jobs or professions. Normally, such a failure to comply with prescribed ritual would have resulted in social ostracism, but in the changed environment of colonialism, the implications of such switches were often not clearcut.²⁵

For their part, Muslims were divided into Ashraf and Atraf — high and low classes. Class affiliation was not based on a single occupation: some Ashraf were *zamindars* (landlords) or had been high officials under the previous reign; others were religious scholars. But by claiming noble ancestry, Ashraf maintained an attitude similar to that of high-caste Hindus — for example, refusing menial jobs, which they considered disgraceful. The Ashraf were contemptuous of the Atraf, who were mostly workers. They were also conservative in nature, and sometimes obscured or misinterpreted religious rules and regulations to their benefit.²⁶

One of the most significant impacts of the colonial takeover was the gradual transformation of the existing feudal system. In the new capitalistic environment, contact between *zamindars* and their land grew more tenuous. Many became infatuated with the pursuit of aristocratic values and adopted luxurious new lives in urban areas.²⁷ From there, they came to depend increasingly on tax collectors, middlemen and touts for revenue collection. *Zamindars* also cautiously guarded their social status, and practiced intermarriage among families with similar status.²⁸ And some collaborated with the colonial government and even helped the East India Company during the 1857 Sepoy Revolution. Such acts were aimed at retaining power and superiority, and in response, the colonial government often nominated *zamindars* to local governing boards.²⁹

The legal basis for this new landed aristocratic class was the Permanent Settlement Act, enacted by the East India Company in 1793. This act mostly benefited high-caste Hindus, who were already favored by the British for their performance and obedience. In effect, it allowed any rich person to buy land, and thus offered merchants the opportunity to rise socially by buying *zamindari* (feudal estates).³⁰

The rise of the new merchant group in the eighteenth century was facilitated by the great complexities involved with the local currency.³¹ This meant plenty of work for currency brokers, especially Hindu merchants, who could become rich through exchange transactions, and who could exert considerable influence on all who became indebted to them.³² This debtor group eventually came to include European traders and administrators who were unfamiliar with local weights and measures and monetary exchange and marketing systems. A significant section of Bengal's top social echelon emerged from among these currency dealers, and from the business group which benefited from their activities.

From the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the increasing involvement of Bengal in international trade also

added to the power and fortunes of this new merchant elite. Following the introduction of railway, steamer and telegraph and development of the port of Chittagong, production increased greatly in such export goods as rice, cotton, indigo, betel nut, leather, hide, oil-seeds, jute and tea. Foreign traders needed the services of local people at different levels, and their businesses could generally only be run with the help of local agents, factory employees, and a contingent of militia. *Banias, mutsuddis, gomosthas, paikers, dalals, kayals, sarrafs, mohrers, paiks, peadas* (all high- and upper-middle-caste Hindus) were also all natives. With their earnings, some of them were gradually able to start their own businesses and join the business class.³³

In addition to this merchant elite, the Bengali middle class was also born out of socioeconomic transformations brought about by colonial rule. The centralized administrative policy of the British opened up many jobs in sectors like law, revenue, health, communication, police and education for local people who could speak English. As the colonial state apparatus continued to expand, *vishayi bhadralok* (materialistic gentlemen) readily accepted English education and formed the first generation of educated urban middle class.³⁴ Initially, the majority were Hindu. For cultural reasons, Muslims were slower to embrace these opportunities. But educated Muslims who took such jobs in the colonial order were considered members of the same relatively open social group.³⁵

This newly educated class joined the already privileged mercantile and aristocratic elite atop the pyramid of Bengali society in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Their formal education was augmented by exposure to books and media, visits to Europe, and interactions with foreigners. Since education allowed Bengalis to climb the rungs of the administrative and social ladder, the advantages of access to metropolitan social life were obvious.

Another result of exposure to European ideas was an awakening of nationalism, as the new educated classes became aware of revolutions in other parts of the world, political and civic rights, and self-reliance. One indication of this trend was a rise in various professional groups, especially among lawyers, teachers and journalists. But interest also grew in nonpolitical organizations and societies such as youth clubs, drama societies, etc. Liberal neo-religious groups like the *Brahmas* also began to form.³⁶ Thus, at the same time that many of Dhaka's urban elite and middle class were increasingly reaping the benefits of colonial rule, many also came to oppose it out of a renewed interest in nationalism.

THE MULTICOURT MANSIONS

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth this new Bengali elite watched as the colonizers erected superb structures incorporating European Neoclassical elements. Such manipulations of the forms and images of imperial glory had a vast appeal to the neo-elite, who aspired to acquire all the habits of the ideal civilized class — that of their British masters. This group

was trying both to rise to positions of leadership in local society and to consolidate their position within the colonial hierarchy. They saw mansions in the Indo-Saracenic style as an ideal way to express allegiance both to native tradition and colonial power.³⁷

Typically, as explained above, Dhaka's houses were of the single-court type. But in Dhaka the multicourt form emerged both from practical and socio-cultural concerns. From a climatological point of view, well-proportioned courts in these huge buildings made interiors more intimate and facilitated ventilation, lighting, and thermal control. And from a socio-cultural point of view, they assisted with functional zoning and privacy. In particular, since they made it possible to locate all rooms so they could maintain both a physical and conceptual link with a court, the multicourt arrangement allowed a traditional type of living and propagated a traditional image of the house. And, of course, the multicourt arrangement expressed a tremendous sense of grandeur (FIG. 6).

Depending on the two morphologies of *mahalla* discussed earlier, Dhaka's multicourt houses could either be very large on regularly shaped plots in residential areas (moderate villas, mansions, or institutional type buildings), or they could be very deep and narrow, located in busy commercial districts.³⁸ However, as in single-court houses, each court formed its own zone with the rooms and other spaces that were related to it. And such a grouping or zoning would vary according to whether the court was primarily meant for formal-public, family-private, or service activities.

Typically, the multicourt mansions were two or three stories in height, with a lofty main entry. Their imposing facades might be set back from the street by an entrance court. In terms of their decorative qualities, the buildings borrowed heavily from established European vocabularies. To increase their visual power, they were often placed on high, molded plinths. A variety of column types were employed, often with foliated capitals. Columns might be grouped, placed on pedestals, or integrated with walls as pilasters. Traceroid windows, placed symmetrically in paneled walls, were also common — as was rustication, particularly for piers and at wall corners. Rooflines were often dramatized using battlemented or balustraded parapets with decorative elements at key locations. The tympanum panels of pediments were normally filled with floral patterns, and similar patterns appeared on friezes. Modillion or plain brackets were used to support cornices. Finally, a variety of arches were used to span between columns or over windows and doors. Some of the most common were trefoil and multifoil, three-centered cinquefoil, pointed Saracenic, pointed segmental, Venetian, equilateral, and semi-circular. Such arches would sometimes feature a protruding, decorated keystone. Window openings might further be encircled with winding rope patterns.

Most of the mansions were constructed of brick, a material abundantly available, although wood was also widely used.³⁹ Brick walls, 50cm. or more in thickness, were usually covered with lime plaster, and then stucco and other ornamentation would be applied to highlight the elegance of the mansion and the taste of the owner. Local craftsmen were used to create other high quality ornamental features, such



FIGURE 6. The typical internal family court created a pleasant microclimate. Photo of courtyard from house of Adi Basanta Babu, or Sutrapur Zamindar Bari (House of the Landlord of Sutrapur), Sutrapur.

as cast-iron pillars, ornate railings, wooden carvings, broken ceramic tiles, and terra cotta. Repousse work was also introduced during this period, especially on balcony railings, posts, capitals, pilasters, drop walls and colonnades.⁴⁰

Structurally, most of the mansions adopted the local purlin-and-rafter technology popularly known as the *ganga-yamuna* system. However, other techniques (e.g., wrought and cast iron and I-section beams), introduced by European builders, were also used to cover large spaces. In particular, these allowed flat roofs, rather than the pitched or vaulted roofs that were accepted practice among local builders.

In plan, the public parts of the building were generally laid out symmetrically to emphasize formal and ceremonial qualities. Such symmetry might be achieved by an entry foyer leading to a main hall(s) (sometimes double-story in height). These entry and living areas, along with the front courtyard, comprised the formal, male domain of the house. These areas might also contain guestrooms, offices, and guard rooms. And sometimes, the front section of a mansion might feature an additional formal court for community gatherings, business activities, or professional counseling.

The public areas of the house were filled with English furniture.⁴¹ Decorative elements might take several forms. For example, hunting had long been popular in Bengal among royal courtiers and aristocrats, and it was a popular pastime of the colonizers too. This meant the display of a hunting trophy in the living room was a perfect way to indicate acquired taste and class. Other common furnishings included large sofas or divans with pillows, gramophones, tiger and deer skins, mantelpieces, false fireplaces, wall clocks, painted portraits, brass smoking pitchers, photographs and banners. Such rooms became display centers of family wealth, status, achievement, association and connection.

The symmetry of the formal front areas of the mansion were often broken in the inner zones of the house for reasons of cli-

mate, function, or site configuration. The inner court(s) were synonymous with the female domain, and accommodated many informal and semi-private domestic activities. The arrangement of rooms here was similar to that in the traditional house — with individual private sleeping rooms surrounding the court and looking out onto a verandah. Similar layouts could be repeated in successive courts, with corridors providing a connection (and taking the place of the gaps between huts in the rural prototype). Service and ancillary facilities like sanitary and washing areas — and sometimes cooking and storage — were generally retained in rear courtyards, which might also include a guest and servants block.

In addition to the formal entry, the main family courtyard in many houses might be reached directly from the outside by means of a secondary building entry — more than one if the site lay adjacent to a secondary road or waterway. Likewise, if the mansion bordered more than one main road, equal importance would be given to its multiple main facades. Stairs would be located so as to serve the groups of rooms around the courtyards. Rooftops might be used either as terraces to overlook the inner court or the front road, and thus would remain semi-private or semi-public.

For all their monumentality, the mansions incorporated the same simple flow from court to verandah to room that characterized traditional houses. This transition was also evident in the lateral progression into the house: from public court, to semi-private court, to semi-private verandah, to private rooms.⁴² A key feature of this transition was a controlling mechanism, or “lock,” between the private and public zones.⁴³ Based on this overall system of zonation, some authors have described the public rooms, or outer house, as a metaphorical window to the outside world, a medium of formal communication and interaction with society.⁴⁴

SOCIO-CULTURAL COMPONENTS

Houses thus conceived and constructed fulfilled many socio-cultural needs for those who lived in them. For example, one of the marks of the English-educated Bengali elite was to adopt a European way of celebrating various festivals and occasions like the New Years. Ball-dances were also held in the big hall rooms, and were equally attractive to the neo-elite. The introduction of large open spaces, entrance lobbies, and lofty halls was a clear consequence of this social predilection.⁴⁵

Hall rooms, front courts, and terraces also played a significant role in facilitating social gatherings, rehearsals, etc. And the public rooms in mansions were used for meetings of the many clubs, organizations and societies that marked the Western aspirations of this social class.

Wealthy and influential society leaders were also often involved in philanthropic activities and charity works, and sometimes these works required a public performance. In these cases, a mansion's outer court might be used for a public ceremony. Outer courts might also be used for community meetings or important social or political announcements.

The celebration of native festivals and rituals was also still an integral part of Dhaka's social life. For example, the *Ashura* had been celebrated at least from the time of the Mughals.⁴⁶ After the demise of the Nawabs local leaders continued as patrons of such events. The long procession of people carrying the cenotaph and other icons was magnificent, and women and children could watch and cheer from verandahs and terraces.⁴⁷ The gathering of people in a *chawk* or in front of the houses of the *mahalla* elite had great bearing on the design of the public parts of these houses. Though many of these rituals were religious in origin, they were pan-religious in celebration. For example, people from other religions would participate in and enjoy Hindu festivals like Durga Puja (worship of the goddess of war) and Lakshmi Puja (worship of the goddess of wealth). Gradually, it became the responsibility of the neo-elite to sponsor these events, and the outer courts of the mansions came to serve as the sites for such public festivals and rituals.

The courts had other, more private, religious purposes as well. For example, in the family courts of Hindu houses a small altar with a niche would be raised under a *tulsi* (holy Basil) tree, and it was a regular ritual in Hindu households to light a lamp in the *tulsitala* every evening to frighten away evil spirits. Courtyards also played an important role in secular social activities. Programs pertaining to marriage, birth and other such ceremonies, and even death, took place in the court. Both Hindu and Muslim marriage ceremonies were celebrated with great enthusiasm and social meaning, and the associated preparations and activities required a large open space in a house.⁴⁸ The segregation of male and female participants at such ceremonies sometimes required the use of separate courts.

Other favorite pastimes of *zamindars* and aristocrats included cock and goat fighting. These events would usually be held in streets and *chawks*. But consideration was also sometimes made in house designs to accommodate them in a large outer court. Kite flying was another popular leisure activity, and was celebrated during a seasonal festival. In the urban context, roof terraces substituted for the open fields that had been used for this purpose in rural areas.

As can be seen from the above examples, the opposite pulls of tradition and Westernization forced the urban middle class and the rural-based elite living in the city to assume a dual life-style. Perhaps nowhere did these dichotomous values find expression more clearly than in the patterns of domestic living. Despite their Western outlook, the neo-elite drew clear boundaries in their mansions between formal and informal activity areas. As in the traditional setting, the degree of access a person was allowed was determined by their relationship to the household. This sense and degree of privacy was synonymous with the demarcation of male and female domains. In general, women had universal admittance to the internal family courts, whereas men had only selective admittance. But female household members were mostly confined to the boundaries of the house, and the court became their breathing space.

CASE STUDY 1: House of Reboti Mohan Das, or Sada Bari (White House), Jaluanagar

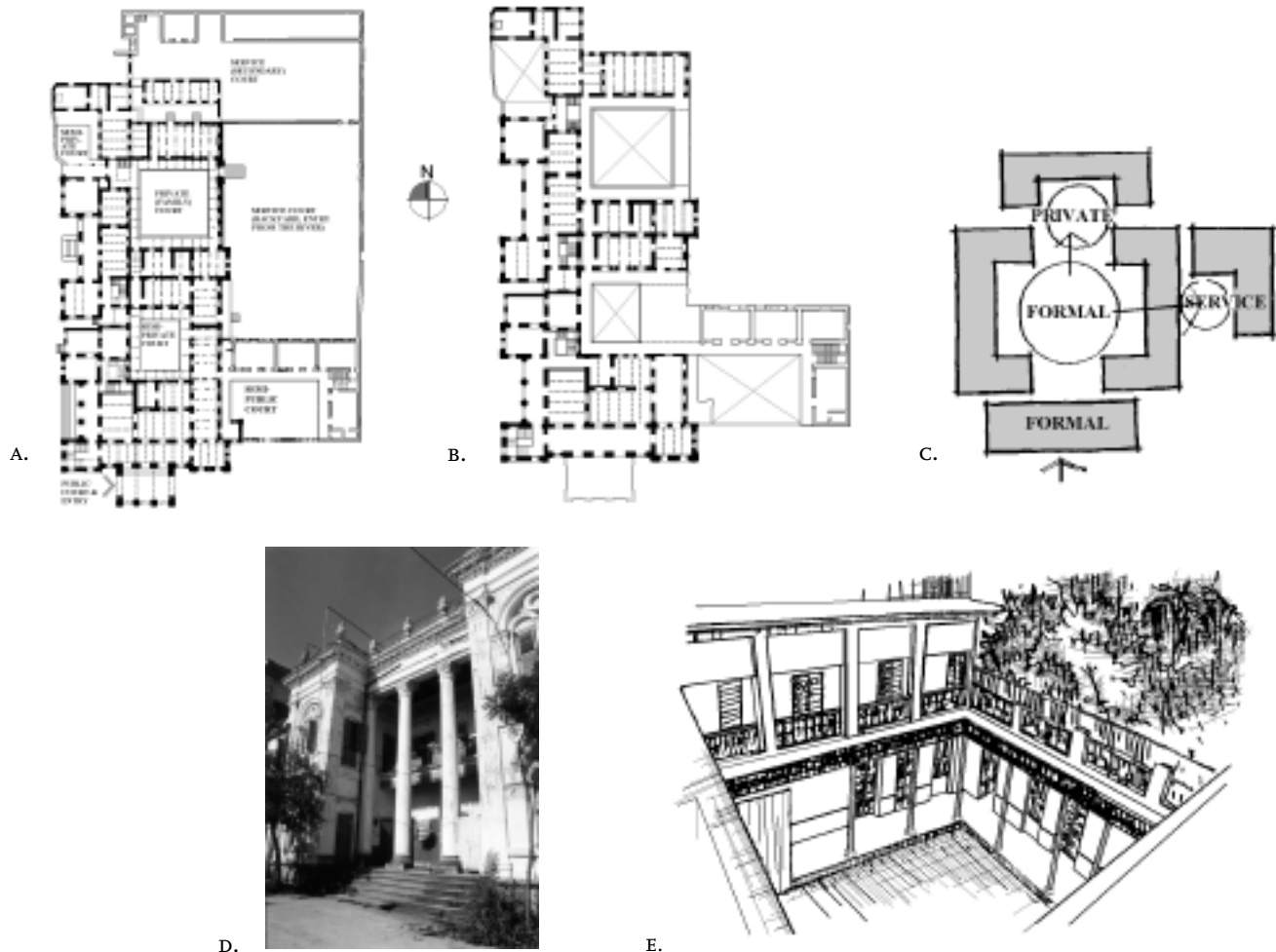


FIGURE 7. A) ground floor plan. B) second floor plan. C) articulation of zones. D) photo of west main facade. E) View of main internal family court.

REBOTI MOHAN DAS, a moneylender and one of the first elected representatives of the Dhaka Municipality, was involved in many social activities. His mansion, built in the early twentieth century, was one of the grandest in Dhaka.

Das's house was entered from the south through a portico. Just inside, an elongated foyer directed visitors both to the main living room and a staircase to the west. A second monumental entry on the west featured a slender, double-height colonnade cut by a curvilinear balcony. From here, a foyer led to a second living room adjacent to the first.

The three-storied northern portion of the mansion was a later addition by Das's brother. It featured a third formal entry from the west, also employing a symmetrically arranged flight of steps.

There were five interior courts of various sizes in the complex, and three exterior ones. The first inner court inte-

grated various semipublic activity spaces. A larger one to its north featured a colonnade on the ground floor. These two major courtyards were connected by a corridor running along their western edges. In addition, there was a secondary entrance to a small court with a verandah on the northwest side of the complex. This area was connected to the northern main inner court via both corridor and stair. The mansion also had a block projecting east from the main entry, used for servant and guest quarters. This portion of the complex was built around a semipublic courtyard, and was also approachable from the Dholai channel on the east.

Rooms of varying sizes were simply arranged around the internal courts. As mentioned, the house partly rose to a third floor. Stairs to the upper two floors were located in separate zones, and habitable rooms and terraces there were generally oriented toward the channel.

CASE STUDY 2: Ruplal House, Farashganj

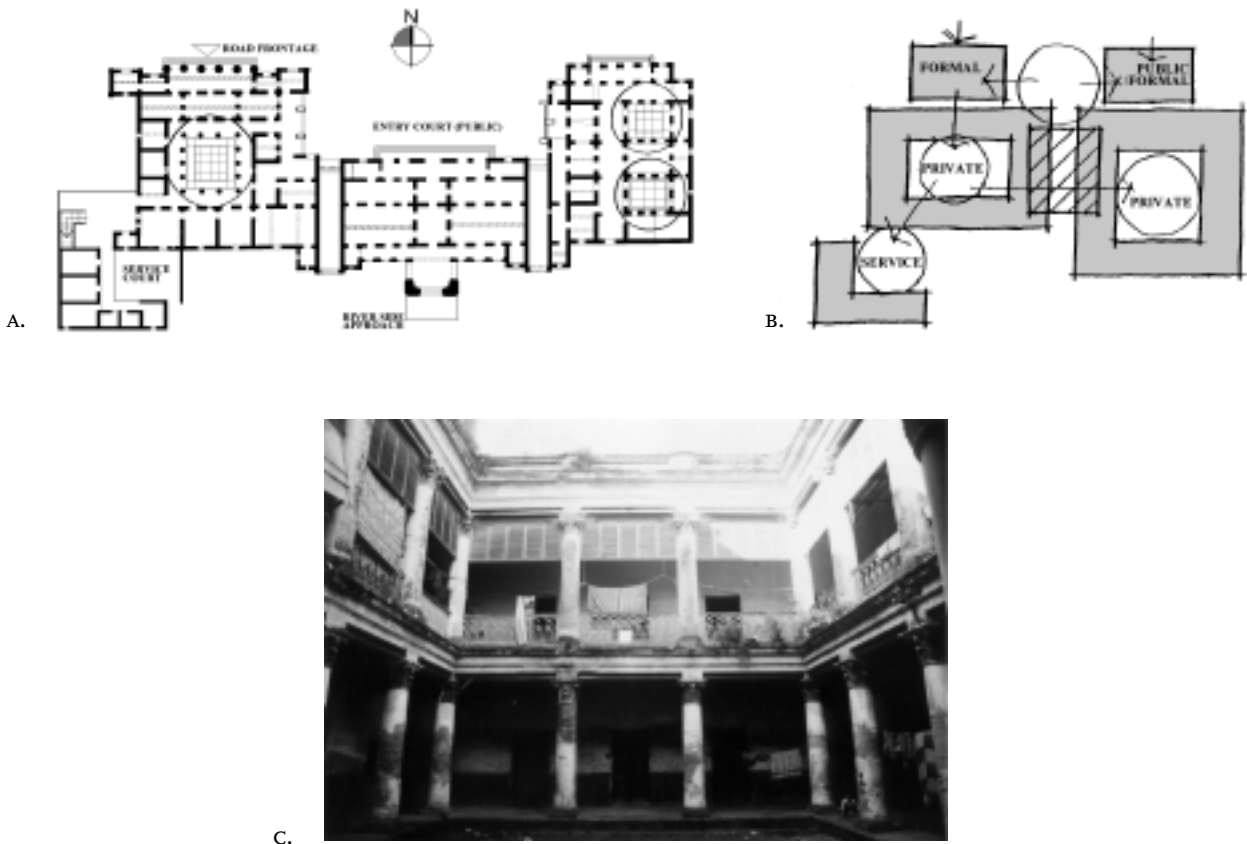


FIGURE 8. A) ground floor plan. B) articulation of zones. C) photo of main internal family court.

RUPLAL AND RAGHU NATH, descendants of Mathura Nath Das, bought this house in the late nineteenth century from an Armenian merchant who had accumulated wealth and influence through the salt business. Das had a mint, and was involved in the batta system. With economic prosperity, he had started to issue hundis, but this never earned him aristocratic position. During the late nineteenth century, however, his sons Madhusudan and Swarup Chandra Das (the father of Ruplal) bought vast estates, making the family one of the most influential in Dhaka.

It was Swarup who commissioned the Martin Company of Calcutta to modify and extend the house. The resulting complex was considered second only to the Ahsan Manzil of the Nawabs. Among other activities that took place in the house were Oriental and Occidental musical soirées for the city's social elite, arranged by Ruplal, a connoisseur of music. Both the city's European and native elites were also invited to the house for a ball in honor of Lord Duffrin in 1888, an event facilitated by the addition of a wooden dance floor.

The complex could be approached either from the north from the main road or by a private entry on the south from the river. It consisted of three distinct blocks, with the most

imposing western one belonging to Ruplal, and the eastern one belonging to Raghu Nath. The smaller central connecting block, the oldest part of the structure, had been built according to a bungalow pattern, without interior courts.

In contrast to the central block, the flanking blocks were built around inner courts. The north-facing entrances to the flanking blocks were both grand in scale and disposition, featuring double-height Corinthian columns with pediment and entablature. The entries led to living and public rooms. These formal parts of the house were connected by corridors to the internal courts, which were surrounded by a series of rooms.

The external treatment of the eastern block was slightly different from that of the west: its front entry had no arches, and its Corinthian columns were stouter — more like Indian columns. The internal courts in this block were of similar size, in contrast to the arrangement of courts in Ruplal's block, where there was a clear separation between a main court and an oblong service court partially open to the river-side. Although neither flanking block connected with the central block at ground level, the upper floors of all three, used for residential purposes, were connected, and featured terraces with panoramic river views.

CASE STUDY 3: Mathura Mohan Chakrabarty's House, or Smriti Mandir (Memory Temple), Dayaganj

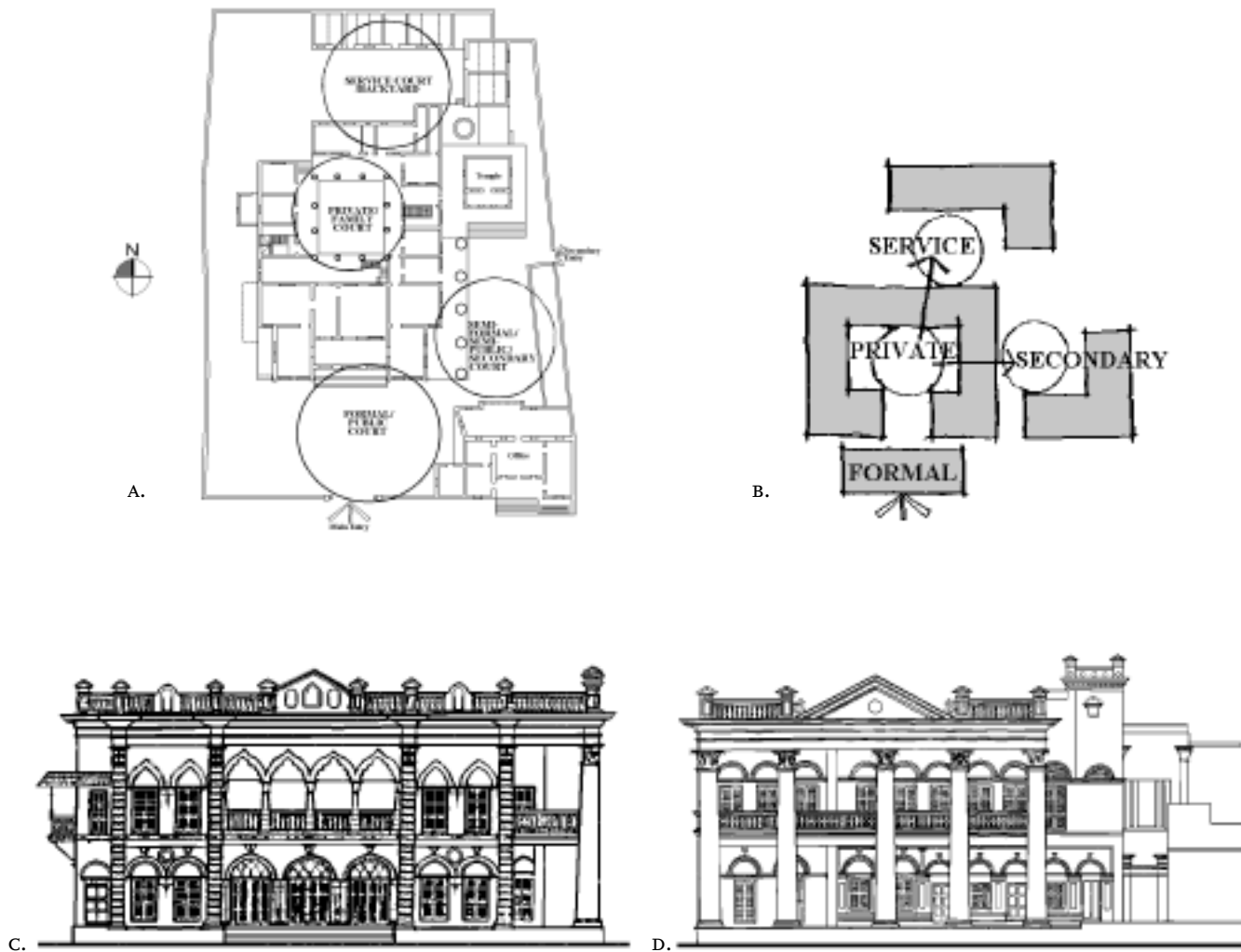


FIGURE 9. A) ground floor plan. B) articulation of zones. C) south elevation. D) east elevation.

CHAKRABARTY, a schoolteacher, established a famous herbal laboratory in this building, which was served by roads on both south and east. The main entrance court on the south was created by setting the house back 11m. from the road. The entrance arcade, unlike that in the previous two cases, was only one story high. It led directly to a living room, which was flanked by public rooms. Several rooms on the eastern side of the house also opened onto a colonnaded verandah that connected to a secondary building. This secondary block, built on an extended podium, housed a community temple. The build-

ing's east-facing colonnade, the temple structure, and another later building used as gatehouse combined to create an oblong court which was used as a public space.

Within the main block there was a secondary, family court. A staircase restricted view of this space from the entrance. It was surrounded on three sides by corridors which gave access to rooms and stairs in the east and west wings. This courtyard was of moderate size and displayed a perfect human scale, providing excellent light and shading. Another court was to the north (back) of the house, which accommodated service spaces.

CASE STUDY 4: House of Jatindra Kumar Saha, or Mangalabas (Goodwill House), Farashganj

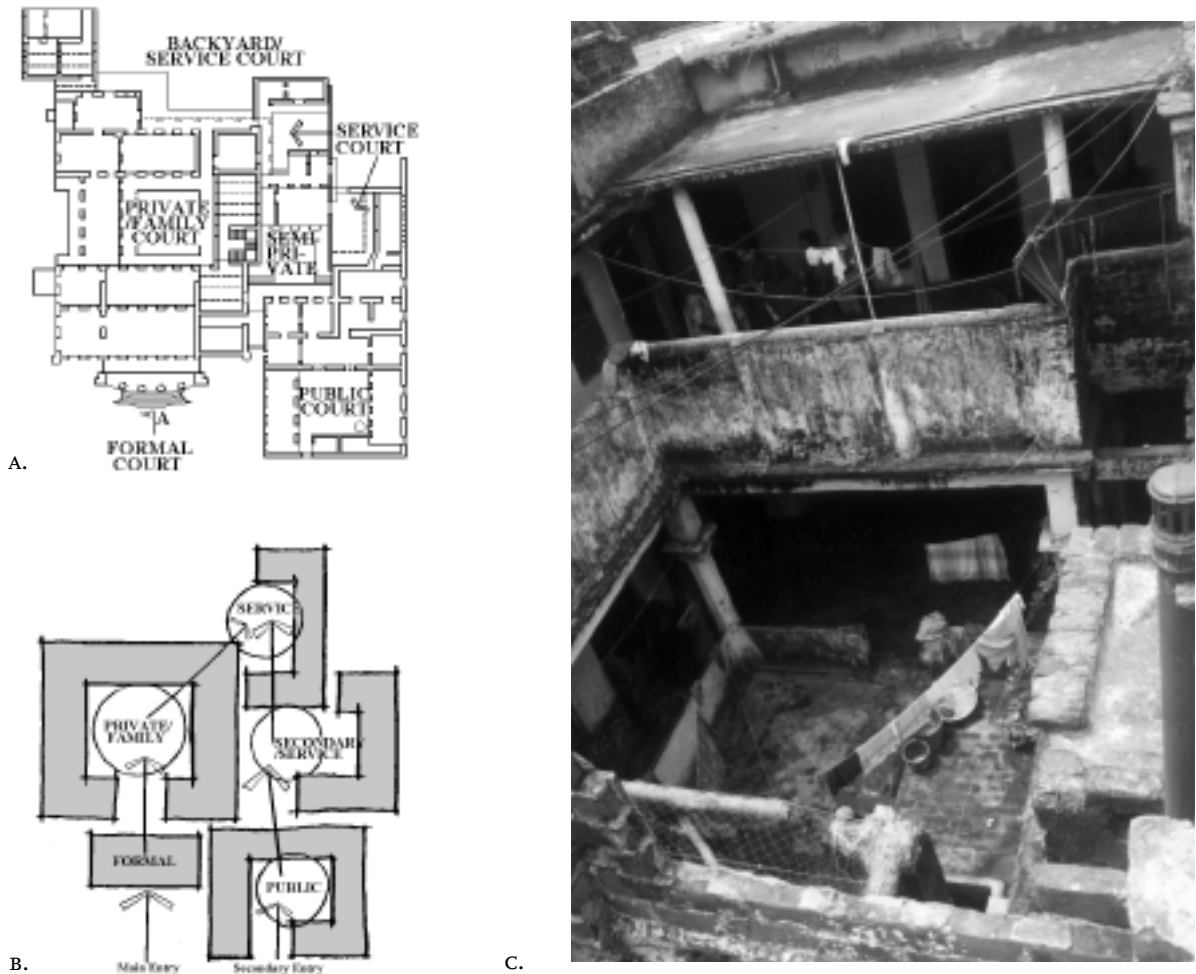


FIGURE 10. A) ground floor plan. B) Articulation of Zones. C) View of service court.

THIS STRUCTURE, presently Kabi Nazrul College Hostel, was once owned by Zamindar Saha. The most prominent features of its facade were heavy square piers and a grand entrance foyer, distinguished by a convex protruding podium. The entrance was connected to a large verandah which was flanked by public rooms on either side. The verandah also led to a living room, beyond which was a corridor ran around the main inner court. The symmetrical arrangement of the formal parts of the house was not carried through to its private areas.

This house had four inner courts. A stair, used exclusively by women, separated the main court from a secondary

family court. The rooms around this second court were small and did not relate directly with the main court and its rooms. Another court featuring an independent entry, was located at the northwest corner of the house, adjacent to the road. Together with its surrounding rooms, it was used for public and official functions. The southwest court was a subsidiary area for services, caretakers and servants.

The upper floors of the house had a generally similar spatial pattern as the ground floor. There were terraces on the south and southwest corners of the second floor, while the western portion of the house rose to a third floor.

CASE STUDY 5: Prasanna Babu's House, or Bara Bari (Big House), Farashganj

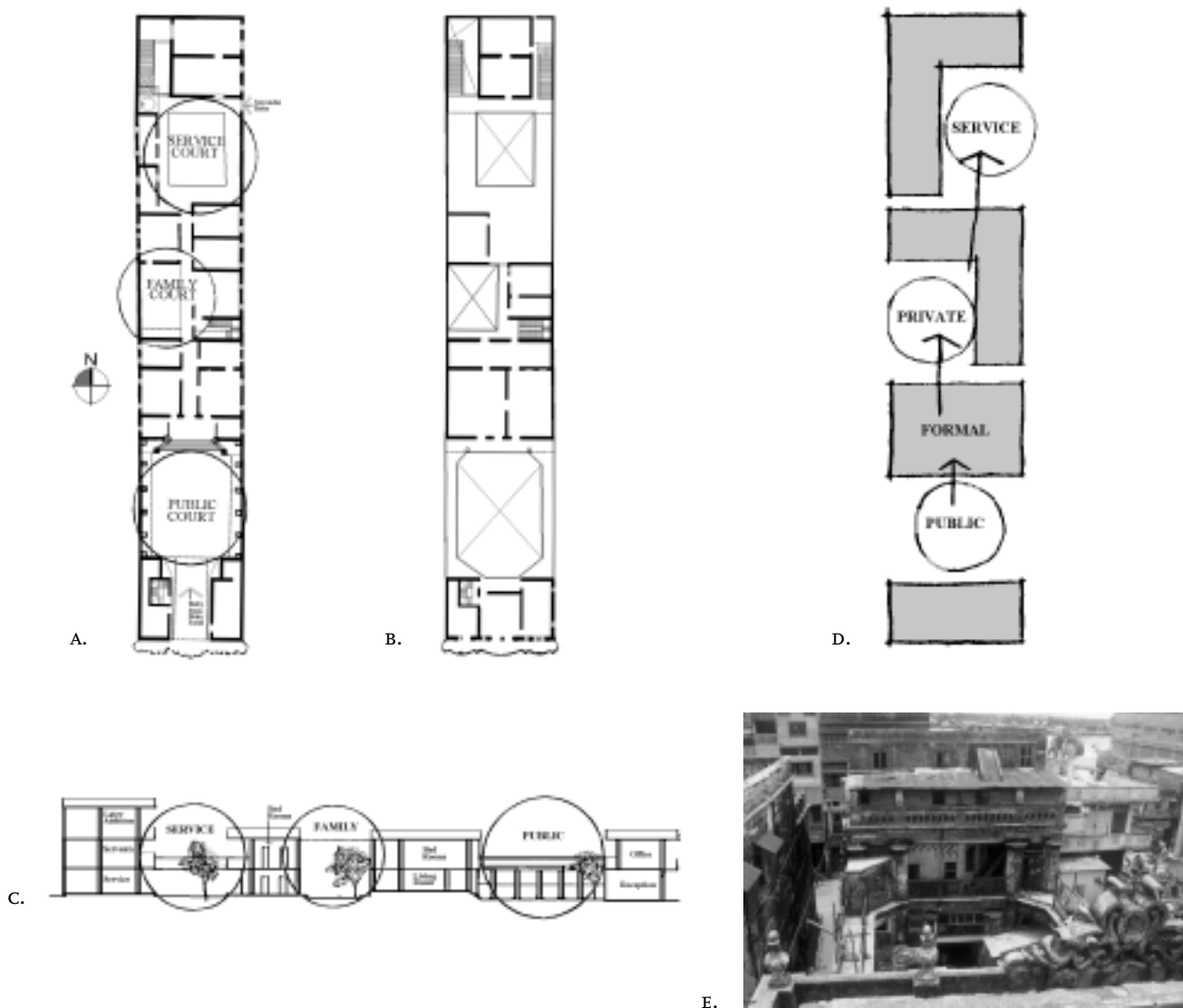


FIGURE 11. A) ground floor plan. B) second floor plan. C) section. D) articulation of zones. E) photo of formal public court.

THIS THREE-STORIED late-nineteenth-century house displayed a magnificent scale and proportion. Prasanna Babu was a moneylender and trader. His house was long and thin, approximately 12m. wide by 60m. long, and was built to the property line. The main road ran to the south, while a narrow secondary road ran along the length of the house to the east. A guardhouse, guestrooms, and office block front the entry. The central aperture through this block, flanked by low rooms on either side, led to the colonnaded public courtyard, from where grand steps led toward an entrance lobby, flanked by two small square rooms. These spaces formed the public zone of the house. From

here, a central corridor with symmetrically arranged rooms to either side directed one back to the family court.

The second court occupied the northern half of the width of the house (the southern half being taken up by a room and a staircase). The central corridor extended further beyond this court to a large service court in the rear of the house. There were three staircases in three different zones: public, family and service. The house also featured a curved balcony with cast iron balustrades overlooking the commercial street in front. The front portions of the house were all two story, connected with each other by a colonnade. Part of the building is now three stories tall, but these areas were later additions.

CONCLUSION

Social and spatial structures, one abstract and the other material, are closely interrelated; however, in everyday life the experience of spatial formation is largely intrinsic.⁴⁹ While environment modulates space, it is in turn shaped by society.⁵⁰ Thus, society retains its basis in forming space, while space, ostensibly a physical entity, conserves the social structure that occupies it.

Starting from the Vedic period (2000–1000 B.C.), Indian villages were formed as clusters of huts arranged in a beehive pattern, many around courtyards. This revealed the beginnings of the social grouping known as *grama*. Even today, the physical organization of villages in Bengal, barring topographical constraints, resembles this Vedic pattern. While society has developed and consolidated from generation to generation, this basic image inherent in the culture has changed little. Even in the urban context, these powerful social influences have guided the development of physical patterns.

One direct consequence of colonial rule in Bengal during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was the creation of an urban social elite. This class gradually infiltrated into the administrative machinery by dint of their education, employment, wealth, social position, and association with the British. One means they used to consolidate and express their new position was the construction of grand mansions. Yet contextual analysis of these mansions today shows that their expressive grandeur was blended with more utilitarian layouts that integrated the inherent norms of indigenous living, climate and tradition.

The case studies presented here from different parts of Old Dhaka show how imported elements were used primarily to drape the exteriors of these mansions, and that a traditional layout existed behind these facades. Such norms as space utilization, sense of privacy, domain division, orienta-

tion and climate control were strong and resistant to change, compared to short-lived stylistic importations.

Today urbanization in Dhaka has continued and has put tremendous pressure on residential land. As a result, house form has become even more consolidated, and buildings have increased in height. Nevertheless, the traditional image of living around a court continues to guide design decisions in urban areas, despite limitations caused by a lack of land, rigid road layouts and the expense of modern materials, building techniques, and services. Urban development patterns so far point more toward the transformation of the courtyard form rather than its disappearance. Even in the latest emerging morphology of multistoried flats, the court is being replaced by an internal family lounge.⁵¹

As a final note, it is ironic today that the dichotomy between foreign stylistic imports and internal indigenous form has resurfaced in the residences of a new class of Dhaka nouveau riche. Their houses, built since the mid-1980s, use many of the same colonial-import elements evident in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century mansions.⁵² These imports are once again being used to express the image of a social elite, alien to the local culture — only this time aspiring to the mantle of globalization. However, the internal forms of these contemporary houses are more Westernized than their predecessors (the mansions described here), perhaps because of the increased availability and affordability of modern and luxury materials and more real exposure and experience of Western living styles.

Multicourt mansions are no longer built in Dhaka. However, they deserve more study and attention, both as evidence of the evolution of local architecture and urbanism and as examples of good design in their own right. Restoring such buildings to their old uses or adapting them to new ones are practices much neglected in Bangladesh. Further study of these mansions may form the basis for such conservation activities.

REFERENCE NOTES

1. See M.M. Ali et al., "Early Twentieth Century Mansions of Dhaka City: Contextual Concepts," in A.H. Imamuddin, ed., *Architectural Conservation Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1993), pp.165–186; and M.M. Rahman, "Old Dhaka's Multi-Court Tenement Houses: The Evolving Ideals," *APJ*, Vol.2 No.1 (December 1996), pp.78–88.
2. For more details, see S. Haq, "Architecture within the Folk Tradition: A Representation from Bangladesh," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.5 No.2 (Spring 1994); and A.H. Imamuddin, "Bengali House in Urban Context," *BUET Technical Journal* (1983).
3. See Imamuddin, "Bengali House in Urban Context." Also see F.A. Haque, "Multi-Court Houses of Old Dhaka: A Study into Form and Context," M.Arch. Thesis, BUET, Dhaka, 1997.
4. D'Oyle drew sketches of 24 such early-nineteenth-century houses on the Buckland Bundh, a promenade along the river Buriganga. See H. Mamud et al., eds., *Dhakar Prachin Nidarshan* (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1991, in Bengali). An excellent description of these riverfront houses may also be found in M. Mamun, *Dhaka: Smriti Bismritir Nagari* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1993, in Bengali), p.174.
5. F.H. Mallick and S.N.M.Z. Huda, "Learning from the Past: Aspects of Environmental Design in Old Buildings," in *International Seminar on Future of the Past: Architectural Heritage of Dhaka* (Dhaka: BUET, 1996).
6. I.M. Khan, "Alternative Approach to the Redevelopment of Old Dhaka," doctoral dissertation, Vol.I, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1983.
7. I.M. Khan, "Liveability of Old Dhaka:

Evolving Residential Patterns in Mahallas,” in R. Powell, ed., *Regionalism in Architecture — Proceedings of the Regional Seminar in the Series: Exploring Architecture in Islamic Culture* (Singapore: Mapin Publishers, 1985), pp.107,109.

8. Khan, “Alternative Approach to the Redevelopment of Old Dhaka.”

9. Rahman, “Old Dhaka’s Multi-Court Tenement Houses,” p.81.

10. Khan, “Alternative Approach to the Redevelopment of Old Dhaka,” p.6.3.

11. Rahman, “Old Dhaka’s Multi-Court Tenement Houses,” p.81.

12. Ibid., p.82.

13. See M.M. Mukhtadir and D.M. Hassan, “Traditional House Form in Rural Bangladesh: A Case Study for Regionalism in Architecture,” in Powell, ed., *Regionalism in Architecture*, pp.81–86.

14. Many authors have identified this as a “rupture” in the architectural development of the region. See, for example, S. Haque, “Towards a Regional Identity: The Evolution of Contemporary Architecture in Bangladesh,” *Architecture + Design* (May–June, 1988), p.25; M. Islam et al., “Introducing Bangladesh: A Case for Regionalism,” in Powell, ed., *Regionalism in Architecture*, pp.21–26; and F. Azim, “Bangladesh, Building the Nation” *Architecture + Design* (July–August, 1991), p.18.

15. Some residential buildings during this period must have been made of brick; however, these probably were not very significant in number and size. A *kuttra* was a form of dormitory built around a courtyard, which may have originated in Northern India, from where many of Bengal’s old ruling class descended.

16. M. Mamun has claimed that the houses of the general urban population in Dhaka in the early part of the colonial era were copies of traditional rural houses. The materials were of an impermanent, nondurable nature, and the techniques were indigenous and rudimentary. See his *Purano Dhakar Utshob O Gharbari* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1989, in Bengali); and *Dhaka: Smriti Bismritir Nagari*.

17. Some early examples are the Calcutta Government House, Serampore College, and Dhaka Old State Bank. See Islam et al., “Introducing Bangladesh,” p.25. M.A. Naqi and M.A. Khan termed these exact facsimi-

les of buildings in Europe. See their “Society and Syncretism: Attitudes in Sankhanidhi Group,” *EARTH*, Vol.2 No.1 (January 1995), pp.24–26.

18. M. Desai, “Colonial Domestic Architecture,” *Architecture + Design* (January–February, 1996).

19. A.D. King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984). See also Haque, “Multi-Court Houses of Old Dhaka”; and Imamuddin, “Bengali House in Urban Context.”

20. In 1888 the first planned gridiron residential area was laid out in Dhaka for the emerging elite and middle-class. G.S. Roy, “Wari Residential Area: A Lost Glory,” *EARTH*, Issue 9 (May 1998), pp.243–45.

21. Ibid.; and Desai, “Colonial Domestic Architecture.”

22. The kitchen was the last area to be affected, since eating habits remained the last bastion of local culture. See Azim, “Bangladesh, Building the Nation.”

23. Anarchy ensued in 1763 as the East India Company took over Dhaka. After the administration collapsed, and the activities of bandits, *fakirs*, and *sannyasis* aggravated the situation, the British quickly reacted by imprisoning some of the aristocrats — which induced many others to move out of the city. The British tried to set up a puppet government headed by *mutsuddis* (usurers and merchants), but this failed to bring normalcy. Only the introduction of the post of Naib-e-Nazim, as chief city administrator, helped ease the situation. Such incidents highlighted the powerlessness of existing leaders and diminished the social dominance of the old aristocratic class. S. Islam, “Social Life in Dhaka, 1763–1800,” in S.U. Ahmed, ed., *Dhaka Past Present Future* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1991), p.75.

24. A Hindu is born into an unchangeable caste, predetermined by that of his father. In general, the Hindu religion consists of four classical social orders or *varnas* (colors). At the top are the Brahmans, priests and scholars; next are the Kshatriyas, warriors; then the Vaisyas, the business community. At the bottom are the Sudras, or untouchables. In Bengal, there were six castes: in descending order of social status — Brahmans, Baidyas, Kayasthas,

Mahisyas, Rajbangshis and Namasudras. See B. Chakrabarty, “Social Classes and Social Consciousness,” in S. Islam, ed., *History of Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1992), p.170.

25. Ibid., p.172. Chakrabarty cited the 1911 Census Report of India to show how Brahmans and Pundits became shareholders in different profitable businesses — for example, the Great Eastern Hotel Company in Calcutta. They even became actively involved in tannery and brewery businesses, previously the purview of Saha businessmen. Therefore, Sahas could no longer be undermined socially for running wine shops. “When they [Brahmans] intruded on the trades and occupation of lower castes, they had no moral right to protest against their coming up to them and shaking hands with them.”

26. Ibid., p.168. Also see A.K.N. Karim, *Changing Society in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Nawroje Kitabistan, 1996).

27. Islam, “Social Life in Dhaka, 1763–1800,” p.82.

28. The old *lakherajders*, progenitors of the exiled and dethroned royal courtiers, etc., also belonged to this topmost class. Though their economic and political influence gradually decayed, many retained revered positions, especially members of the Nawab’s family.

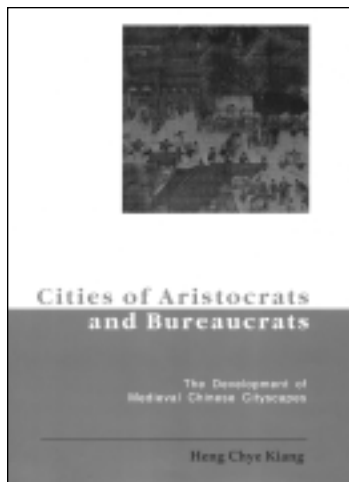
29. M. Mamun, *Unish Shatoke Purba Banger Samaj* (Dhaka: Samaj Nirikhyon Kendra, 1986, in Bengali), p.99. The British also appreciated their role by awarding titles such as “Maharaja” to Suryakanta of Mymensingh and “Nawab” to Abdul Gani of Dhaka.

30. M. Mamun listed many such examples in his *Dhaka: Smriti Bismritir Nagari and Unish Shatoke Bangladesher Sangbad Samoikpatra* (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1985, in Bengali). *Zamindars* like Mathuranath Das (see case study 2), Jiban Krishna Roy, and Madan Mohan Basak all upgraded their status by buying huge amounts of land. Anada Chandra Roy was a prosperous lawyer before becoming a *zamindar* and being elected the first chairman of the Dhaka Municipal Authority. Jiban Krishna Roy, the most influential *zamindar* of the early nineteenth century, bought a zamindary from business profits. Amiruddin Daroga earned lot of money as a police officer and then bought land properties, and declared himself a *zamindar*.

31. Islam, "Social Life in Dhaka, 1763–1800." During the seventeenth century the value of a coin had been determined by metallic content, and every region had its own currency. As such, there were seven types of currency in use in Dhaka in the late eighteenth century. Since government revenue was collected only in *sicca*, other currencies had to be converted to it for revenue payment. *Sicca* retained its original value only for a year and then discounted (*batta*).
32. A sunset law strictly maintained the deadline for revenue payment, and the slightest delay put a *zamindari* at risk. This sometimes compelled *zamindars* to borrow from currency dealers to pay the government punctually. "It [would] not be an exaggeration to remark that by the end of the 18th century most zamindars and taluqdars of eastern Bengal fell indebted to the seths and banias of Dhaka." Islam, "Social Life in Dhaka, 1763–1800," p.80.
33. *Ibid.*, p.77.
34. The 1835 minutes of T.B. Macauley, a member of the Supreme Council of India, launched English education in India. It opened the way for the growth of Westernized Indian middle class. Its objective was imparting "... to the native population the knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of English language ... to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern. A class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste." Chakrabarty, "Social Classes and Social Consciousness," p.174.
35. English education was not as popular initially among Muslims as it was among Hindus. However, after the 1857 Revolution, when the British royalty replaced the East India Company as the governors of India, more attention was given to the problems of Muslims, and policies were adopted encouraging Muslims to become educated, take better jobs, and become more active in colonial society and administration. From the early twentieth century, this led to the creation of a Muslim middle class, which began to gain influence in civic, social, economic, political and cultural arenas in Dhaka and Bengal. The process was expedited with the partition of Bengal (1905–11) and the establishment of Dhaka University (1921). Chakrabarty, "Social Classes and Social Consciousness," pp.175–77.
36. Enlightened Hindus who condemned the caste system formed their own modified religion. Many society elite and social reformers (e.g., the Tagores, Swami Bibekananda, and Raja Rammohan Roy) embraced Brahmanism.
37. A variety of writers have addressed this issue. Among them are Khan, "Alternative Approach to the Redevelopment of Old Dhaka"; Rahman, "Old Dhaka's Multi-Court Tenement Houses"; Q.A. Mowla, "Architecture in Bangladesh and the State," *EARTH*, Vol.2 No.1 (January 1995), pp.16–17; Z. Islam, "The Beauty and the Beast: Who Decides for Whom," *EARTH*, Vol.2 No.2 (May 1995), pp.18–19; S. Haq, "Bangladeshi Urban Image: Conception in the Making," *EARTH*, Vol.2 No.1 (January 1995), pp.20–21; and Naqi and Khan, "Society and Syncretism."
38. A limited study of the form of such houses is provided by Imamuddin et al., "Shankhari Pattri: A Unique Old City Settlement, Dhaka," in A.H. Imamuddin and K.R. Longeteig, eds., *Architecture and Urban Conservation in the Islamic World* (Singapore: Aga Khan Trust for Culture-Mapin Publishers, 1989), pp.121–133.
39. A further factor leading to the extensive use of brick was the ownership of nearby brickfields by some of the elite.
40. The ancestors of many of the local craftsmen had moved to Dhaka with the Mughal entourage; others were hired from Calcutta. Ali et al., "Early Twentieth Century Mansions of Dhaka City."
41. Descriptions of these early-nineteenth-century furnishings given by Bishop Heber are available in Mamun, *Purano Dhakar Utshob O Gharbari*. The daughter of a foreign-returned doctor, Begum Shaista Ikramullah, explained the attitude of this class: "... our house was furnished to look exactly like an English house. In the drawing room, there were heavy sofas, ... lace curtains, gleaming brass and silver. ... The dining room had a fairly massive side-board ... displaying a love of heavy silver. The hall and the study were furnished in the typical English style of the time." See Haq, "Bangladeshi Urban Image," pp.20–21.
42. K.K. Ashraf, "Land, Water and Man in Bengal: Themes for a Deltaic Architecture," in F. Ameen, ed., *Contemporary Architecture and City Form: The South Asian Paradigm* (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 1997), pp.25–39.
43. A. Rapoport, *Human Aspects of Urban Form* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1977).
44. See, for example, Imamuddin, "Bengali House in Context."
45. Ruplal House is a good example (Case Study 2).
46. The tenth day of the Muslim holy month of Muharram, commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain, grandsons of Prophet Muhammad, especially celebrated by the Shia Muslims. See K.M. Karim, "Social Structure under the Nawabs," in Islam, ed., *History of Bangladesh*; J.N. Sarkar, "Mughal Cultural Heritage," in *Ibid.*, pp.84–118; and Mamun, *Purano Dhakar Utshob O Gharbari*.
47. M.M. Rahman, "Ephemeral Transient Static: Ritual Architecture and Urbanity," *EARTH*, Issue 9 (May 1998), pp.238.
48. Some examples were Gaye Holud (putting tamarind on the body before the wedding), and Sat Pak (seven ambulating walks during wedding).
49. See B. Hillier and J. Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
50. Rapoport, *Human Aspects of Urban Form*.
51. See N. Shabin, "Search for Regional Identity in the Contemporary Urban Residential Architecture of Dhaka City," M.Arch. Thesis, BUET, Dhaka, 1997.
52. Islam, "Beauty and the Beast."

All photos and drawings are by the authors unless otherwise noted.

Book Reviews



Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats: The Development of Medieval Chinese Cityscapes.
Heng Chye Kiang. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1999.

Many researchers of Chinese history have noted how a great shift took place in urban form during the Tang-Song period. While major cities in the Sui and the early Tang Dynasty resembled collections of semi-autonomous walled “urban villages” separated by wide avenues, the late Northern Song city established a new paradigm — that of the open city where walls between wards fell, houses and shops invaded public roadways, and streets filled with commercial activities. How did this transition happen? What kinds of experience did the distinct city forms provide their residents? And, more fundamentally, how did the dialectics of power and culture, consciousness and practical need, shape the transformation?

Heng Chye Kiang’s book presents the most exhaustive description and analysis of this transition to date. From the perspective of an urban historian, Heng details the process by which the closed city, as characterized by Tang Chang’an and Luoyang, slowly eroded under the attack of political and economic forces. In particular, he describes how the previously strong aristocratic power to control urban form was gradually replaced by a new gentry of pragmatic career Confucianist bureaucrats, under whose management the open city eventually flourished during the eleventh century. He also describes how at this same time China experienced a period of unprecedented economic growth, rapid urbanization, and the rise of an energetic urban culture.

The book starts with a description of the Tang city before the transition. By focusing on two capital cities, Heng illuminates a highly disciplined Tang cityscape, in which residents’ living and commercial activities were subjected to strict spatial and temporal constraints. According to Heng, Chang’an, the Sui-Tang capital city, was divided into large enclosed wards by extraordinarily wide streets. City residents were forbidden to leave their respective wards during curfew hours. In this environment, commercial activities were permitted only during certain hours of the day, and were restricted to the city’s fortress-like East and West Markets. As a result, the city’s closely patrolled streets were devoid of any business-related facility and became vast expanses of “no-man’s land” at night. The rigid city plans and controls, Heng claims, were reflections of a strict social hierarchy under overpowering aristocratic rule.

After this detailed description of the Tang city, the subsequent two chapters offer a careful investigation of the political, social and economic factors behind the transition to a more open form. Chapter 3 is particularly interesting because it describes attempts to return to older city forms after the movement to the new was already under way. Such reactions to change are typical in the development of many urban forms, but they are often neglected by historians. Here, however, through an analysis of changes in social order and class structure, official attitudes toward trade and urban real estate, population, and territorial administration, Heng depicts a complicated process by which the system of walled wards was eventually replaced — despite attempts by the central authorities to revive it.

Chapters 4 and 5 next provide a comprehensive account of the Song city after the grand transition. A booming economy and social transformation, coupled with the rise of a bureaucratic government of practical scholar-officials, soon allowed trade to expand beyond strictly regulated, enclosed markets operated primarily to supply the needs of the court. As the rationalism of the Song reign turned urban problems into money-making opportunities, the slackening of commercial controls was accompanied by the relaxation of urban regulations. With street-encroaching structures taxed but accepted and a new freedom to choose business locations, busy commercial districts were created, and former Tang spatial distinctions between residential, commercial and administrative functions became blurred.

The arguments in this book are carefully constructed. Although Heng identifies aristocrats and bureaucrats as major agents in the process of transformation, he also points out that the evolution of Chinese city form during this era was affected by larger social, economic and cultural forces. It is perceptive that he also emphasizes on several occasions that the period identifications — Tang and Song — are simply convenient marks: in particular, the development of cities did not correspond neatly to the clear divisions of dynastic history. I would add that the tag “medieval” is also a loaded package in need of qualification. In many instances, it is employed only as a temporal indicator for the historical period approximately matching the Middle Ages in European history.

At the beginning of the book, Heng proclaims that urban history should pay attention to how cities were perceived and understood by their founders and inhabitants, rather than simply examining their formal aspects. This book has succeeded in accomplishing this. The two imaginary walks constructed by the author from specific persons' viewpoints to introduce the Tang and Song cities greatly activate the sense of their form. By drawing data from a variety of sources, Heng has also been able to animate some of the finer elements of the experience of these historical cities. The consciousness of the daily rhythm of drum beats in the minds of residents, for instance, is vividly illustrated through a citation from a poem by Bai Juyi describing an early morning scene when he bid farewell to friends. The author's use of the famous painting “Going up the River during Qingming Festival” (*Qingming shanghe tu*) and the memoir

Record of a Dream of Splendor in the Eastern Capital (*Dongjing menghua lu*) to restore the urban experience of Song Kaifeng are also extremely successful.

Overall, this is a deeply researched, insightful and clearly written urban history, with extensive details and abundant illustrations. It would be an excellent text for courses in urban and Chinese history, and it is a wonderful reference work for researchers of the traditional Chinese city. ■

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Felt Tents and Pavilions. Peter Alford Andrews. London: Melisende, 1999, in 2 volumes. 1,472 pages of text and illustrations, 257 black-and-white plates, 15 color plates.

“What little can be learned about the dwellings of the Huns . . .,” must surely be found assembled in the two volumes of *Felt Tents and Pavilions*. The same might be said for much current knowledge of the tents of the great Turkic, Mongol and Moghul tribes of Central Asia. The extraordinary stories assembled here make even Hollywood epics look rather thin. What director could compete with the actual lavishness of the Moghul courts, or survive a snow-bound winter in the tents of Atilla the Hun? Andrews sets out to tell the story of the Central Asian felt tent, but ends up painting a picture as rich and exciting as any in the West. Even the names of this region’s tribes and rulers remain redolent of swagger and conquest. Here are the great tent-dwelling empires from the plains of Assyria, Scythia and Greece; the world of Chinggiz Qan; and the great courts of Timur and Shah Jahan. These books offer a monumental history, not only of the felt tents and the princely pavilions of Central Asia, but of the life-styles, culture and societies of those who inhabited them.

Several problems necessarily confront the study of the early history of tentage. Primary among these are the perishability of tent materials and the general lack of concern among ancient chroniclers for everyday objects. Islamic historians and artists tended to ignore the ordinary tent completely, and provided only occasional illustrations of tents they found exquisite enough to be worthy of their heroes. A richer harvest of historical evidence exists in the records of foreign travelers. The situation is further complicated by the fact that, while it is rare to find descriptions of common objects like tents while they are in use, once they have passed out of use, they are often forgotten rapidly. Despite such formidable obstacles, Andrews has managed to build an encyclopedic history of both ordinary tents and unordinary, princely ones.

The work encompasses an enormous swathe of history. Volume I starts with a general introduction to pastoral nomads, dealing largely with the early history of the covered cart dwelling and the emergence of different tent types and forms among the Scythians, Sarmatians, and proto-Mongolian tribes. It goes on to detail tent development over the last 1,500 years. Tents discussed range from those of the early Turks, to Mongolian antecedent types, to the tents of the Mongols them-

selves, including the *ger* and other trellis types. Volume I ends with a wonderful description of life in the court of Timur, whose dynasty, the Timurids, ruled the region from 1368–1530.

Timur’s tents were splendid, their opulence contrasting strongly with the earlier, much simpler, tastes of Atilla the Hun, who was noted for his modest life-style. Hulegu Khan was entertained in tents of gold-brocaded silk sheathed in white felt, and by the Moghul period the levels of extravagance were legendary. For example, the private tents of the Moghul royal family were placed in enclosures of silken material as high as a man on horseback and as much as three hundred feet across. Tents and awnings were pitched in many ways within such an enclosure. Andrews covers the ornateness of such princely camps in considerable detail in Volume II.

On these pages also appear stories of great men. To many readers the most exotic may be Chinggiz Qan, a leader famed for his intelligence, prowess in fighting, and great amours. He was seduced by Qulan, and was supposed to have delayed three years in the country of Solonghud. Afterwards, he could only plead to his wife Borte:

The rule I have established is no more. The power of my strong desire exists. I have not obeyed the ministers who advised me. I have been in the beauty of tiger tents. I, the Holy Lord, have slept with Queen Qulan.

Such words associated with tents are redolent with symbols. For example, the very description of the tent in the above quotation signifies lust and sexual passion; tigers are a powerful image of fertility in Asia. Again and again in the two volumes, the reader is confronted with the symbolic richness of meanings associated with tents: authentic, living comprehensible meanings, unlike those found in much writing about modern buildings.

Reading of the people described in these volumes, one also wonders where all the heroes have gone. Why, with all our modern media, can we not create such legends as those of Humayun, Jahangir, Shah-Jahan and Aurangzib? The total power of these rulers must have played a strong part in their magic, and such qualities were surely reflected in their homes. For example, the Moghul Sultan’s enclosure was distinguished by its red color, while his courtiers had encampments of white, embroidered with blue. Tents were made of silk, cotton, linen, furs and felt. Floors could be boarded or felted and strewn with

a fabulous richness of carpets. A tent's structure and its furnishings could be made of wood, brass, gold or silver. It might even be studded with jewels, as were the Sultan's parasols.

The layout of a tent camp might also be truly formidable. The center of a single camp on a route march had to be at least three quarters of a mile long to include the imperial harem, the state tents, and the drum house. A space of 300 cubits would then be left open all around this, outside of which the rest of the camp would be pitched, a standard layout not dissimilar to that emulated by Shah Jahan in the Red Fort at Delhi (1638–48).

Such camps would include a multitude of tent types and sizes. A contemporary historian, Abu'l-Fazl, described many of these, of which the trellis type figured only eighth. It is surprisingly, therefore, that the trellis tent continued to be used into the Moghul period, even in the structural repertoire of princely tents. In later royal courts, however, the trellis form bore little resemblance to its early traditional tribal forms. And by this stage their declining position in the repertoire of princely dwellings was heralded by the move of the Sultan's harem to wooden pavilions. The trellis tent, however, has continued to be associated to this day with the form of the Central Asian felt tent, best known as the Mongolian *ger*.

Andrews has combed through a vast breadth of source material to produce these volumes. But in the end what is so riveting about these books are the stories they tell, describing qualities of tents as diverse as everyday life within them to their metaphysical associations. In its ostensibly simple form, the tribal tent held a rainbow of meanings. According to Andrews: "the multivalency of symbols precludes any simple attempt to decode them as coherent systems, so a focus on their means of operation seems to me to be the best guide to their understanding." Thus, the camp was an expression of potential and actual power; the tent was a religious and cultural reinterpretation of the cosmos and society; and the place that each occupant adopted in a tent was an indication of his or her history and position in this cosmos.

I have only two bones to pick with the larger scope of this history. First, having spent many years excavating in Mesopotamia, I adhere to an old archaeological maxim: "lack of evidence is not evidence of lack." Thus, when Andrews writes, "I shall show . . . there is no proof that the trellis tent was used before the VIIIth century AD," I would dispute this constitutes satisfactory evidence that trellis tents did not exist before this date. In this particular case, I would also disagree with Andrews in that it appears the Assyrians may well have used trellis tents. For example, the bronze gates of Balawat showing Sennacherib's triumph over the

city of Lachish in the eighth century BC bear intricate illustrations of tents with hemispherical roofs — some with guy ropes and internal posts (see J. Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, British Museum Publications, 1985). The form depicted is certainly not that of a velum tent (for a full classification of tent types, see P. Andrews, *Nomad Tent Types of the Middle East*, vols. I & II, Reichert, Wiesbaden, 1997), and it certainly cannot be proven from the evidence available that it is not a trellis tent. Again, there is so little evidence of the dwellings of the great nomadic dynasty of the Sassanians in the first to the third centuries AD, that it is impossible to guess what types of tents they did or did not use.

My second complaint is that from the early chapters of volume I on, the book gives the impression that the use of the cart and the early development of tents were interdependent. However, while carts, or at least disc-wheeled vehicles, have been found in Mesopotamia dating from the end of the fourth millennium BC (S. Piggot, *The Earliest Wheeled Transport*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1983), there is no real evidence that the early history of tents was related to them. What functions carts originally had is not clear. Were the first carts used to carry grain to market? To take warriors to conquer new lands? Or to carry people to their graves? At what point were they used to move populations? How old is nomadism?

The answers to these questions may remain elusive because tented tribes walked softly on the land. On traditional tribal roads in Luristan, inaccessible to carts, artifacts have been found from as early as 4000 BC. These have often been retrieved from burial grounds with no associated villages. How much easier, faster, and more comfortable it must have been to pack a tent onto a horse, donkey or camel, and move the tribe over a mountain pass by pack animal than by lumbering cart. The advantage of a cart, presumably, is that it makes better use of animal power. But I do admit to being less convinced than Andrews about the scale of cart use among early nomadic tribes of Central Asia.

These two volumes of *Felt Tents and Pavilions* represent another brilliant work by Andrews. For the tent enthusiast — or for the collector of vernacular-dwelling studies — they are an absolute "gottahave" buy. I can only conclude by saying how much I look forward to Andrews' next volume, *Velum Tents*. As an aside, I might add: "Eat your heart out Metro Goldwyn Meyer, the epic of the Central Asian tents has arrived." ■

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Sazin: A Fortified Village in Indus-Kohistan. Antiquities of Northern Pakistan: Reports and Studies, Volume 4. Peter Andrews and Karl Jettmar. Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2000.

In a small secluded valley in Pakistan, to the north of the Indus river as it winds its ways south from the Himalayas, lies the fortified village of Sazin. When Karl Jettmar first visited the area in 1982 he was astonished to find that it was still an unspoiled example of an ancient style of fortress village, or *kot*. The contents of this monograph recording the form of the village and some insights into its everyday life bear testament not only to the remarkable society of Sazin, but to its architecture. With funding from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Peter Andrews spent some five months in 1987 in the field recording the village for posterity.

Sazin lies in the heart of a hanging valley, nestling beneath towering mountains that are snow-capped even in summer. Three days walk away in the upland pastures the whole village, except the elderly or infirm, spend the summer. The *kot* is sited on a stone moraine hillock in the center of the valley, in a sea of terraced fields that form a pattern reminiscent of the marks left in wet sand by a receding tide. To one side of the valley are the village threshing floors and a cluster of byres, or cow houses. A road was cut through the valley early in the 1980s by timber fellers, who decimated many of the forests of northern Pakistan before an effort was made to put a halt to their plunder in 1987. Today some new buildings have grown up in the valley, but Andrews' main work was in the old village in its center.

The result is extraordinary. The society appears terminally neurotic, with blood feuds responsible for the deaths of men and women on an almost daily basis, largely because of alleged, perceived or actual cases of adultery. Andrews and Jettmar both had to be extremely careful to avoid the womenfolk of the village to ensure their own safe passage from the area. In fact, within the *kot* (the fortified village is also described by Andrews by the lovely old-fashioned name a "fastness"), there are a number of stone towers, or *gali*, built in house compounds to defend the household not only from foreign marauders, but also from the unwelcome attentions of next-door neighbors.

The basic form of the stone houses is not so unusual, reminiscent of houses I saw recently in the Kalasha valleys to the west of Chitral. They typically have a quadrangular room with four pillars, being on average around 4 m. wide. They are two stories high, with the upper living story, *ghurh*, above the storeroom, *bono gorh*. A stone and timber verandah runs the whole width of the room,

being 2–3 m. deep. Only the defense towers, or *gali*, exceed the houses in size and rise up to five stories in height. A fireplace in the center of the single room has a smoke hole above, the *somo*, for ventilation. Apparently, the fireplace is in two parts, one for cooking and one for warmth. These houses of northern Pakistan have no windows, and light comes only through the door, through the ventilation hole in the roof, or from the fire of candles or lamps. In houses built higher up the valley sides, and normally half dug into the mountainside, one can imagine that for many months, when the snow is deep, any window would not only be useless but also a weak link in the overall defense against the harsh climate.

What is so riveting about the visual impression of the village is not only the randomness of the plan, in which there are apparently no true right angles or straight edges in any of the buildings, but its roofscape. Above the flat roofs of the village and its byres, an upper roof is loosely constructed of a ridge beam supported by a timber upright at each end, against which rough-hewn planks are lain to form an incomplete pitched roof. This provides a secondary defense against the deep snows of winter and gives an aerial view of the village the appearance of an undulating herringbone weave. The excellent color plates at the end of the book amply illustrate this.

In his text Andrews takes readers through the following topics related to the village: situation; access; population and amenities; farming economy; agriculture; irrigation; animal husbandry; land-ownership; diet; forestry; social organization; material culture; ancestors; present prospects; and conditions for fieldwork. It is a surprisingly good record after only five months of fieldwork and a tribute to Andrews' skill as a recorder of anthropological and architectural information.

The limitations of the fieldwork are obvious, with two very alien cultures meeting with no common language and for a very limited time. Despite that, this book is a unique history of a fascinating village. The commentaries provided by Jettmar are interesting, if at times peripheral. I did become slightly frustrated by his continual repetition of discussions about the *wesh* system; he obviously thinks the educated reader should fully understand this, but he fails to define it clearly, and nowhere does he convincingly explain its specific relation to Sazine. A welcome contribution comes from Georg Buddruss who, with Andrews, compiled a Glossary of Terms.

This is a beautifully produced book and a valuable addition to the history of the vernacular architecture of Pakistan.

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On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture. Setha M. Low. University of Texas Press, Austin, 2000. 274 pp., illus.

How do culture and politics shape public space, and how does space enact, encode, and reshape societies' values, in general — and those of Latin American cities, in particular? How can this relationship between space and culture be theorized? How can understanding and interpretation of this dialogic and dialectic relationship be enhanced, through the interweaving of various kinds of narratives, histories, and ethnographies? Setha Low satisfactorily and enjoyably engages these research questions in her book *On the Plaza*. The book provides a historical and contemporary study of two plazas in San José, Costa Rica — Parque Central and Plaza de la Cultura — with comparisons to other urban spaces with different cultural geographies and histories. Although I express certain critiques in this review, Low's multifaceted, ambitious work is highly valuable in that it really achieves what it sets forth to accomplish: the *spatialization* of culture — i.e., the integration of “the social production of the built environment with the daily routines and ceremonial rituals of the cultural realm and the phenomenological experience of individuals” (p.36).

Low's book is divided into four parts. Part I, *Introduction*, presents ethnographic field notes on the two plazas of San José. I realize Low's intent was to immerse the reader immediately in the ambiance of the plazas, but her choice caused me some discomfort. Specifically, the decision to open in this way signals an overly conventional “anthropological” approach that may risk her purpose of reaching out to a broader audience.

In Part II, *Histories*, Low exposes the fact that ethnohistorical materials on the origins of the Latin American plaza have traditionally privileged Eurocentric conceptions and overlooked indigenous precedents. Thus, she stresses that the interpretation of these public spaces derives not only from the analysis of the actual spaces, but from the power embedded in the writing of history. The principal weakness of this section, however, is that Low does not clearly explain how these different precedents distinctly influenced the conception and transformation of the two Costa Rican plazas studied.

By using the spatialization of culture as an analytical framework and method, Part III, *Ethnographies*, presented for me the most valuable section of the book. By “spatialize” Low means “to locate-physically, historically, and conceptually-social relations and social practice in space” (p.127). The three chapters that compose Part III deal with spatializing culture, constructing difference, and public space and protest (the plaza as art and commodity). In them Low touches on many of the important factors at work in the social production/construction of space. These chapters encompass great breadth. However, they prove a little short in terms of depth when she moves precipitously to Part IV. One senses this may be due to her attempt to provide equivalent length to each part of the book. For instance, more analysis from the physical design point of view — architecturally and urbanistically — of both the plaza

and its immediate surroundings — the definers of the plazas' three-dimensional space — would have better complemented her multiperspective approach and better served her purposes. Another issue that is not fully engaged is how the national and international transformations of the political economy at the moment of the plazas were created resulted in their radically different designs. Similarly, it would have been enlightening to unveil in greater detail the architectural and urban planning ideas and ideals that existed at the time of their design.

In Part IV, *Conversations*, Low aggregates literary, conversational and personal narratives in an attempt to provide multilocal and multivocal perspectives on the experience and representation of the spaces of the plazas. Although the inclusion of other voices is commendable as an effort to provide “a more unmediated experience of being in the plaza than is possible in an ethnography” (p.206), Low should still acknowledge that the “ever present voice of the ethnographer and author” is still here — if only more discretely through the excerpting of selected texts.

In her conclusions in Chapter II, Low converges with the analyses about the impact of globalization upon places, as presented mainly by Manuel Castells, Sharon Zukin, and Saskia Sassen. She stresses, however, “a counter social force called *vernacularization*: the process by which the global is made local through the attribution of meaning. These local spatial/cultural spaces provide the emotional and symbolic bases for maintaining cultural identity.” Low further adds that the vernacularization of urban space is “a powerful and important corrective to globalization processes” (p.244). In some ways, this concept seems problematic: for instance, since the attribution of meaning is an on-going process, it may be impossible to “maintain” cultural identity. For this reason, vernacularization may not in fact be a “corrective” to globalization, but rather a very important aspect of it.

In summary, although the book concedes that the public plazas in Costa Rica provide a rich stage for the negotiation of larger conflicts produced by the growing influences of globalization, tourism, and individual and social struggles to define cultural identity, it fails to provide a thorough critical analysis of how the first two factors impact the third. The ongoing changes produced by globalization and tourism have had an unprecedented catalytic effect on Latin American public spaces. Have the Costa Rican plazas really resisted commodification, or slowed its pace, as Low suggests (pp.35–6)? Her analysis (in Chapter 8) seems to show that despite all the social contestations, the plazas are becoming places of commerce and consumption, as well as instruments of state-controlled representation and myth-making — just as are many public spaces in the U.S. Recognizing the increasing commodification of public spaces and the role of representing places in the Costa Rican context, Low may be too quick to assert that “the meeting place of the past has become the marketplace of the future, where the goods that are exchanged are representations of the nation and city, and the creation of public space has become part of the imagineering of a city” (p.197). To be sure,

plazas have not ceased to be meeting places, and they have a long history as marketplaces. Moreover, they have always been representations of ideal notions of nation and/or culture by dominant social powers, as testified to by the historiography of their transformation. What has changed is the intensity and pace of these phenomena, due to the postmodern, global condition of time-space compression.

Despite the above critiques, I still consider this an extremely useful pedagogical work. It goes into great detail to explain and flesh out both the application and the results of all the methodological and analytical approaches used to investigate the social production and construction of these two Costa Rican plazas. With the increasing interrelation of humanities and social sciences disciplines, this book is highly recommended for research methodologies and analytical courses in a wide spectrum of disciplines. Furthermore, at a time when both the Hispanic population and academic interest in Latin American studies are growing in the United States, this book is a much-needed addition to the scarce literature on the subject of Latin American culture *in space*, firmly establishing the syncretic nature of cultures, physical designs, and socio-political meanings of public places in Latin America. ■

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Expanding the View of Hohokam Platform Mounds: An Ethnographic Perspective. Mark Elson. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, Anthropological Papers, No.63, 1998.

Great House Communities Across the Chacoan Landscape. Edited by John Kantner and Nancy M Mahoney. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, Anthropological Papers, No.64, 1999.

Two major anthropological papers (numbers 63 and 64) published by the University of Arizona Press offer a synthesis of recent scholarship concerning the built environments of the two major southwest cultures of a thousand years ago.

Using a canal system, the largest in the New World, the prehistoric Hohokam developed an agricultural economy in the low, hot deserts of present-day Arizona (1,000–3,000 ft. [300–900 m.]). It was their empty canals that stimulated agricultural resettlement by “Anglos” from the eastern U.S. at the end of the Civil War. Thus was established the location of Phoenix and surrounding towns and cities, a metropolitan region which today has a combined population of more than three million people.

At the same time the contemporary cultures of those people we now call the Anasazi occupied the nearby high desert plateau (above 5,000 ft. [1,500 m.]). The primary built signature of the Anasazi were dry stone masonry pueblos, of which Pueblo Bonito is the most extraordinary. Although primarily located on the Colorado Plateau of Arizona, west of the Grand Canyon, the remains of their settlements may also be found today in New Mexico, Colorado and Utah. The largest and most impressive collection of Anasazi ruins, the “great houses” (which have even been called “city-states”), are found in Chaco Canyon, in the center of the northwest quadrant of New Mexico. Chacoan culture has now emerged from a generation of popular touristic attractiveness — and an integrated anthropological exploration campaign. As a result, the Anasazi are the most published and popular of all North American prehistoric cultures, stimulating creative literature, spiritual movements, and intense intellectual and cultural study.

The architectural remains of Hohokam culture are insignificant compared with the remnants of their hundreds of miles of interconnected canals and ditches, an irrigation system that required a complex social organization and a dispersed, decentralized settlement pattern. Aside from more than 200 ball courts, their most impressive architectural remains also appear to be landscape monuments: earth mounds or platforms. Among these two are best known — the four-story adobe cube called Casa Grande (c. 1300–1350 AD) at Coolidge, Arizona; and the platform mound of Pueblo Grande in a city-operated park at 44th Street and Washington in Phoenix. The evolution of ceremonial or observational platform mounds by the Hohokam may not be so surprising, considering their usefulness and prominence as landmarks overlooking flat, irrigated expanses of maize, corn, squash and cotton. Like the construction of canals, mound platforms required large-scale group cooperation.

Typically, Hohokam platform mounds have a raised surface area averaging 5,400 sq.ft. (500 sq.m.), and an average height of 6 ft.-4 in. (1.9 m.). They are normally dated between 1150 and 1350 AD, during what is known as the Classic period. Thus, the mounds represent the multistaged culmination of 900 years of the Hohokam riverine cultural sequence. In 1883 Adolph Bandelier proposed that Pueblo Grande was once an artificial raised solid earth core with a cluster of rooms on top. But four years later, Frank Hamilton Cushing initiated controlled excavation on the site, and concluded that it was the structural base of a great mud temple that served an elite class of priests. For more than 100 years, through the excavation of 24 platform mounds, representing 20 percent of known mounds, these competing interpretations have continued a lively debate. Often the same sites and data sets have supported simultaneous, conflicting readings.

In his monograph, Mark Elson goes beyond previous research by examining platform mound function and social group organization through a scholarly cross-cultural study. His selection of historic mound-using groups of similar social complexity takes in cultures from the Pacific Ocean region to South America and the southeastern United States. By this method, he develops new postulates about how prehistoric people invented and used mounds. He then applies this perspective to the study of a prehistoric settlement system in the eastern Tonto Basin of Arizona, containing more than twenty platform mounds, of which five have been excavated by three distinct archeologist teams. These sites were all flooded during the past decade by the raising of Roosevelt Dam (originally constructed in 1911) by 80 ft. (25 m.). He argues that Hohokam mounds were used variously as residences and later ceremonial facilities by competing descent groups, thus confirming hereditary leadership. They represented group integration and resource management in origin and early use, and after abandonment, they served as ancestral shrines. Thus, their chronologies reveal shifts of use and meaning.

Elson's study provides a fresh approach to an old puzzle that synthesizes many earlier studies, and offers new ideas of variability among Hohokam populations. His innovative use of comparative data and analyses enriches and consolidates understanding of Hohokam culture. But at least as important is his examination of seven other societies that illustrate the importance of ceremonial monumental constructions that enclose or protect little. Rather, their presence in the landscape preserves and enhances cultural belief and ritual, signifying social complexity and hierarchy.

Archaeologists occasionally compare the contemporaneous Hohokam with the Anasazi. Hohokam mound villages were spaced every 3–5 miles (5–8 km.) along the prehistoric canals of the present-day Phoenix area. By contrast, the great houses of the Anasazi in the Mesa Verde region had an average spacing of about 7 km. (4.3 miles) (p.150); but productive communities ranged in area from about 40 to more than 100 sq.km. (15.4–38.6 sq.miles), illustrating the variance in scale between different definitions of community. Did agricultural

sustainability or social clustering establish community? For the Anasazi, the architectural fragments and the dimensions of carrying capacity shifted with both time and location.

Beginning in the tenth century Chaco Canyon emerged as an important Anasazi center, one whose influence shaped subsequent cultural developments throughout the Four Corners area of the American southwest. Archaeologists investigating the prehistory of Chaco Canyon have long been impressed by its massive architecture, evidence of widespread trading activities, and ancient roadways that extended across the region. John Kantner and Nancy Mahoney's edited monograph discusses the architectural effect of the Chaco phenomena on its hinterland. Communities with great houses located some distance away are of particular interest, because determining how and why peripheral areas became associated with the central canyon provides insight into the evolution of the Chacoan tradition. For example, in the opening essay (p.3) they write:

The largest great houses in Chaco Canyon once stood four or five stories and contained more than 650 rooms. The roofs of these immense structures required so many timbers that trees were harvested from forests up to 80 km. (50 miles) away. Chaco Canyon great houses were planned structures with geometric layouts that displayed distinctive architectural characteristics not present in most puebloan architecture. These features included core-veneer and banded masonry, multiple stories, blocked-in kivas, large and tall rooms, and enclosed plazas. In addition, most of the canyon great houses appear to have been oriented toward the cardinal directions and may have incorporated features marking solstice events. Clearly the effort expended on the design and construction of these buildings surpassed that of any previous structures in the prehistory of the northern Southwest and greatly exceeded utilitarian necessity. A century of archaeological investigations of Chaco Canyon great houses has not provided straightforward answers to how they were used.

Their opening commentary is followed by twelve chapters by archaeologists suggesting that the relationship between Chaco Canyon and outlying communities was not only complex but highly variable. Their new research reveals that the most distant groups may have simply appropriated Chacoan symbolism to influence local social and political relationships. By contrast, many of the nearest communities appear to have interacted closely with the central canyon — perhaps even living there on a seasonal basis. Thus, distant architectural imitation could represent slight cultural exchange, whereas close imitation confirms the cultural dominance in many areas of Chaco. And although the subject is supposed to be community definition, identified as “social reproduction and sustenance production” (p.149), the marker is the presence of “great houses.” They best reveal how “people transform a physical landscape devoid of meaning into a historically constructed cultural landscape, thoroughly imbued with meaning” (pp.149–150).

Anasazi scholars themselves now constitute a large, diverse but dedicated tribe of multidisciplinary archeological specialists who use Chaco Canyon and its great houses as the barometer, or benchmark, of cultural evolution and revolution. Their enthusiasm is best communicated by the concluding chapter in *Great House Communities Across the Chacoan Landscape*, that by Stephen H. Lekson, entitled "Great!"

Think great thoughts: Great Houses, Great Kivas, and what the rest of us call roads, but Winston Hurst calls Great Trails. Ralph Waldo Emerson, that old Transcendentalist, once said that to be great is to be misunderstood (giving false hope to writers of convoluted prose). Are great houses, kivas and trails misunderstood? Do we share a common understanding of what "great" is? It all depends on what our definition is of what makes "great" great.

We tried, long ago, to define the criteria of greatness: multiple stories, "blocked-in" kivas, core-and-veneer banded masonry, and other architectural details (for example, Powers and others, 1983; see also Hurst, this volume). These were the features of the large buildings of Chaco Canyon, certified "great" by inclusion in the National Park system and UNESCO's World Heritage List. (p.157).

Those excavated sites formed a tight class, defined by details. But, once they were laid bare and we knew their ground plans, it became clear that form was as important, more important, than technology. Technology was, after all, only in the service of form. The same form could be created with sandstone or poured adobe. Being Southwestern archaeologists trained in the 1970s, it took us some time to realize that great houses were architecture, designed to be seen. We had been looking for banded masonry, but we quickly moved to geometries, ratios, canons, and sitings (Fowler and Stein, 1992; Sofaer, 1997; Stein and Lekson, 1992). So, perhaps, it was acceptable for Bis sa'ani to be adobe; it still looked like a great house. If it looks, walks, and talks like a duck, then, in the words of a great contemporary Transcendentalist, let's call it a duck. (pp.157-58)

Great houses were architecture with a capital "A," buildings designed and built (we assume) to impress and even to awe. Great houses shared canons, geometries, and details that created a monument, changing the built environment of the community that surrounded them. Whoever designed great houses shared a set of ideas about form and, presumably, about meaning. And, we can assume, communities throughout the region of the great houses understood that the same set of supraregional canons and symbols: architecture carries meaning, and its intended audience must be able to decode and understand those meanings (p.159).

. . . Ralph Waldo Emerson said, memorably, if rudely, that a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds. If we take a Pueblo Bonito laundry list out to the edge, we should not be surprised if some linen goes missing. "In the long run, men hit only what they aim at," said Thoreau. There is no point looking for Pueblo Bonito at Bluff or Andrews, much less at Wupatki or in the Membres Valley. It's not there. But the great house pattern is. The best way to understand that pattern is not to fragment this great big problem into tiny analytical units, but rather to jump up a scale and put our big problem into even bigger contexts. Look at Chaco and Mimbres and Sinagua. Look at Chaco and Catal Huyuk and Cahokia and LBK. I began this essay by asking us to "think great thoughts." I end with this amended request: Don't just think "great," think BIG (p.163).

And so Lekson concludes. His seven-page unillustrated essay is one of the great pieces of literature on one of the great prehistoric master cultures of the built environment. It is also iconoclastic. It should be available in hard back, in cassette, and on disc, illustrated.

The multifaceted approach taken by the other 22 authors provides different and sometimes refreshing perspectives on Chaco. Their contributions offer new insight into what a Chacoan community is, and they shed new light on the nature of interactions among prehistoric communities. More cautiously, Mark D. Varien concludes, "that the Chaco regional System is not one thing . . . what is needed are more studies like these" (p.156).

And so the industry of Anasazi study and publication continues. ■

Jeffrey Cook
Arizona State University, Tempe



Hybrid Urbanism On the Identity Discourse and the Built Environment

Edited by Nezar AlSayyad

Despite strong forces toward globalization, much of late twentieth-century urbanism demonstrates a movement toward cultural differentiation. Such factors as ethnicity and religious and cultural heritages have led to the concept of hybridity as a shaper of identity. Challenging the common assumption that hybrid peoples create hybrid places and hybrid places house hybrid people, this book suggests that hybrid environments do not always accommodate pluralistic tendencies or multicultural practices. In contrast to the standard position that hybrid space results from the merger of two cultures, the book introduces the concept of a “third place” and argues for a more sophisticated understanding of the principal but unequal components contributing to the making of an urban identity.

In contributed chapters, part one of the the book provides historic case studies of the third place, enabling a comparative and transnational examination of the places that capture the intersection of modernity and hybridity. Part two considers equivalent sites in the late twentieth century, demonstrating how hybridity has been a central feature of globalization.

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Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism

Edited by Nezar AlSayyad

From the Grand Tour to today's package holidays, the last two centuries have witnessed an exponential growth in travel and tourism. As the twenty-first century unfolds, people of every class and from every country will be wandering to every part of the planet. Meanwhile, tourist destinations throughout the world find themselves in ever more fierce competition — those places marginalized in today's global industrial and information economy perceiving tourism as perhaps the only means of surviving. But mass tourism has also raised the local and international passions, as people decry the irreversible destruction of traditional places and historic sites. Against these trends and at a time when standardized products and services are marketed worldwide, there is an increasing demand for built environments that promise unique cultural experiences. This has led many nations and groups to engage in the parallel processes of facilitating the consumption of tradition and of manufacturing tradition. The contributors to this volume — drawn from a wide range of disciplines — address these themes within the following sections: Traditions and Tourism: Rethinking the “Other”; Imaging and Manufacturing Heritage; and Manufacturing and Consuming: Global and Local. Their studies, dealing with very different times, environments and geographic locales, shed new light on how the tourist “gaze” transforms the reality of built spaces.

This book reintroduces the idea of the city as a territorial concept. The use of the built environment as a lens places globalization debates in the specific context of national regional and local expression. This focus on the built environment provides a study of the city infrastructure in terms of economic, social and political issues, as well as questions concerning identity.

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Conferences and Events

UPCOMING CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND EXHIBITIONS

The XXIX International Association Housing Science Congress, Ljubljana, Slovenia: May 21–25, 2001. Hosted by Faculty of Architecture, University of Ljubljana. For more information, contact: University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture, Zoisova 12, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia. Web: <http://www2.arnes.si/~iahs/intro.html>.

The Ninth Annual Congress for the New Urbanism, "From Neighborhood To Region," New York City: June 7–10, 2001. For more information, contact: Congress for New Urbanism, The Hearst Building, 5 Third St., Suite 725, San Francisco, CA, 94103. Tel.: (415) 495-2255; Fax: (415) 495-1731; E-mail: cnuimfo@cnu.org; Web: <http://www.cnu.org/ix/>.

Tourisms: Identities, Environments, Conflicts and Histories: Preston, U.K.: June 21–23, 2001. Organized by the Department of Historical and Critical Studies, University of Central Lancashire. For more information, contact: Liz Kelly, Business Services Office, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE, U.K. Tel: (44) 1772 892256; Fax: (44) 1772 892938 Email: ejkelly@uclan.ac.uk; Web: http://www.uclan.ac.uk/business_services/conf/index.htm.

"Planning for Cities in the 21st Century," Shanghai, China: July 11–15, 2001. Organized by the World Planning Schools Congress. For more information, contact: The College of Architecture & Urban Planning, Tongji University, Shanghai 200092, China. Tel: 0086-21-65983419; Fax: 0086-21-65983414; E-mail: wpsc2001@shtel.net.cn; Web: www.caup-tongji.org/wpsc2001.

"Retrospective on Urban Morphology at the Millennium," Cincinnati, Ohio: September 6–9, 2001. Biennial Conference of the International Seminar on Urban Form, hosted by the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning at the University of Cincinnati. For more information, contact: Brenda Scheer, Associate Professor of Urban Planning, University of Cincinnati, P.O. Box 210016, Cincinnati, OH, 45221-0016; Fax: (513) 556-1274; E-mail: Isuf2001@uc.edu.

"Cultures of Cities," Rotterdam, the Netherlands: September 20–22, 2001. The fourth Biennial of Towns and Towns Planners in Europe will consist of a three-day seminar and an exhibition. For more information, contact: Phone: +31 (0)70 302.84.11; Fax: +31 (0)70 361.74.22; E-mail: biennial@nirov.nl.

“Preserving the Spirit of Place,” Providence, Rhode Island: October 16–21, 2001. Conference organized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, with the Providence Preservation Society, Preserve Rhode Island, and a broad range of Rhode Island leaders. For more information, contact: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC, 20036; Phone: (202) 588-6100 or (800) 944-6847; Fax: (202) 588-6223; E-mail: conference@nthp.org.

“Globalization and Popular Culture,” Winnipeg, Canada: October 19–21, 2001. Workshop hosted by the University of Manitoba. For more information, contact: 346 University College, Department of History, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3T 2M8. Tel (204) 474-9149; Fax (204) 261-0021.

“Consumption and the Post-Industrial City,” Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany: December, 14–15, 2001. For more information, contact: E-mail: Frank.Eckardt@archit.uni-weimar.de; Web: <http://www.uni-weimar.de/urbanistik/>.

RECENT CONFERENCES

“South Lebanon: Urban Challenge in the Era of Liberation,” Beirut, Lebanon: April 3–6, 2001. International conference organized by the Faculty of Architectural Engineering of Beirut Arab University (BAU) and the Hariri Foundation, in partnership with the United Nations’ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). For more information, contact: Prof. Ahmed Soliman, Beirut Arab University, P.O. Box 115020, Republic of Lebanon, Beirut. Tel: +(961) 1 300110; Fax: +(961) 1 818402; E-mail: ahsoliman@hotmail.com; Web: <http://www.bau.edu.lb/faculties/Arch/Events.html>.

Guide for Preparation of Manuscripts

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Do not use a general bibliography format. Use a system of numbered reference notes as indicated below.

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In his study of vernacular dwellings in Egypt, Edgar Regis asserted that climate was a major factor in the shaping of roof forms. Henri Lacompte, on the other hand, has argued that in the case of Upper Egypt this deterministic view is irrelevant.¹

An eminent architectural historian once wrote, "The roof form in general is the most indicative feature of the housing styles of North Africa."² Clearly, however, the matter of how these forms have evolved is a complex subject. A thorough analysis is beyond the scope of this paper.³

In my research I discovered that local people have differing notions about the origins of the roof forms on the dwellings they inhabit.⁴

The reference notes, collected at the end of the text (not at the bottom of each page), would read as follows:

1. E. Regis, *Egyptian Dwellings* (Cairo: University Press, 1979), p.179; and H. Lacompte, "New Study Stirrs Old Debate," *Smithsonian* 11 (December 1983), pp.24-34.
2. B. Smithson, "Characteristic Roof Forms," in H. Jones, ed., *Architecture of North Africa* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), p.123.
3. For a detailed discussion of this issue, see J. Idris, *Roofs and Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984).
4. In my interviews I found that the local people understood the full meaning of my question only when I used a more formal Egyptian word for "roof" than that in common usage.

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