



# TRADITIONAL DWELLINGS AND SETTLEMENTS REVIEW

JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL ENVIRONMENTS



## GLOBAL TOURISM

*Khaled Adham*

## NEW SILICON VALLEYS

*John C. Stallmeyer*

## RECONSTITUTING HMONG CULTURE

*Lynne M. Dearborn*

## CROSS-CULTURAL THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE

*Paul Memmott and  
James Davidson*

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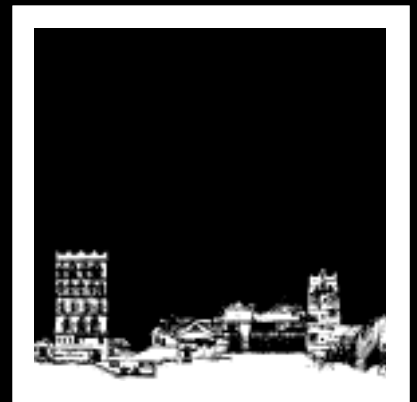
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*Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* is the official publication of IASTE. As a semi-annual refereed journal, *TDSR* acts as a forum for the exchange of ideas and a means to disseminate information and report on research activities. All articles submitted to *TDSR* are evaluated through a blind peer-review process. *TDSR* has been funded by grants from the Graham Foundation, the Getty Publication Program, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Center for Environmental Design Research, and the office of the Provost at the University of California at Berkeley.

IASTE membership is open to all who are interested in traditional environments and their related studies. In addition to receiving the Association's semi-annual journal, members are eligible to attend the biennial conference at reduced rates. Subscription to the journal is available only with membership in IASTE. Domestic annual order rates are as follows: Individual, \$60; Institutional, \$120; Corporations, \$180. Foreign members add \$15 for mailing. Libraries, museums, and academic organizations qualify as institutions. Subscriptions are payable in U.S. dollars only (by check drawn on a U.S. bank, U.S. money order, or international bank draft). Send inquiries to:

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# TRADITIONAL DWELLINGS AND SETTLEMENTS REVIEW

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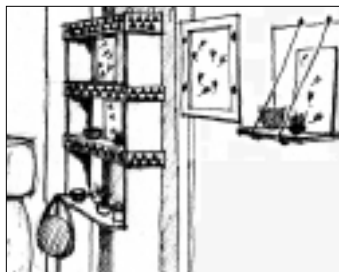
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COVER ILLUSTRATION: Al-Gouna resort on Egypt's Red Sea coast illustrates the disembodied condition of architectural references in many tourist developments worldwide today.  
Photo ©Ayman Taher.

## Editor's Note

This year marks a significant milestone for the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE). Established at the First International Symposium on Traditional Dwellings and Settlements held at Berkeley in April 1988, IASTE now celebrates its twentieth anniversary, and will hold its eleventh conference December 12–15, on the theme “Interrogating Tradition: Epistemologies, Fundamentalisms, Regeneration and Practices.”

As most of you know, the 2008 conference will be hosted by Oxford Brookes University in the United Kingdom. What you may not know is that the response to the call for abstracts this past spring has been enormous, with paper proposals continuing to reflect the diversity of disciplinary fields represented by our members, located across Asia, the Middle East, Europe and North America. This continues to strike me as the essence of IASTE — its ability to forge multiple avenues of inquiry across cultures. It is this that makes IASTE like no other research institute in the U.S.

This issue of *TDSR* captures this attribute by bringing together five articles that provide different views of the dialectic relationship between technology, culture and tradition. The issue opens with Khaled Adham's examination of tourist resorts as a stage for the invention of tradition. As he points out, in Egypt, tradition not only serves as a theme for arranging a consumable cultural montage, but it has become a deliberate strategy for capital accumulation. John Stallmeyer, in his piece on Bangalore, next looks at technology as tradition, particularly at how the technology economy has become spatialized in corporate office campuses in India's “Silicon Valley.” But space here, like information technology itself, is unbounded, creating contiguous territory not with its immediate surroundings, but with Silicon Valley, California, and with other Silicon Valleys across the world. This relationship between built form and technology also frames Shundana Yusuf's article, which presents the social history of a mode of architectural representation constructed entirely beyond physical space, through the medium of radio during the years between World Wars I and II.

In our “On Theory” section Paul Memmott and James Davidson explore an expansive definition of the concept of architecture which not only reflects Western stylistic ambitions but expresses core cultural and contextual values. Their goal is to recast the relationship between architectural value and building tradition in a form that can be applied without bias across all human environments. Our fifth article, by Lynne Dearborn, also engages with culture and tradition, but does so by looking at the efforts of a specific group of tradition-makers, Hmong refugees in the U.S. She further explains how building forms in Milwaukee, ostensibly a city in decay, can provide a vital site for immigrant groups like the Hmong to reconstitute their traditions in settings far different from those they left behind.

In the next few months, IASTE members will all receive a poster detailing the sessions of the 2008 conference. Please also visit our website, <http://arch.ced.berkeley.edu/research/iaste/>, for details. This year has proved opportune to reflect on our history as we look toward to what lies ahead. We welcome you in that engagement.

*Nezar AlSayyad*

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# Global Tourism, Hyper-Traditions, and the Fractal Condition of the Sign

KHALED ADHAM

Since the early 1990s the tourism industry in Egypt has opened a new geographic territory in the Red Sea region for investment. In new commodified spaces there it has remained preoccupied with providing an exotic, “authentic,” cultural experience for international tourists, similar to that they have long desired from trips along the Nile. In this essay I will discuss how the developers and designers of Kafr al-Gouna, part of al-Gouna integrated town-resort, have used architectural forms to reinvent heritage in this new location in order to simulate an authentic experience for tourists. Through discussion of this case I want to, first, problematize the concepts of authenticity and tradition as they are practiced and theorized, and, second, shed light on a specific urban strategy used to produce tourist spaces in today’s Egypt.

For after the natural, commodity, and structural stages of value comes the fractal stage. The first of these stages had a natural referent, and value developed on the basis of a natural use of the world. The second was founded on a general equivalence, and value developed by reference to a logic of the commodity. The third is governed by a code, and value develops here by reference to a set of models. At the fourth, the fractal (or viral, or radiant) stage of value, there is no point of reference at all, and value radiates in all directions, occupying all interstices, without reference to anything whatsoever, by virtue of pure contiguity.

—Jean Baudrillard<sup>1</sup>

With the inception of the tourist industry in nineteenth-century Egypt, the paintings, writings and travelogues of scores of European scholars, writers, adventurers and artists created the dreamscape, and thereby the desire, to travel and personally experience the “exotic Orient.” During this era, Egypt’s tourism industry was based on its heritage along the River Nile, and the experience of the visitor was, to a great extent, imbricated into the fabric of the place — its everyday life, work relations, culture and nature, and architectural

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heritage.<sup>2</sup> Since the end of the 1980s, however, another phase of tourism development has emerged in Egypt, one based on mass entertainment, highlighting not only the cultural component of visits to historical sites along the Nile but newly developed areas, such as pristine and sparsely populated regions along the Red Sea and in the southern Sinai. These new geographic destinations are rapidly opening to investment that targets a market niche relatively new to Egypt — beach, leisure-oriented tourism. Though it is difficult to speak in terms of actual figures due to classification problems, there is no doubt this new type of tourism now constitutes the largest market among the various sectors within the tourism industry in Egypt.<sup>3</sup>

Because the tourism industry revels in perceptions of difference and otherness, many developments in the Red Sea region are preoccupied with reinventing the illusion or fantasy of these qualities.<sup>4</sup> Thus, developers there have been constructing themed, artificial environments that copy from other places and times. Such theming of local architectural heritage follows what is becoming an increasingly prominent theme in tourist developments worldwide. It also follows the pattern by which many cities are striving to rebuild their economies based on tourism. The resulting ocularscape of fantasy places, however, only provides a movie reel of images for visual consumption, and it places international tourists at the center of both public and private urban development and regeneration schemes.

The amount of investment in (and revenue from) new tourist projects in the Middle East attests to these trends. The United Nations World Tourism Organization predicts that in 2006 travel and tourism will have generated close to \$150 billion worth of activity in the Middle East region alone, accounting for nearly 10 percent of both GDP and total employment.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, it is estimated that spending on leisure and tourism projects in the Middle East will hit \$3 trillion over the next twenty years.<sup>6</sup>

Mike Robinson has rightly pointed out that tourism, as a force of change in the built environment like other economic endeavors, is not easy to disentangle from other globalizing influences. His premise, however, is that “tourism has become an increasingly significant driver of cultural remaking and reinvention.”<sup>7</sup> In this essay, I want to build on this premise. Specifically, I want to trace the story of the proliferation in Egypt and beyond of a specific reinvented architectural tradition. I also want to discuss the conditions of its emergence, recent rise, and global spread, which I will suggest are due to the late-twentieth-century expansion of global cultural tourism and an industry of “authenticity.” I will give particular weight to the story of how the developers and designers of Kafr al-Gouna, part of al-Gouna integrated town-resort by the Red Sea, have used this reinvented tradition to simulate an authentic cultural experience for their international clientele.

One must keep in mind that any discussion of the cultural remaking and reinvention of tradition will be knitted with

more general cultural and political debates concerning authenticity, heritage, tradition, culture, and identity formation. In Egypt, these debates have been further interwoven with a wider discussion of the role Western countries have played in shaping the challenges faced by its contemporary society. This relationship has triggered various reactions at different times.

In general terms, Nezar AlSayyad has distinguished three main phases in the change of attitude toward heritage and tradition in the past two centuries — and, by inference, other closely related conceptual corollaries.<sup>8</sup> While the first phase corresponded with the end of colonialism and was characterized by an increasing interest in local heritage, the second phase corresponded with postcolonial nationalism and was marked by rising demands for resorting to heritage as a form of resistance against the homogenizing forces of modernity. The third period, according to AlSayyad, has corresponded with globalization, and is characterized by an “out-right manufacture of heritage coupled with the active consumption of tradition in the built environment.”<sup>9</sup> No tradition in the built environment, one can deduce, now holds permanent meaning; traditions can become whatever particular societies want to make of them.

This is also the lesson of the seminal work of Edward Shils on the subject.<sup>10</sup> It is often argued, however, that in the past two centuries modernity has not only freed societies from tradition, but established it as its antinomy. John Tomlinson has declared that this tradition-modern dualism has become “the single, universal story of human development.”<sup>11</sup> For reasons related to the history of colonization and postcolonization in Egypt, we have become heirs to this same antinomy of *al-assala* versus *al-mu’asara* (originality versus contemporaneity) and *al-taqlidiya* versus *al-hadatha* (traditionalism versus modernism). And since the middle of the nineteenth century this antinomy has created fierce debate between two intellectual camps, traditionalists and modernists, according to which it has been customary to find tradition either scorned or lamented.<sup>12</sup>

In architectural and urban planning theories and practices in Egypt, a similar, but not identical, dualism thesis has circulated for some time. Khaled Asfour has thus observed that even though architects in the Arab world come from a wide variety and backgrounds, most critics attempt to lump current architectural trends there under the convenient labels “traditionalist” or “modernist.”<sup>13</sup> Contemporary Arab cities, it is often claimed, represent a physical duality between traditional Islamic and modern Western design.<sup>14</sup> Yet, while this interpretive model may have been productive in explaining the problems facing architecture and cities at the crossroads of decolonization, I would echo Janet Abu-Lughod, who has argued that the distinction no longer provides a sufficient framework with which to decipher the current situation.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, I want to suggest that unless we can go beyond this dualism, the fields of architecture and urban planning in Egypt will remain trapped within a vicious circle.

Hegel taught that the position contrary to a point of view is always trapped in the framework of that point of view. I shall contend that this is clearly evident in the contrast of traditional versus modern — or their interchangeable binary oppositions, Islamic versus Western, or authentic versus inauthentic — in the architectural theories and practices in Egypt.

In order to disentangle the maze of problems involved in this antinomy (all of which it will, unfortunately, be impossible to touch on in this essay), I shall select one thread and pursue one major aim: the possibility that today's practicing architectural traditionalists (who at the surface might appear opposed to modernity) are, indeed, producing hybrid architecture and urbanity — not the “pure,” “uncontaminated,” “authentic” buildings they usually claim to be designing.

I shall address this issue by looking at the one precedent most often cited to demonstrate a traditional approach to architecture in Egypt. This is the work of Hassan Fathy, which his students (among whom are the architects of Kafr al-Gouna) have continued to propagate as an authentic Egyptian architecture. As we shall see, this tradition has developed during two of the phases in the changing attitude toward heritage and tradition described by AlSayyad: first, with Egyptian and Arab nationalism; and, second, with the expansion of the global forces of cultural tourism and the authenticity industry.

The imagery of this approach owes much to Fathy's innovation in combining two building traditions by twinning the forms of the dome and the barrel vault.<sup>16</sup> It was through Fathy that this couplet began a tour in place and time which has led to its current status as a representational tool, or sign, of traditional heritage. As a consequence of this trans-

formation, this couplet is now being widely adopted by the tourist and authenticity industries in Egypt — and perhaps, as we shall see, by practitioners abroad.

As a prelude to the story of Kafr al-Gouna, I will begin with a brief history of this reinvented architectural tradition.

#### TRADITION FROM NECESSITY TO SPECTACLE

The story begins in 1945 when the Egyptian Department of Antiquities commissioned Fathy to design and build a village to which to relocate the inhabitants of Gourna, across the Nile from Luxor, who presumably lived by robbing the nearby ancient rock-cut tombs of the Theban necropolis (FIG. 1).<sup>17</sup> While “old” Gourna was located near these tombs, New Gourna would be set amid the sugarcane fields half way between the ancient hills of the Valley of the Kings and the River Nile.

As Timothy Mitchell has pointed out, Fathy considered the New Gourna commission an opportunity to build a model village that would launch a complete regeneration of the Egyptian countryside.<sup>18</sup> Toward this goal he would develop an inexpensive architectural style for the rural poor, which he could advocate as an alternative to modern Western architectural styles. In particular, Fathy imagined that a regional reappropriation of tradition and technology might stem the tide of the International Style, which was then gaining momentum in Egypt. This was also the time of the nationalist movement in Egypt, which eventually led to the end of the monarchy and the establishment of a nation-state in 1952.



FIGURE 1. Old Gourna is located at the edge of the Theban necropolis.

Mitchell has argued that in his search for a national village architecture, Fathy discovered and drew upon the architectural style of the Kenuzi Nubians. Nubia is a region located along the Nile south of Aswan, straddling the political border between Egypt and Sudan. In ancient times, Nubia was an independent kingdom; and in modern times, Mitchell pointed out, the Nubians hardly considered themselves Egyptians. But nowhere within the political boundaries of Egypt did Fathy find the idyllic countryside of his imagination. What he found in the Nubian villages of *gharb* Aswan, however, was a particular roof construction method that created an aesthetically pleasing character — namely, barrel vaults built with mud bricks.

Interestingly, when Fathy discovered it there, barrel-vault residential construction had only existed in Nubia for less than four decades. It had arrived, according to Yasser Mahgoub, from another region to the north, known as Daraw.<sup>19</sup> When the First Aswan Dam was constructed in 1902, the northern parts of Nubia, where the Nubian Kenuzi resided, were flooded, forcing them to move their villages to higher ground. The Kenuzi were faced with rebuilding their houses quickly, and they adapted the barrel-vaulted roof system popular in Daraw, twenty miles north of Aswan. Until this time, there is no evidence this method, which had disappeared from the rest of the region, had never been popular with the Nubians, particularly for houses.

In essence, then, the barrel-vault method embodied the revival of an old technique under duress; it did not represent local symbolic or aesthetic desire. Nevertheless, to Fathy it had great appeal, and he combined it with the domes he knew from the mosques of Islamic Cairo to form a new architectural language, which he used to build New Gourna.

In subsequent years, although the settlement of New Gourna failed for reasons that are not relevant here, its architectural language, particularly the twinning of the dome and vault, survived (FIG. 2). However, quite separate from Fathy's original intent, during the 1950s and the 1960s (with the exception of another model village built in the western desert) it was used exclusively in the design of custom residences for upper-class Egyptians inside and around Cairo.<sup>20</sup> For practical and symbolic reasons, despite the fact Fathy had invented this architecture for them, peasants did not adopt the domes and vaults for their houses. First, the forms presented an obstacle to expanding houses vertically; and, second, they were associated with graves.<sup>21</sup> Other possible reasons the domes and vaults were not more widely adopted included successful lobbying by modern contracting companies and a desire by the national government to appear modern in the design of state-subsidized projects.<sup>22</sup>

Until 1970, therefore, the use of Fathy's domes and barrel vaults was extremely limited. However, in that year Fathy was given a significant commission to design a tourist village on part of the land set aside for, but never occupied by, New Gourna, and that would allow Fathy to complete his vision of a traditional village. In the tourist complex, however, linear pedestrian walkways would largely replace the diagonal pathways of the original village. And as James Steele has pointed out, where the focal point of New Gourna had been a mosque, it would here be a restaurant.<sup>23</sup> Although this project was never realized, the seeds for the later use of its style as a thematic representation of authentic heritage were most definitely sown.



FIGURE 2. The market plaza in New Gourna.

The cultural basis for that growth had already been established. In 1962 the government merged Egypt's Ministry of Culture — the political body invented after the 1952 revolution to develop and promote national culture and preserve local heritage — with its Ministry of Information and Tourism. Tharwat Aukasha, who headed the Information and Tourism Ministry from its establishment in 1958 until this merger, commented that this decision would thereafter imbue culture and heritage “with excessive touristic and media influences.”<sup>24</sup> However, in the early 1960s Nasser had committed Egypt to an ambitious modernization program that could not be achieved without hard currency to purchase technology from abroad, and one way to earn this currency was to support the tourist industry. Nevertheless, in hindsight, this sudden change in orientation appears to be a precursor to the government's later decision to assume a much more elaborate role in mobilizing the country in the service of the foreign spectator, or traveler.<sup>25</sup>

The late 1970s and early 1980s also ushered in an era when Fathy's architectural vocabulary would travel from Egypt, across the deserts of Arabia, to the booming new states of the Persian Gulf. The spread came in the aftermath of independence and a first modernization wave in these countries. For some ruling families in the Gulf region, Fathy's domes and vaults symbolized their struggle to retain a sense of identity against the tide of change — even though this type of construction had never existed on the Arabian Peninsula before. And during this time, Fathy and a group of his disciples built fancy palaces and villas in the Gulf states, exporting the style of twinned domes and vaults and effectively internationalizing it.

Mitchell has subsequently argued that these projects should not discredit Fathy's earlier endeavor to establish a new vernacular Egyptian architecture. I agree with this position. However, I want to raise the following question: if the Daraw (or Nubian Kanuzi) architectural heritage could be adapted to represent a traditional, authentic architecture for all of Egypt, what did it mean to consciously export it to other Arabian lands? Even more of a conceptual problem was Fathy's decision to use this same architecture in 1980 to build the Dar al-Islam School in New Mexico, U.S.A. — a total despatialization and decontextualization of the “authentic” (FIG. 3). Curiously, what began as a local, rediscovered method of construction for poor Egyptian peasants could now provide the architectural language for a group of Muslim Americans who wanted to distinguish their buildings from the adobe constructions of the Navaho Indians.

Defenders of Fathy argue that adobe has always been used in New Mexico, and that the weather conditions there are similar to Egypt — particularly in the summer. Yet, while the first point may be true, the second is certainly not. When I visited Fathy's school building in the summer of 1995, the temperature inside was very comfortable in comparison to the simmering heat of the surrounding desert. But its occu-



FIGURE 3. *Dar al-Islam in New Mexico, U.S.A.*

pants told me that during the winter the inside temperature dropped to such an extent that they had to wear winter coats indoors.<sup>26</sup> It was clear that Fathy was using this invented tradition as a way to anchor a group of Muslim Americans within a larger Muslim world. But in doing so, the design process no longer privileged an actual building tradition, but the ideology of its users.

What began as a regional, traditional and authentic architecture was thus first generalized to represent a national, authentic heritage, and then internationalized as an authentic prototype to be adopted anywhere, regardless of the local environment or aesthetic traditions. Isn't this the same critique that has been raised with regard to the Modern Movement?

#### GLOBAL TOURISM AND CULTURAL INDUSTRY

In Egypt, Fathy's domes and vaults continued to be used on only a limited scale in cities and villages until about the end of the 1980s. However, in 1986 they were applied for the first time to the design of a major tourist facility. This was the Movenpick Hotel near al-Qusair in the Red Sea region. Its architects were the husband and wife team of Ramy al-Dahan and Sohair Farid, disciples of Fathy who would later play a great role in propagating the style through their work on Kafr-al-Gouna.

It was around the same time, as many social commentators have observed, that a transformation in the global force of capitalism began to be felt. And to locate and make sense of the impulse in Egypt to reinvent heritage in the production of tourist spaces in the two decades since, I want to make a short detour and broadly sketch the forces reshaping today's tourism industry.

It has been argued that since the late 1980s and early 90s the drive for capital accumulation in advanced, industrial societies — and in their corollary, loosely connected socioeco-

conomic and political nodes or clones in developing countries — has established a second economic tier, where capital is accumulated through cultural rather than industrial production.<sup>27</sup> The main activity in this expanding tier is not the manufacture of material goods in factories but the provision and consumption of services and the production of cultural experience.<sup>28</sup> This takes place in specific spaces in the city, and a significant portion of these new hyperspaces of capital have been claimed for the ever-expanding entertainment, culture and tourism industries. Some scholars have gone so far as to claim that many contemporary cities are metamorphosing completely to accommodate these new spaces.<sup>29</sup>

Jennifer Craik has pointed out that at about the same time that the physical environment was changing, another phase of tourism, highlighting the cultural component of the tourist experience, was beginning to emerge.<sup>30</sup> She has contended that this happened precisely because tourism fit with the emerging trend within economic development toward service-based, consumer-oriented industries. Similarly, Timothy Mitchell has noted that “tourism is an industry of consumption, and the consumption not of individual goods but of a more complex commodity, experiences.”<sup>31</sup>

Tourism is one of the modern era’s oldest cultural industries. And ever since it was launched in a formal way by Thomas Cook in the mid-nineteenth century, it has involved the packaging of cultural experiences. Yet, today, from its beginnings as a only bud in the bark of the capitalist tree, the branch of cultural capitalism has grown to where it may soon eclipse the original tree. Like the industrialist tier of the capitalist system, the culture and tourism tier is also increasingly being subject to a global regime of free markets. In its new trajectory, involving the development of mass tourism, the use value of the tourist services, experiences and spaces (or “products,” as the tourist marketers like to call them) have become commodities to be advertised, marketed and sold, as Karl Marx would have argued, much like any other commodity.<sup>32</sup> And because in global high capitalism, cultural production in general, and tourist “products” in particular, are increasingly standardized, there is an increasing demand for built environments that “attach themselves to signs that carry an additional element of value.”<sup>33</sup>

It was this additional element of value in the resort of Movenpick al-Qusair that quickly gave it the exotic character tourists so enjoyed. Ultimately, I want to suggest, the domes and vaults of Movenpick set a model not for the poor villages of Egypt, as Fathy had intended, but for a new breed of tourist resorts and hotels, particularly those striving to create an experience of authenticity. However, a total simulated authentic experience using this style was not fully embraced until the development of the integrated tourist resort-town of al-Gouna. More than any other tourist project, al-Gouna introduced domes and vaults forcefully to the age of hyper-signification, where architectural forms and spaces constitute a stage for the mercantile activity of entertaining and pleasing ever-expanding numbers of tourists.

## KAFR AL-GOUNA

The year to be remembered for al-Gouna integrated city-resort is 1989. In that year, Orascom, a leading Egyptian construction company, established a sister company, Orascom Projects and Tourist Developments, to develop approximately 3,000 acres of land about twenty kilometers (thirteen miles) north of the sprawling town of Hurghada. Like many other developers, Orascom intended to capitalize on the area’s delightful climate as well as the crystal waters and coral reefs of the Red Sea.<sup>34</sup> However, unlike the others, the company — inspired by the vision of its chairman, Sameeh Sawiris — came to envision al-Gouna as a fully independent resort-town, with hotels, villas, shopping boutiques, golf courses, a marina, an airport, a school, a hospital, two factories, housing for workers, and other support facilities.

Sawiris’s original vision had been relatively humble, limited to few villas designed by the local architect Shehab Mazhar for family and friends. But, according to Hani ‘Ayad, director of architecture and site planning for OPTD, a bigger concept of al-Gouna gradually developed in Sawiris’s mind over the last few years of the 1980s.<sup>35</sup> Probably because of a new law prohibiting the development of areas directly by the sea for nontourist projects, Sawiris was also forced to consider a different approach to the company’s land north of Hurghada. This led him to purchase an even larger tract and hire a French architect, Alfredo Freda, to develop a master plan for an integrated resort-town.

From the beginning, there were several dominant design principles for this new fully independent resort community. One was a system of inland artificial lagoons containing islands connected by bridges and promenades (FIG. 4). Sawiris also envisioned the resort-town as sprawling around Kafr al-Gouna, which he wanted to resemble a vernacular fishing village that had existed long before the resort was built. In other words, since the place did not have any human history, he would invent one.

Of course, cities do usually grow over a long period of time around such historic cores. This is a pattern evident in the fabric of most villages and cities in Egypt, as well as in many other Mediterranean resort towns. What Sawiris wanted to do was emulate this pattern. Indeed, so faithful was he to the idea of inventing history that his first inclination was actually to move fishermen and their families to the resort village and use them to create a new al-Kafr hamlet. Had this plan been implemented, it would have embodied a total simulation of the vernacular, creating a showcase community to enthrall tourists. Many difficulties intervened, however, and the idea was eventually abandoned and replaced by another, more practical one — one that would also save the company money.

When construction began in al-Gouna, Orascom initially accommodated its staff and engineers in Hurghada, a condition that most new resorts had to face during construction. However, Sawiris soon thought of saving money by housing



FIGURE 4. Inland artificial lagoons and islands define the character of al-Gouna (©Ayman Taher).

his staff in the center of the development in cheap new buildings that would afford the image of authentic life for visiting tourists. To make the “old fishing hamlet” occupied by resort workers look as if it had been there for many generations, the architecture would have to look spontaneous and vernacular — carefully and orderly chaotic.

What Sawiris wanted was that the village look organic, as if the people had built it themselves. And in 1992 he hired al-Dahan and Farid, designers of the Movenpick al-Qusair, to design and supervise construction of seventy houses on one of the islands, which he designated as the old city center, Kafr al-Gouna. This was the biggest commission al-Dahan and Farid had received since they had set up their own office in the mid-1980s to pursue work in the tradition of their mentor.

More than anything else, it is its intended, all-pervasive image that distinguishes Kafr al-Gouna from other attempts to simulate “authenticity.” According to ‘Ayad, Sawiris envisioned houses that did not follow any formal architectural rules, yet evinced a very strong character. To achieve this effect, he had al-Dahan and Farid design the houses directly on the site with only rough sketches. The architects overall scheme also involved arranging the houses and support facilities along a labyrinth of winding alleys (FIG. 5).

As a construction method, al-Dahan and Farid proposed the same brick bearing-wall system they had used in most of

their earlier works. Such building materials and construction methods fitted with Sawiris’s intended effect; indeed, it was a major reason the architectural pair had been hired. On many earlier occasions, the architects had also argued for reviving traditions by using local materials and forms. For them, local materials were “more healthy than concrete.” Sounding like her mentor, Farid argued that “everyone is building in an international way today. We have a tradition in Egypt. Why not revive it?”<sup>36</sup>

Employing this novel approach was not without its problems. Although Orascom is one of Egypt’s largest construction and engineering companies, it was inexperienced with this type of construction. With the architects’ help, however, the company hired skilled artisans to teach its workers to build whitewashed domes and vaults. Many of these workers had been involved with earlier such projects, particularly the Movenpick al-Qusair.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, according to ‘Ayad, the construction process proved to be “a very tedious and costly experience, twenty percent more expensive than the conventional concrete method.”<sup>38</sup> However, al-Dahan and Farid maintained that their method was actually quicker and easier and “work[ed] out to be cheaper than concrete.”<sup>39</sup>

The difference of opinion presents a typical confrontation between two systems of building, and it would be wrong to rush to any conclusion concerning it. Among the factors



FIGURE 5. *Plan of Kafr al-Gouna.*  
Drawing courtesy of Ramy al-Dahan.

complicating construction of Kafr al-Gouna was that it was hard to control nonstandard methods of construction (the almost lost knowledge of traditional building techniques) with modern management systems. In addition, the process required a different division of labor and lacked, to an extent, the standardization of building types which would allow Fordist ease, efficiency, and speed of assembly. This situation changed, at least slightly, when the method was integrated with the company's conventional approach to construction. According to 'Ayad, at the beginning, the architects' involvement was tremendous. But eventually, Orascom's own workers learned the method and started building without the direct help of al-Dahan and Farid.

Despite the additional time and expense of construction, the finished houses were so impressive to Sawiris and to foreign visitors that the company moved its staff housing elsewhere and transformed the entire island into a village-resort composed of villas and hotels for wealthy visitors (FIGS. 6, 7). This change required some architectural adaptations. But the technique employed by the architects also meant they could adjust the plans to meet the developer's shifting needs — something that would have been impossible had they used reinforced concrete. In time, the entire *kafr* was redesigned to include new tourist-oriented spaces, such as Souq al-Balad (a marketplace in the assumed style of a traditional Oriental market) and al-Khayamia shopping arcade (a clone of the historical



FIGURE 6. (LEFT) *Kafr al-Gouna* (©Ayman Taher).



FIGURE 7. (RIGHT) *Houses in Kafr al-Gouna* (©Ayman Taher).





**FIGURE 8.** Entrance to al-Khayamia shopping arcade, a clone of the historical Khayamia cloth-market outside of Bab Zewaila, Cairo.

Khayamia cloth-market outside Bab Zewaila, the south gate of old Cairo) (FIG. 8). With these changes, al-Kafr pivoted suddenly to become the focal point of the development, showcasing a collage of names and images selected from elements of formal or vernacular Arab, Islamic, or Egyptian heritage.

Dawar al-'Umda hotel was one example of the new tourist facilities in which styles, names, and cultures were mixed (FIG. 9). Sawiris contended that every small village in Egypt had an *'umda* — a chief or mayor, who lived in a *dawar*, a big house, where he could host villagers and visitors. Therefore, Kafr al-Gouna had to have one too. Sawiris imagined this as a small building with about 25 rooms that would look as if it had been transformed at some point from the mayor's house into a hotel run by a family. Once again, to design the building, the origin was first reinvented, then copied. "Authenticity" was manufactured to accentuate the all-encompassing feeling and impression of history and of the vernacular.



**FIGURE 9.** Dawar al-'Umda hotel, a reinvented model of a mayor's house that never existed (©Ayman Taher).



**FIGURE 10.** Inspired by the Ponte Vecchio in Florence, the architects designed the additional rooms over a lagoon.

According to 'Ayad, the hotel was originally built to this vision. But additional rooms had to be added later for reasons of feasibility. Interestingly, this involved an exercise in mimicry that crossed the Mediterranean Sea to the Italian peninsula (FIG. 10). Inspired by the Ponte Vecchio in Florence, the architects designed the additional rooms to extend partially out over a lagoon, creating a spectacular effect that would have made a real Nile Valley *'umda* blush.<sup>40</sup> Except in its name, therefore, Dawar al-'Umda hotel copies an original that never existed. Yet in the pamphlet promoting al-Gouna it is described as "authentic to the core."

The effect of the hotel's exterior was further complemented in its interior. Here the designers Shahira Fahmy and Mona Hussien mixed pieces and images from vernacular Egypt and Islamic Cairo. These included meticulously chosen antique furniture and handcrafted chandeliers, gas lamps, and beds with corner posts and overhead canopies. Meanwhile, outside the hotel, in Tamr Henna, or Kafr al-Gouna Center, the architects designed yet another interesting simulation of the vernacular, an Egyptian-style cafe. Called al-Qahwa, it mimicked an imagined "original" coffee shop, where Egyptians would sit to smoke water pipes and drink tea. So careful was this simulation that graffiti was intentionally painted over the pastel colors of the interior walls (FIG. 11).

In several important regards, however, the impulse to create an "authentic experience" for the tourist (who now occupied the center, instead of gazing at it from a distance) seems to have overruled important considerations. For example, the original idea had been that the construction method would make modern, electric cooling systems unnecessary. In addition to insulating the walls, the domes and vaults were supposed to provide natural cooling in a desert environment. However, for the international tourist, this natural cooling system was not enough, and the searing summer temperatures required installation of air conditioning units (FIG. 12).



**FIGURE 11.** *Al-Qahwa* was designed to mimic an imagined “original” coffee-shop.

‘Ayad’s observations here are very revealing. In describing the houses at the end of the construction process, he concluded that they “ended up with form and not function.”<sup>41</sup> In other words, material objects and images of vernacular architecture could provide an emotionally powerful illusion of authenticity, but the tourist never really wanted to feel what it was to live in a vernacular building or sit in a vernacular coffee shop. To begin, such an authentic experience would have involved sweating. Instead, the vernacular, or the “original,” if this could really refer to something, needed to be decontextualized and cleansed so it could more effectively re-present the real.

In the years following construction of Kafr al-Gouna the resort around it continued to grow. More than ten foreign and Egyptian architects have now worked on it. This use of multiple architects has been deliberate, intended to create diversity of styles, underpinning the idea that the place grew



**FIGURE 12.** Air conditioning split units were eventually installed.

incrementally over a long span of time. However, it perhaps made it inevitable that the original copy would, itself, emerge as a source for copying, mimicking or recycling. Ironically, or perhaps significantly, this copying of the copy would come from one of the high priests of postmodern architecture.

When the time came to design a third hotel in al-Gouna, the Sheraton Miramar, the developer selected Michael Graves as its designer (FIGS. 13, 14). And when Graves first visited al-Gouna he was not impressed with the Mediterranean style of its first hotel, the Paradiso. Nor did he like what he considered the European style of its second, the Movenpick al-Gouna, which he thought was out of context. Familiar with the work of Fathy, what he most admired was the work of al-Dahan and Farid.

Sawiris claims he deliberately took Graves to Kafr al-Gouna “so that [Graves] could refer to it as his source of Egyptian architecture.” Sawiris further related that he “asked [Graves] to design the new hotel in a modernized version of this style, as if the work of Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy was being reinterpreted two generations later.”<sup>42</sup> For Graves, the architecture of Kafr al-Gouna became the springboard for his Sheraton Miramar design, as well as for other facilities he designed in al-Gouna. Thus, the domes and vaults Fathy intended as a model for a new peasant architecture have not only migrated to the Red sea region from the Nile valley, but been reinterpreted twice in less than ten years.

#### AUTHENTICITY AND THE FRACTAL VALUE OF THE SIGN

At this point, I want to bring this story of architectural heritage back to the question of authenticity and the transformation of value inherent in such cycles of reinvention. In particular, I want to suggest that the difference between the original, the copy, the simulation, and the simulacrum are all apparent in this story of invented traditions.

Consider the use of barrel-vaulted roofs of the Kenuzi villages. These emerged as a result of cultural exchange, of help received from the builders in Daraw to the north, embodying a revival of an old method due to an urgent necessity for houses. The architecture was largely determined by local forces; it was “the insular period” to use Nezar AlSayyad’s words.<sup>43</sup> However, when Fathy designed el-Gourna near Luxor in the 1940s, his design diffused this traditional method of roofing belonging to people who lived in the Nubian region, while combining it with dome construction prevalent in Islamic architecture, particularly the Mamluke mosques in Cairo. This was clearly not the case of a tradition handed down, but of a tradition being invented.

As Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have pointed out, traditions that claim to be old are often quite recent in origin, and in many cases they are invented.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, in mimicking traditional architectural elements and construction



FIGURE 13. (LEFT) In the Sheraton Miramar, Graves is mimicking a mimicry of a mimicry.

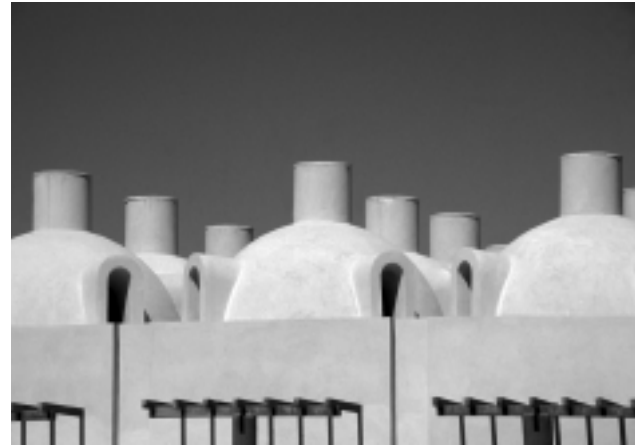


FIGURE 14. (RIGHT) Graves transformed dome.

methods, Fathy did not intend to reproduce an old-world environment; rather, he wanted to establish a national architectural style. Nevertheless, even though el-Gourna was an attempt to stand for something else, for a whole national heritage, it was not a mere thematizing, or commodification of an “authentic,” original. Although it was a copy, it still bore a semblance to traditional models, whether of Nubian, Daraw, or Mamluke architecture.

I also want to argue, however, that in this ambivalent condition of the architectural tradition emerging in New Gourna — of both having and not having a semblance with a model — its ability to acquire a sign value different from its former association was born. In displacing the sign value of the dome and the vault, Fathy transformed tradition. From the beginning, therefore, his pilot village marked the end of a Nubian building tradition and the beginning of a transformed version of it — one that, interestingly, has still not succeeded in being attractive to the rural poor. Rather, the subsequent years have witnessed the dome and vault acquiring a new romantic, nostalgic sign value appealing to the richest, most elite segment of society.

In this process of semiotic appropriation, al-Dahan’s and Farid’s designs for both the Movenpick al-Qusair and Kafr al-Gouna were first-order simulations. These buildings, to an extent, stand as separate from the model, whether that of Fathy’s el-Gourna, or of Nubian villages. The architects represented a vernacular which never existed in this form (think of the Dawar El-’Umda hotel/house). The design is more real than the real; it is the vernacular cleansed, retouched, and refurbished.

It is also important to recognize that the architecture of Kafr al-Gouna distinguishes itself from Movenpick al-Qusair through an approach to the simulation of heritage and the vernacular that is all encompassing. Using domes and vaults, Kafr al-Gouna as a whole is akin to a theme park of appropri-

ated vernacular and historical images and names. While the Movenpick al-Qusair does not conceal that it is architecture for scenography, Kafr al-Gouna represents itself as real. Like someone hiding behind a mask at a costume party, Movenpick al-Qusair pretends to be someone else, without the erasure of the pretense. By contrast, Kafr al-Gouna attempts a complete urban disguise.

In the Sheraton Miramar hotel the reality is even different. Here Graves mimicked a mimicry of a mimicry of an architecture that never existed in the Red Sea region. The production of the domes and vaults has no relation whatsoever with the production of the Nubian or Daraw house. In other words, it is a second-order simulation, a simulacrum. No longer is there a reference to the meaning or function of the model; architectural elements have been transformed into signifiers with no external referent. Neither do they have any practical use value. This is architecture for the sheer reason of being spectacle.

Kafr al-Gouna’s spaces are like staged commercial entertainment spectacles, replete with signs that, in addition to their function in differentiating the resort-town from others, communicate meanings which promote specific lifestyles and patterns of consumption.<sup>45</sup> Mark Gottdiener, among others, has called attention to the fact that today lifestyles are intrinsic markers of “who one is and as a means to connect to others.”<sup>46</sup> Akin to the individual’s possession of physical commodities, adopting the tourist lifestyle marks and conveys meaning, status and prestige within a peer group. In particular, within one’s own society it displays the acquisition of cultural capital. To put it differently, while the display function of commodity signs remains a significant source for individual identity-actualization and prestige, the accumulation of cultural experiences, such as travel to exotic places, represents an increasingly powerful alternative source for the acquisition of identity and status.

Illustrative of this force is the eagerness of many tourists in the resort-town of al-Gouna to take photographs in certain spots so that they can tell their peers back home that they were in a particular place. This is the “I have been there” feeling, to paraphrase what Baudrillard calls the “I did it” feeling.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, it is to gain cultural capital that a large segment of the traveling public is increasingly motivated to experience and consume differences and the exotic. And it is for supplying this exotic experience that the cultural and tourism industries in the Red Sea region of Egypt are manufacturing authenticity and reinventing tradition.

#### PARTING THOUGHTS

The hybrid mixture of al-Gouna’s various hotels and thematic spectacles has proven a business success, and become a recipe that has now been repeated by its developer. Today, al-Gouna’s domes and vaults are being exported, or cloned, for other fancy tourist resorts across the country, region, and maybe soon, the world.<sup>48</sup> The list below includes all of Orascom’s projects operating, planned, or in the pipeline.

Al-Gouna . . . . .	Egypt
Taba Heights . . . . .	Egypt
Bernice . . . . .	Egypt
North Coast . . . . .	Egypt
Tala Bay . . . . .	Jordan
The Cove . . . . .	UAE
Wadi Al-Qurum . . . . .	Oman
Salalah . . . . .	Oman
Al-Soda Island . . . . .	Oman
Sifah . . . . .	Oman
Kamaran Island . . . . .	Yemen
Club Med . . . . .	Mauritius
Invitation . . . . .	Morocco

Al-Gouna now provides an architectural recipe that offers tourists snapshots of a history and an architectural tradition that did not exist prior to its inception in the early 1990s. However, if al-Gouna claims authenticity because it espouses visual association with some regional, vernacular or past architectural forms and elements — a visual authenticity, if you will — then, when considering the list above, one begins to wonder which history and which tradition these new cloned spaces represent. Islamic, Egyptian, Arab, Omani, Nubian! As small souvenirs and statuettes of Nubians fill the shelves of many tourist shops, their domes and vaults are also becoming available for appropriation in the global architectural supermarket, to paraphrase the words of Gordon Mathews (FIG. 15).<sup>49</sup>

Nezar AlSayyad has written that the emerging idea of a global cultural supermarket has cast further doubt on the legitimacy of tradition as a stable frame of reference and a harbinger of authenticity. According to AlSayyad, “tradition has become,



FIGURE 15. Like their vaults, Nubians have become tourist objects as small souvenirs and statuettes of them fill the shelves of many tourist shops.

like culture, a matter of choice, because both information and alternative identities are now available in this global supermarket.”<sup>50</sup> The supermarket is today the perfect metaphorical space for our contemporary “experience economy” — and for our architectural imagination, particularly when dealing with history and the reinvention of architectural heritage.

Jorinde Seijdel has pointed out that the supermarket — an offspring of the department store — is a product of modernity.<sup>51</sup> Dell Upton wrote that the adjective “tradition” and its corollary, “authenticity,” are also products of modernity — I should add, objectified through the modern institution of the museum.<sup>52</sup> Like the museum, the department store (predecessor of the supermarket) fulfilled an important function within the new capitalist system: that of display. Walter Benjamin once described the Paris shopping arcade as a place where the merchandise had for the first time created a small world of its own, and he characterized it as a surrealistic dream. Today, according to Seijdel, the supermarket, or hyper-market, manifests itself rather as a hyper-realistic utopia. And in this utopian world of consumption (of commodities, signs, and spatial experiences), “the law that is imposed on us is the law of the confusion of categories.”<sup>53</sup>

“Each category,” wrote Baudrillard, “is generalized to the greatest possible extent, so that it eventually loses all specificity and is reabsorbed by all other categories.”<sup>54</sup>

In the realm of architecture and urbanism, some critics are beginning to recognize a similar confusion of categories and functions. Paul Virilio, for example, has declared that cities are becoming like airports.<sup>55</sup> Following this thread, I would suggest that airports are looking more like shopping malls; shopping malls are becoming closer to theme parks; theme parks are looking more like resorts; and resorts are becoming the ultimate typology for cities. One can see this last link in Egypt, where al-Gouna is now the typology for a massive real estate development near Cairo called Dreamland, which I have previously described.<sup>56</sup>

Or one may choose to look under the law of the confusion of categories at the concepts of authenticity and tradition, and ask whether both concepts may have also been conflated. I find it interesting that in their lexical meanings, both concepts use the hand to mark a temporal connection with a distant past, an origin. While Shils has defined tradition as anything which is handed down from the past to the

present, authenticity derives from the ancient Greek *authentēs*, which, according to *Websters*, meant “the one who did things with his or her own hands.”<sup>57</sup>

With a certain trepidation, I want to pose the following questions. Could it be that the “invisible hand of the market” has conflated both concepts by putting them on the same shelf in the global hyper-market of ideas? Could it be that the framing of tradition as the antithesis of modernity has put their associated concepts of authentic and inauthentic on equal terms (or meanings) with them? Inspired by Jane Jacobs’s formula “tradition is (not) modern,” I want to suggest the following formula: “tradition is (not) authenticity.”<sup>58</sup> If we conceive them as separate concepts, then the value of tradition will no longer be harbinger of or revered as the authentic.

The reinvented architectural tradition used in al-Gouna was never place-based. Nor was it a temporally situated heritage owned by certain people. Its value, therefore, lies not in its claim to authenticity, but in its fractal state as it makes images of the past available as objects of present attachment, or in its visual contiguity to other traditions in the global architectural supermarket.

## REFERENCE NOTES

1. J. Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil* (London: Verso, 1993), p.5.
2. I say “to an extent” because, as Derek Gregory has argued convincingly, with the exception of their contact with the Egyptian *dragoman* and the crew of the Nile barges, or *dahabeah*, Western travelers on the Nile during the nineteenth century were detached from the locals and their different happenings. D. Gregory, “Colonial Nostalgia and Cultures of Travel: Spaces of Constructed Visibility in Egypt,” in N. AlSayyad, ed., *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2001).
3. As an indication of its rise, one may point out that of the 100,000 hotel rooms in Egypt, there are 20,000 in Luxor, Aswan, and the floating boats; about the same in Cairo; and more than 40,000 in the Red Sea region. Egyptian Hotel Association, “Hotel Capacity in Egypt,” Statistics (Cairo: Governmental Publications, 2001).
4. My use of the word industry follows that of Mike Robinson. He has argued that the tourism industry is fragmented into four broad areas: attractions, accommodations, transport and distribution. M. Robinson, “Tourism Encounters,” in AlSayyad, ed., *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage*, p.35.
5. Editorial, “The Next Wave,” *Gulf Business*, Vol.II No.2 (June 2006). In the Persian Gulf region, for example, recent studies show that in 2007 more than \$300 billion is in the pipeline for tourist projects, with \$170 billion committed to pure leisure projects, covering developments such as museums and theme parks. See B.D. Augustine, “UAE Leisure Ventures Hit \$512b,” *Gulf News*, January 20, 2008, p.33.
6. C. Maceda, “Spending on Leisure Projects in Mideast,” *Gulf News*, January 23, 2008, p.38.
7. Robinson, “Tourism Encounters,” p.35.
8. N. AlSayyad, “Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism,” in AlSayyad, ed., *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage*, p.2.
9. *Ibid.*, p.3.
10. E. Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
11. J. Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (London: Polity Press, 1999), p.64.
12. A classical example of this debate is the one that took place between Taha Hussien and Said Kotob concerning a book the former had published in the 1930s entitled “The Future of Culture in Egypt.” See T. Hussien, *Mostaqbal al-Thaqafa fi Misr* (Cairo: al-Anglo, 1936).
13. K. Asfour, “Abdelhalim’s Cairo Garden: An Attempt to Defrost History,” *Mimar* 36 (September 1990), pp.72–76.
14. This thesis has been put forward, for example, by Janet Abu-Lughod in her earlier analysis of Cairo. See, J. Abu-Lughod, *Cairo* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1971).
15. In her later writings, Abu-Lughod suggested that the old dichotomies between East and West no longer make sense. J. Abu-Lughod, “Disappearing Dichotomies,” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlement Review*, Vol.3 No.2 (Spring 1992).
16. The dome first appeared in Assyrian architecture, later becoming a feature of Islamic mosques throughout the region. Not unlike in the West, the dome had two main symbolic interpretations: first, a representation of the vault of heaven; and, second, a symbol of divine dominance engulfing the emotional and physical being of the faithful. In functional terms, it has been used to externally define Qibla (the direction of Mecca for prayers) and to provide a source of daylight for the interior of mosques.
17. H. Fathy, *Architecture for the Poor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).
18. T. Mitchell, *Rule of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
19. Y. Mahgoub, “The Nubian Experience: A Study of the Social and Cultural Meanings

of Architecture," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1990.

20. J. Steele, *An Architecture for People: The Complete Works of Hassan Fathy* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997).

21. Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*.

22. J. Steele, *Hassan Fathy* (New York: Academy Editions/St. Martin's Press, 1988).

23. According to Steele, the idea was to somehow "fulfill the unrealized potential of New Gourna's close proximity to the ferry landings on the bank of the Nile and the main highway that sustains endless busloads of tourists traveling back and forth from these landings to the Valleys of the Kings and Queens." J. Steele, "The Hassan Fathy Collection," in *A Catalogue of Visual Documents at the Aga Khan Award for Architecture* (Bern: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, 1989), p.18.

24. T. Aukasha, *My Memoirs in Politics and Culture* (Cairo: Dar al-Helal, 1990), p.459.

25. In an upcoming book, I deal with the history of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture and its changing role in the built environment. K. Adham, *Walls of Transgression* (Cairo: AUC Press, forthcoming).

26. In fact, in their later additions to the complex, they have changed the style and the construction technique.

27. Many scholars have suggested this shift or expansion of the cultural capitalism. See, for example, J. Rifkin, *The Age of Access* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2000); and S. Britton, "Tourism, Capital, and Place: Towards a Critical Geography of Tourism," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 9, pp.451-78.

28. See Rifkin, *The Age of Access*. Similarly, management consultants Joseph Pine and James Gilmore, for example, have argued that an advanced stage of the service economy is beginning to emerge where businesses are selling experiences rather than merely performing services. This, they suggest, is a natural progression in the value added by the business over and above its inputs. Their core argument is that because of digital technology and increasing competition, services today are starting to orchestrate memorable events for their customers, as memory itself is becoming the product — or, to be more accurate, the simulated experience. B.J. Pine II and J.H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999).

29. See, for example, J. Hannigan, *Fantasy City* (London: Routledge, 1998).

30. J. Craik, "The Culture of Tourism," in C. Rojek and J. Urry, eds., *Touring Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1997).

31. T. Mitchell, "Making the Nation," in AlSayyad, ed., *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage*, p.232.

32. J. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage, 1990).

33. R. Goldman and S. Papson, *Sign Wars* (New York: Guilford, 1996).

34. It is important to note that al-Gouna is partly funded by the World Bank.

35. My interview with the architect Hani 'Ayad, Director of OPTD (Orascom Projects and Tourist Development) took place in September 1998.

36. Interview of Rami al-Dahan and Sohair Farid by E. Curtis, "For Richer for Poorer," *Perspectives* (Summer, 1997) pp.44-47.

37. During the 1980s, al-Dahan and Farid worked on a few resort commissions.

Coincidentally, I happened to be working in their office during this time. Another big commission was in the city of Al-Quossair, 130 kilometers south of Hurgada. A local contractor commissioned them to build a small, low-profile hotel. The project stalled for a few years because of the death of the owner while the building was still under construction. Finally, it was taken over by the Movenpick hotel chain, and with Sabbour Contracting Company, the architects worked again to finish their earlier designs.

38. My interview with Hani 'Ayad, September 1998.

39. Sohair Farid, quoted in Curtis, "For Richer for Poorer," p.45.

40. K. Adham, "Traditional Tourism, Kafr al-Gouna, Red Sea," *World Architecture* 75, pp.66-67. Architect Rami al-Dahan has informed me about Ponte Vecchio being his source of inspiration in my interview with him in September, 1998.

41. My interview with Hani 'Ayad, September 1998.

42. Sameeh Sawiris, quoted in E. Curtis, "A Star is Born," *Egypt Today* (1997) pp. 75-81.

43. AlSayyad, "Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism," p.2.

44. E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

45. Rifkin, *The Age of Access*, p.149.

46. See M. Gottdiener, "Approaches to

Consumption," in M. Gottdiener, ed., *New Forms of Consumption* (Lanham: Roman, 2000), p.21. An excellent illustration of the importance of lifestyles in advanced capitalist societies can be seen in the words of U.S. President George Bush in his first appearance after the 9/11 attacks on Washington and New York. His second sentence was "Our way of life, indeed our very freedom, came under attack."

47. Quoted in S. Mestrovic, *Postemotional Society* (London: Sage, 1997), p.83.

Similarly, I have noticed that more candidates seeking new jobs write their travels as part of their resumes.

48. More interesting is the fact that Sawiris has decided to invest more than 400 million Euros in Andermatt, Switzerland, to build a resort that would lift the tourism business in this small town in the Alps. It is not clear whether the dome and Nubian vault will be used in this resort, but if they are, this would be a true globalization of the style.

49. Gordon Mathews, quoted in N. AlSayyad, "The End of Tradition, or the Tradition of Ending," in N. AlSayyad, ed., *The End of Tradition?* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.23.

50. *Ibid.*, p.23.

51. J. Seijdel, "Theater and Emotion in the Supermarket," online essay, accessed Feb. 15, 2008, at <http://www.mediamatic.net/article-5687-en.html>.

52. D. Upton, "Authentic Anxieties," in AlSayyad, ed., *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage*.

53. Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil*, p.9.

54. *Ibid.*, p.9.

55. Paul Virilio, quoted in L. Chambers, *Border Dialogues* (London: Routledge, 1990). Recently, Rem Koolhaas has suggested that the ultimate typology of contemporary urbanism has become the resort. R. Koolhaas, "Frontline," in *Al Manakh* (Amsterdam: Stichting Archis, 2007).

56. K. Adham, "Globalization, Neoliberalism, and New Spaces of Capital in Cairo," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.XVII No.1 (Fall 2005), pp.19-32.

57. Shils, *Tradition*, p.12.

58. J. Jacobs, "Tradition Is (Not) Modern: Deterritorializing Globalization," in AlSayyad, ed., *The End of Tradition?*

All photos are by the author except where otherwise indicated.

# New Silicon Valleys: Tradition, Globalization, and Information-Technology Development in Bangalore, India

JOHN C. STALLMEYER

This article argues that information- and communications-technology (ICT) office parks, with Silicon Valley, California as their referent, constitute a new transnational tradition. The article begins by explicating the Silicon Valley tradition. It then examines the Bangalore, India, campus of Infosys and its invocation of this tradition. The article argues that the Silicon Valley tradition constructs the ICT worker as a member of a global workforce by physically marking the landscape of cities around the world with cues to appropriate modes of behavior. In conclusion, it proposes that transnational traditions may be reterritorialized and eventually handed down to future generations.

Tradition and globalization would appear to be in opposition. Tradition, on the one hand, has been variously defined as that which constrains choice, that which is handed down through face-to-face interaction, and that which is highly place specific.<sup>1</sup> Globalization, on the other hand, has been defined as that which provides the penultimate choice, that in which a hyper “mediated quasi-interaction” is the principal form of social/cultural exchange, and that which is completely unbounded from the specificity of place.<sup>2</sup>

These definitions, however, are not exhaustive, monolithic, or mutually exclusive, despite the tendency of writers to cast them as such. In particular, definitions of globalization have treated it as a totalizing narrative of “sheer commodification.”<sup>3</sup> But, as William Mazzarella has pointed out, such treatment denies “the problem of the concrete altogether” by ignoring the specifics of social and historical conditions, and it denies the fact that “images that have become increasingly important to the reproduction of capital are not reducible to the calculi of value.”<sup>4</sup> This is important for the case presented here, as I will argue that a new “Silicon Valley tradition” relies on images transmitted transnationally, and that these images have concrete consequences in the built environment. In addition

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to Mazzarella's two critiques, I will emphasize that images, or representations of space, do not remain merely as images. In the words of Henri Lefebvre, "we may be sure that representations of space have a practical impact . . . by way of construction — in other words, by way of architecture."<sup>5</sup>

Like definitions of globalization, the various definitions of tradition outlined above are limiting, and tend to close off tradition as a useful framework for understanding the contemporary processes of globalization. However, as Nezar AlSayyad argued in *The End of Tradition?*, taken together, they "point to a more open-ended definition."<sup>6</sup> This view grows from the perspective articulated in the earlier *Dwellings, Settlements and Tradition*, in which AlSayyad and Jean-Paul Bourdier proposed that tradition might serve as "a model for the dynamic reinterpretation of the present."<sup>7</sup> It is in this vein that I will approach the notion of "tradition."

Edward Soja has argued that within the processes of globalization "there is a restructured global space economy that demands to be studied on its own emphatic terms."<sup>8</sup> This is a phenomenon that Jane M. Jacobs noted "has delivered new conditions for its [tradition's] emergence; installed new mechanisms for its transference; and brought into being new political imperatives for its performance."<sup>9</sup> Thus, the carefully circumscribed and in many respects opposing definitions of tradition and globalization are inadequate because the one seems to preclude the other. Fortunately, AlSayyad's framework allows a new reading of the intersection of globalization and tradition that helps bridge this gap.

The case I describe here suggests that tradition, now reworked, reconfigured, transmitted and respatialized through transnational processes of globalization, continues to offer a meaningful analytic frame with which to approach the contemporary structure of Soja's global space economy. One component of this process is cultural globalization, which Diana Crane has argued is "a complex and diverse phenomenon consisting of global cultures, originating from many different nations and regions."<sup>10</sup> Given the existence of such "global cultures," defined individually as "the way of life of a people or a system of schemata transmitted symbolically [and whose] transmission occurs not only through language . . . but also through the built environment," a necessary product of globalization will be global or transnational traditions.<sup>11</sup> The key constituents of these global cultures and their attendant transnational traditions are norms or constraints on appropriate ways of behaving. These culture/tradition formations are therefore intimately bound up with the built forms through which individuals are disciplined to become and remain members of the group.

Such built forms are part of new geographic formations that are not city- or region-specific; instead, the processes of globalization and transnational tradition-making simultaneously disembed territories and re-embed them in a noncontiguous geography. In so doing, they become, as Kris Olds has suggested, one of "the concrete articulations . . . that

accompany the process of global flows under geographically and historically specific conditions."<sup>12</sup>

In the case of Bangalore, India, this is not a re-embedding or reterritorializing, but a move to define anew the region or territory as part of a transnational geography of information and communications technology (ICT), a non-geographically contiguous entity. It is in just such a geography that we find a "global culture" of ICT development to which geographically separated individuals belong, or wish to belong. And it is through a set of geographically unbounded or transnational traditions that this redefinition takes place.

These ICT enclaves — as well as aspects of their larger landscapes — are physical manifestations of the advance of simultaneously real and imagined places, "an exact copy of a city that has never existed."<sup>13</sup> Specifically, the traditions that inform them are transnational in the ways they are constructed and passed on or transmitted. But, like all traditions, they continue to discipline members of a particular culture in appropriate behaviors. At the same time, they are particularized by the social, economic, political and spatial histories of the locales in which they are embedded.

These transnational traditions and their physical embodiments are yet in a nascent stage in Bangalore and other locations around the globe. As such, their final spatial outcomes are far from determined, much less completely understood. Nevertheless, they are important to consider in discussing urbanization and its link with tradition under conditions of globalization.

As Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger have noted:

*We should expect it [the invention of tradition] to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which "old" traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable and flexible. . . .<sup>14</sup>*

Thus, to the extent that all traditions are invented, and given that globalization and information technologies have been hypothesized as marking out a "new mode of becoming human," a commensurate set of "new" transnational traditions, constructed within the context of contemporary globalization, should come as no surprise.<sup>15</sup>

To understand how the particular transnational tradition of ICT development operates within the built environment of Bangalore I will first examine the images and worldview that constitute the "tradition of Silicon Valley" and how it is bound up with the built environment.



## A SILICON VALLEY TRADITION

In the 37 years since the term “Silicon Valley” was coined by journalist Don Hoefler, it has been transformed from a speculative description into an actual physical location — and, I would argue, a transnational tradition constituted in part through myth. As cities around the globe attempt to create futures based on their own milieus of technological innovation, Silicon Valley’s influence as a model of a technology growth engine has extended far beyond its own borders.

While Silicon Valley is a physical geography, it has also become an idea linked to a mythologized history. The tradition of Silicon Valley is constituted by two mutually supporting imaginaries: a physical one, based on “representations of space” which have been made concrete in the landscape; and an economic one, based on economic success. An important part of this mythology is constituted by visual imagery and written descriptions of Silicon Valley transmitted through an increasingly globalized media. As Manuel Castells and Peter Hall have noted:

*There is a[n] . . . image for the new economy that has taken its place in the last years of the twentieth century, but it is only just imprinting itself on our consciousness. It consists of a series of low, discreet buildings, usually displaying a certain air of quiet good taste, and set amidst impeccable landscaping in that standard real estate cliché, a campus-like atmosphere.<sup>16</sup>*

Understanding how these media representations contribute to an image of “Silicon Valley” is an important first step in understanding how it constitutes a transnational tradition that can be invoked in other locations that aspire to similar status.

In her 2000 article “The Virtual Architecture of Silicon Valley” in *The Journal of Architectural Education (JAE)*, architectural historian Gwendolyn Wright described Silicon Valley, California, as a “seemingly endless repetition of flat, prosaic surfaces,” a place where “the prevailing norm is utterly banal.”<sup>17</sup> Assessing general critical opinion of this landscape, Wright noted “there is only disdain for the flimsy facades of today’s third industrial revolution.”<sup>18</sup> She contrasted this disregard with the admiration of Schinkel and Latrobe “for the straightforward, uncluttered presence of nineteenth-century brick factories” and the “painters, photographers and architects who were enthralled by the majestic assertiveness of Detroit’s automobile assembly plants.”<sup>19</sup>

While Wright’s assessments may be accurate, her view is not that which constitutes the standard image of Silicon Valley worldwide. This tends toward the mythic, eliding the prosaic in favor of both the spatial and socioeconomic spectacular. Indeed, the representations that form the image of Silicon Valley rarely, if ever, present it as banal. Instead, like the earlier celebratory rhetoric and imagery of industrialization, the landscape of high technology is depicted by its icons

or monuments; and, despite their frequent, real physical banality, these are nearly always constructed as extraordinary.

Early descriptions of Silicon Valley, such as Reyner Banham’s 1980 article in *New West*, “The Architecture of Silicon Valley,” even celebrated it for a sleek, distinctive aesthetic.<sup>20</sup> Banham’s descriptions are worth quoting. For example, here is what he wrote about IBM’s Santa Teresa complex:

*Neat, silvery smooth and as slickly styled as an advanced computer, IBM Corporation’s Santa Teresa laboratory complex sits among ranch lands and orchards in the shelter of a ring of rounded, sun-dappled, yellow-grass hills. . . . It looks marvelous.*

*[I]t is IBM, more than any other company, that developed the sharp, modern imagery that high-technology industries feel compelled to present to the public . . . precise and elegant outwardly, almost an art gallery within.<sup>21</sup>*

Discussing Digital Equipment Corporation, he nearly waxed poetic:

*It is rock bottom image, the ultimate black box: a rectangle of dark glass on a skinny plinth, standing on a mathematically precise plane of green lawn . . . the image is inviolate: a dark crystal on a green velvet mount.<sup>22</sup>*

More recent examples illustrate the continued use of such rhetoric. Thus, *World Architecture*’s July/August 1998 article “An Instant Landmark in Silicon Valley” began: “Silicon Graphics Inc.’s new Research and Development Campus in Mountain View, California, combines cutting edge architecture by STUDIOS Architecture and stylized landscaping by the SWA Group.”<sup>23</sup> By contrast, Wright wrote of this same complex: “The giant purple cylinder and turquoise trapezoids don’t pretend to be more than upbeat ornamentation to enhance limited-budget, all-purpose warehouses.”<sup>24</sup>

The photographs that accompany articles like the one in *World Architecture* on Silicon Graphics’ Mountain View campus reinforce this image of the spectacular. A case in point was that magazine’s 1995 profile of Gensler, a global architecture firm headquartered in San Francisco, which was accompanied by a nearly half-page photo of the Oracle campus in Redwood City that it designed (FIG. 1).<sup>25</sup> The views here are carefully framed and cropped to bracket the landscape, eliminating anything that might take away from the sense of buildings as spectacular icons of technology. As Mitchell Schwarzer has noted, however, the Oracle campus was in fact a developer-driven project to which the company had to adapt itself; it was not the monument to corporate identity the *World Architecture* profile made it out to be.<sup>26</sup>

This juxtaposition of Wright’s analyses with the image presented in architectural periodicals is important. Aside from their diverging views, it speaks to the place of different



FIGURE 1. Oracle Headquarters, Redwood City, California. Photo by Sherman Takata, courtesy of Gensler. First published in *World Architecture* 39.

publications and the audiences they reach. *JAE*, an academic journal published in the United States by MIT Press, has a circulation of just 4,300.<sup>27</sup> *World Architecture*, before it ceased publication in 2003, had a paid circulation of 10,000, including subscribers in at least twenty countries.<sup>28</sup> Based on these numbers, it seems reasonable to assume the celebratory imagery of *World Architecture* would have had a greater reach within the profession than the critiques in *JAE*. Indeed, it would have been unlikely that architects, either in the U.S. or worldwide, would even have been aware of Wright's article. By contrast, images like those in *World Architecture*, Banham's *New West* article, and elsewhere in the architectural and popular press have done much to construct Silicon Valley as a place dominated by the monuments of ICT companies.

The second important constituent of the tradition of Silicon Valley — perhaps more important than this architectural imaginary — is its image as a place where technological development has created a new socioeconomic/business landscape, and where, notwithstanding the bursting of the dot-com bubble, success is assured. Here, anyone with a bright idea can become the next Steve Jobs or Bill Gates — or even more powerful in the case of Bangalore, Sabheer Bhatia, founder of Hotmail.

Annalee Saxenian has noted the pioneering spirit that supposedly defines this new landscape. “The early entrepreneurs of Silicon Valley saw themselves as the pioneers of a new industry in a new region. They were at once forging a new industrial settlement in the West and advancing the development of a revolutionary new technology, semiconductor electronics.”<sup>29</sup> This ethos forms an important part of the Silicon Valley tradition. Today, corporate founders like Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard are celebrated for their risk-taking, technological innovation, and personal success. As Saxenian noted when discussing Fairchild Semiconductor,

“the family tree [of firms spun off from Fairchild] glorifies the entrepreneurial risk-taking and competitive individualism that distinguishes the region's business culture.”<sup>30</sup>

The metaphor of pioneers going west to create something new, as a glorious exploration of the unknown, is apt, especially since many of Silicon Valley's first-generation leaders were transplants to the area. But like other California dreams, this myth leaves out important ingredients. As Saxenian has shown through comparison with Boston's Route 128, Silicon Valley's pioneers did create a remarkably different business model.<sup>31</sup> Yet, among its many features was the notion that failure was not a bad thing; one could simply get up after a failure and try again. Thus, failure is rarely part of the Silicon Valley story. In fact, the existence of failure is in some respects celebrated as part of “a daredevil, risk-taking culture” where final success is always the focus.<sup>32</sup>

This Silicon Valley imaginary has been capitalized on by the ICT industry, the real estate industry, and government, and both its spatial and business components are now firmly embedded in media representations. Thus it is that buildings like the Oracle headquarters, as presented in *World Architecture*, have become models for the aspirations of architects, developers, government officials, local IT companies, and software workers in places like Bangalore.

In this new Silicon Valley tradition all things are considered possible. And through representations of spectacular ICT architecture and a bold legacy of economic success, Silicon Valley has become, as Banham noted, “not simply a geographical location . . . , but a kind of heightened industrial consciousness based on the seemingly unlimited market for spiffy gadgetry. . . .”<sup>33</sup> Thus, while the landscape described by Castells and Hall in *Technopoles of the World* may aptly be described as banal, it is the myth that proliferates and travels to far-away destinations through the flows of globalization.

In this process, both constituents of the Silicon Valley tradition — the spatial and the economic — elide important components. The spatial myth suppresses the banal and prosaic that forms so much of the landscape, instead constructing it as spectacular and monumental. And the economic myth focuses only on spectacular success. As *Business Week* reported in 1997, “Here [Silicon Valley] you can reap wealth from sheer brainpower.”<sup>34</sup> However, this economic myth ignores a soft underbelly of Silicon Valley that is vital to its functioning as a high-tech industrial region. The service workers who make much of Silicon Valley work are largely, if not completely, ignored by the powerful myth-making machinery, and the landscapes they inhabit are invisible in most accounts.

I am not suggesting here that Silicon Valley, California, represents an authentic tradition, in juxtaposition with inauthentic reproductions, or simulacras, produced elsewhere. On the contrary, the original Silicon Valley is every bit as imagined, mythologized and invented as its supposed replicas. Yet, as a transnational tradition, the idea of Silicon Valley is informed and transformed by instances of replication. And together with representations of the original, it is now constituted as a global imaginary with which individuals identify themselves as a means of embedding themselves in a meaningful geography within a constantly shifting global landscape.

Unlike images of other types, such as the advertising discussed by Mazzarella, however, architecture also constructs physical space. It thus simultaneously creates a commodity image and a part of Soja’s space economy. This means that those who aspire to reproduce the images of Silicon Valley, such as architects and ICT corporate executives, may also create real exchange value within a global space market. In other words, the concretion of Silicon Valley images into built form, as architecture, can also be consumed through inhabitation by ICT workers who aspire to be part of a global software culture.

But it is also through attempts to make such images concrete, in social and historical circumstances removed from their place of origin, that the abstract conditions of their production are laid bare. That is, it is in each such attempt that their ability to “bestow authenticity upon any set of appearances” can be most obviously be questioned.<sup>35</sup> In other words, as the Silicon Valley tradition is reproduced in diverse new locations — in Galway, Saigon, Suzhou and Bangalore, to name only a few — each attempt must explicitly or implicitly invoke the tradition of Silicon Valley, California. Yet, in every instance, the local social and historic circumstances make exact reproduction an impossibility.

#### ELECTRONICS CITY: A COPY OF A PLACE THAT NEVER EXISTED

Bangalore, in the South-Indian state of Karnataka, is one instance of this attempted reproduction (FIG. 2). Eleven kilometers south of Bangalore’s former colonial cantonment



FIGURE 2. Bangalore location map.

(now an emerging CBD), and well beyond its postcolonial ring of housing and industrial development, lies what is arguably the epicenter of India’s growing ICT economy — Electronics City. Despite its overburdened infrastructure and ever-increasing traffic, there is little doubt that Bangalore is India’s information-technology hub. Fully 34 percent of Indian software exports for 2003–2004 originated from Bangalore-based ICT firms, the largest of which were based at Electronics City.

To better understand the landscape of ICT in Bangalore, and Electronics City more specifically, it is important to recognize that Bangalore’s image as “The Silicon Valley of India” has been deliberately constructed and deployed by government agencies, the real estate industry, and ICT companies. These actor/institutions have used both visual and textual representations to create the image of a city entirely given over to ICT development. As Tim Hall and Phil Hubbard have pointed out, the urban entrepreneurial policies which capitalize on this imagery are meant “to promote the comparative advantage of the city relative to other cities which may be competing for similar investments.”<sup>36</sup>

To promote Bangalore as equivalent to other high-tech cities, and so compete in a global ICT space economy, verbal descriptions and visual images of the city (and, more specifically, its ICT developments) employ many of the same strategies as marketing efforts worldwide. Thus, buzzwords such

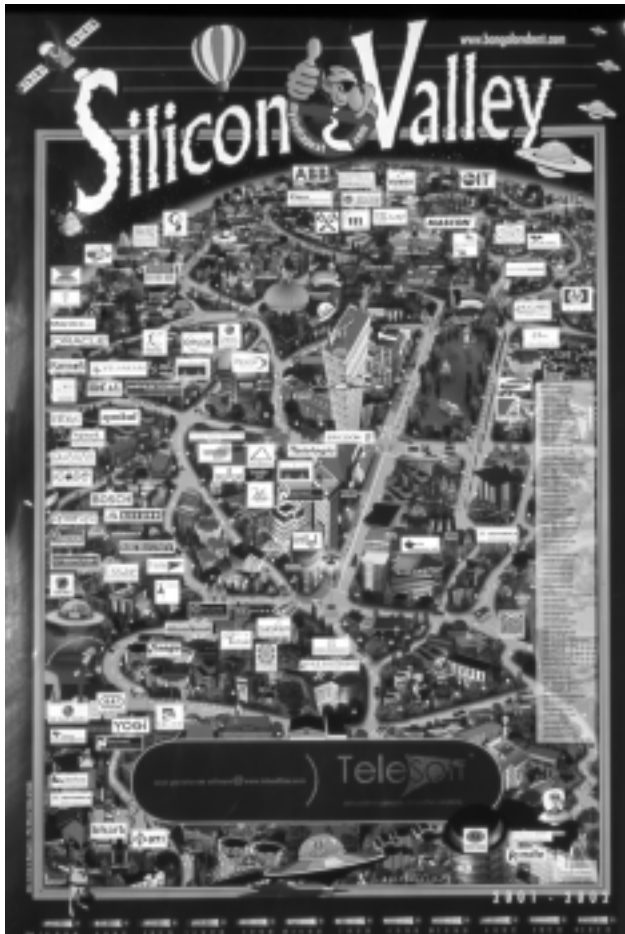


FIGURE 3. Cartoon map of Bangalore.

as “world-class,” “international standards,” and “modern” proliferate in descriptions of Bangalore’s built environment. And the visual representations of its ICT developments are, like the photo of Oracle’s California headquarters, tightly bracketed to eliminate the complexity of the picture just beyond the field of view.

These representations construct an image of Bangalore not unlike that shown in the accompanying cartoon (FIG. 3). This image, widely distributed in Bangalore, depicts the city as a homogenized landscape populated only by ICT companies. But this view of Bangalore’s ICT landscape is, like most efforts to market cities, a distortion. Despite the attempt to represent ICT as ubiquitous across the entire city, the density of ICT establishments, mapped by postal (PIN) code across its entire 531 sq.km., is in fact quite uneven (FIG. 4).<sup>37</sup> Notwithstanding this unevenness, Bangalore remains known as “the Silicon Valley of India,” and real estate advertisements frequently refer to it this way, as in the sign just beyond the boundary of Electronics City (FIG. 5).

While several features of the ICT geography shown in Figure 4 are notable, including the concentration of activity

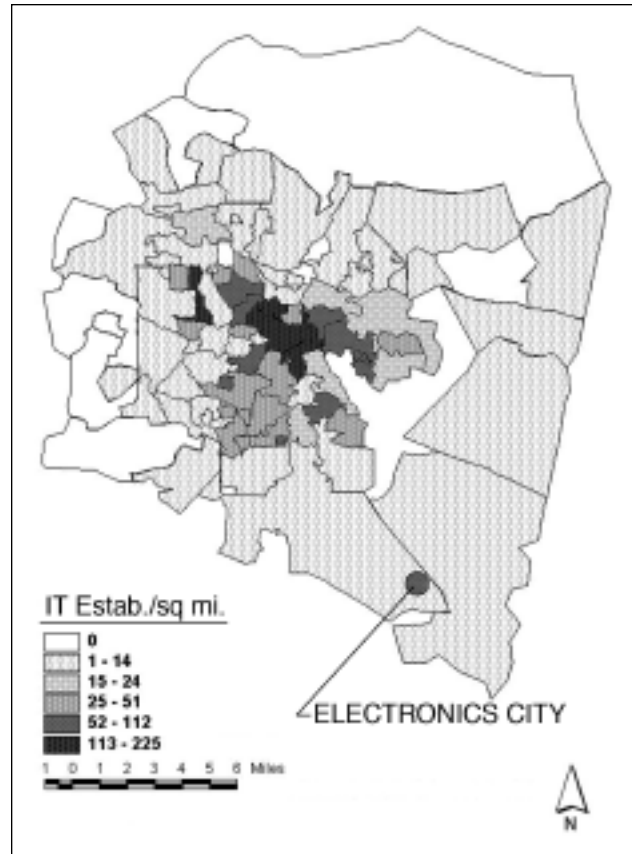


FIGURE 4. Citywide density of ICT establishments.

in the central business district, it is the “island” of development to the south of the city that is most noteworthy. Here, at Electronics City, the national and state governments and the ICT industry have constructed an ICT enclave.

Electronics City has been described as “an assemblage of gleaming marble and glass buildings where Indian tech



FIGURE 5. Real estate signage near Electronics City.



FIGURE 6. Hosur Road at Electronics City entry.

companies have taken root”; yet, the entry to it on Hosur Road marks the border between the controlled corporate world and the seemingly chaotic space of the city (FIG. 6).<sup>38</sup> Vendors, pedestrians, all manner of transport, and India’s ubiquitous wandering cows, all converge outside its gates. Meanwhile, inside, the image of Bangalore as the Silicon Valley of India is carefully tended, in a framed tableau of corporate campuses.

Among the ICT establishments at Electronics City is Infosys. One of Bangalore’s and India’s largest software

companies, Infosys has come to represent the ideal for many Indian companies aspiring to success in the ICT sector. And its flagship campus at Electronics City, reputed to be the first in India, has likewise become the referent image of the built environment for these companies (FIG. 7).

Before looking at the Infosys campus in more detail, it is useful to contextualize the exurban development at Electronics City within the larger social, historical and spatial history of Bangalore. This history can be understood according to four broadly defined political and economic regimes. During each period, prevailing political, economic, planning and architectural paradigms shaped different locations in the city and left behind concrete reminders of their existence, creating a landscape onto which today’s ICT development is being accreted.

Following its founding in 1537, Bangalore remained for many years a regional trading and mercantile center surrounded by a rural landscape dotted with villages and tanks (reservoirs). During this period, it consisted of two parts, the *pettah* (market) and the fort, built by the city’s founder, Tippu Sultan (FIG. 8). The *pettah*, characterized by its organic form and densely packed shops and housing, evolved according to an irregular pattern of narrow streets and alleyways. Bangalore largely retained this form until the British defeated Tippu Sultan in 1791.



FIGURE 7. Aerial photo of Electronics City with Infosys campus highlighted. Includes material © Space Imaging LLC.

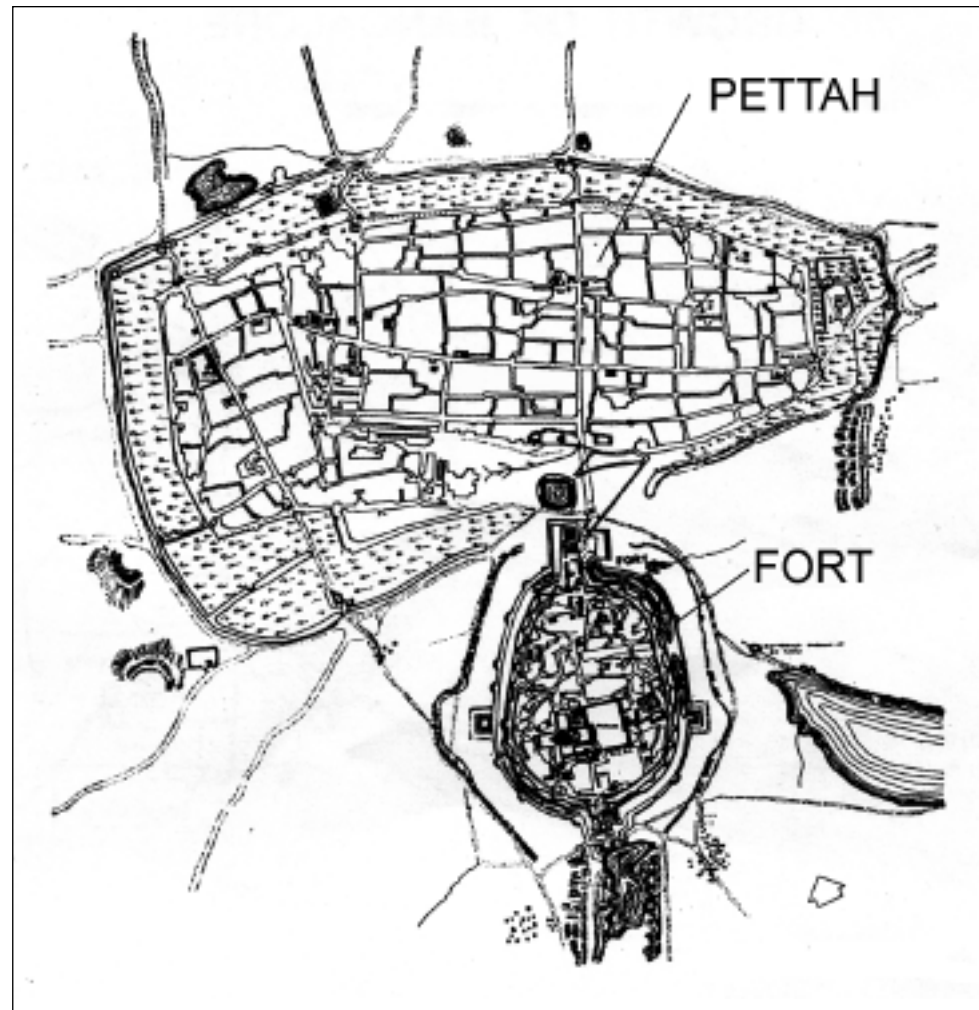


FIGURE 8. Map of Bangalore, c.1537. Source: Census of India.

The urban fabric of the period that followed reflected a radical shift in economic, political and social structure within the city, the establishment of British colonial control, and the construction of Bangalore's cantonment. The cantonment, and its accompanying "civil lines," provided an area for housing both British military and civilian personnel. As Veena Oldenburg noted, "the aim [of the cantonment] was to create a small European cosmos at the edge of the city not only to compensate the officers for the hardship of serving in an alien land but also to provide European soldiers with adequate recreational facilities so that they would be less tempted to taste the pleasure the city had to offer."<sup>39</sup>

The differentiation of the Bangalore cantonment as a separate social and political entity resulted in a binary urban system, and its physical planning assisted in this differentiation of the "native" city from the colonial one (FIG. 9). Such differentiation was achieved through scale, street organization, and physical separation. In terms of scale, the cantonment, measuring nearly 5 km. in the east-west direction, dwarfed the *pettah*/fort complex.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, its street layout,

consisting of an orthogonal grid (or at least broad, straight streets), contrasted with the narrow, winding streets of the old city. The cantonment was also physically separated from the native city by a strip of land some 1.5 km. wide. This *cordon sanitaire* served several purposes. First, it separated Westerners from the perceived dangers (health and otherwise) of the native city. Second, it created social distinctiveness for the colonial population. As R. Ramachandran stated, "The civil lines and cantonments highlight the social distance deliberately maintained by the British from the mass of Indian urban dwellers."<sup>41</sup> The cantonment also introduced a low-density, almost suburban, or garden city-like, pattern, whose broad, tree-lined streets and sprawling bungalows contrasted with the high-density *pettah* (FIG. 10).

India's independence in 1947 signaled the beginning of Bangalore's third period of urbanization. In this postcolonial period, the new government of India embarked on policies of state-led industrialization, emphasizing heavy industry, and protecting domestic goods through the imposition of tariff barriers. Calling Bangalore "India's city of the future," Prime

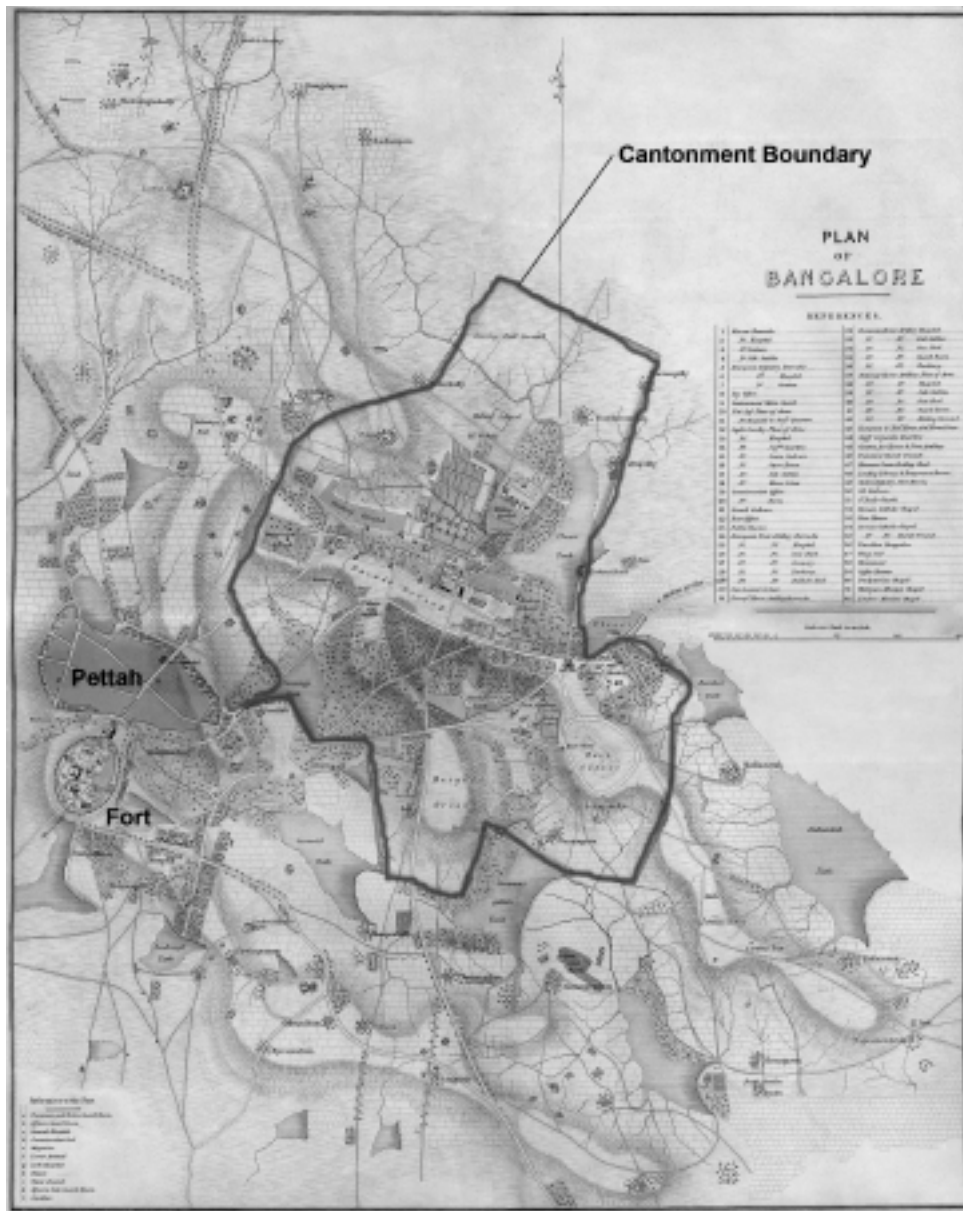


FIGURE 9. Map of Bangalore, c.1854. Source: An Atlas of the Southern Part of India, Pharoas and Company, 1854.

Minister Jawaharlal Nehru set a course for national policy that funneled investment in industry and research to it.<sup>42</sup> Accompanying this state-led economic development there was a corresponding rapid growth in Bangalore's population, matched by the development of large new residential areas. Together, industrial development and increasing population led respectively to the construction of industrial estates and vast housing layouts planned and constructed by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA).

As a part of this development, a number of architectural works in the city sought to embody the new identity of the nation and Bangalore's South-Indian heritage. These included the State Legislature Building, known as the Vidhana Soudha, and the central post office, both built in a Neo-



FIGURE 10. Bungalow compound, central Bangalore.





FIGURE 11. Post office, central Bangalore.

Dravidian style (FIG. 11). Charles Correa's Visvesvaraya Tower of 1980 also marked the skyline with an icon of modernist design in the Corbusian tradition (FIG. 12). During this period, the original settlement of fort, *pettah* and cantonment were all but surrounded.

The fourth period of Bangalore's development began in 1991 in the wake of national economic liberalization measures. These measures, building on Bangalore's strength in education and defense, gave birth to the ICT industry and to firms like Infosys. This new round of urbanization has since been characterized by the redevelopment of many postcolonial housing estates, the development of a new CBD in the former cantonment, and the accretion of ICT developments along the periphery of the city. It is these exurban ICT developments that house firms like Infosys.

#### INFOSYS: CORPORATE VILLA TO GLOBAL OFFICE PARK

Founded in 1981, and growing rapidly from "body shopping" in 2002–2003 to become India's top software exporter, Infosys is in many ways the darling of the Indian software industry.<sup>43</sup> The company now has more than 50,000 employees in seventeen countries. Its Bangalore campus (with the exception of several buildings constructed in last three years) presents a unified picture that belies the somewhat unplanned nature of its development. The campus also shows the development and maturation of the corporate image of Infosys and the direct influence of this image on the architectural styles it has chosen. More importantly, it shows how the influence of the Silicon Valley tradition, discussed above, has penetrated locations like Bangalore, literally half a world away.



FIGURE 12. Visvesvaraya Tower.



After Infosys' move to Bangalore from Pune, the company was initially housed, like many Bangalore ICT companies, in small offices around the city. By the early 1990s, however, Infosys had outgrown these facilities and acquired ten acres in Electronics City on which it planned to build a facility for up to eight hundred employees. Retaining the Bangalore-based architectural firm Chandavarkar and Thacker, Infosys constructed its first facility at Electronics City in 1993–94. This building is now somewhat ironically called “the heritage building.”

As the accompanying plan and photo show, the heritage building presented a complex arrangement of space, form and materials in concert with a carefully considered landscape, resulting in a cohesive architectural statement (FIGS. 13, 14). In particular, its rough-hewn granite slabs and brick exterior were in keeping with local building methods, which had long employed readily available granite, as in the case of the Vidhana Soudha. The open-air building also took advantage of Bangalore's mild climate. However, although costs were low, construction time was relatively long. And by November 1998, when the building was published in *Indian Architect and Builder*, Infosys was already rapidly increasing its workforce and moving beyond both the spaces it provided and the corporate image it presented.

As Infosys' business increased in the run-up to Y2K, it quickly outgrew the heritage building, and the image it projected to both employees and clients was superseded by other concerns. Describing this shift in thinking, architect Sudakhar Pai, who worked for Chandavarkar and Thacker at the time, noted:

*[The heritage building] was in keeping with the idea of N. Murthy [founder and CEO of Infosys], a simple person, [with] Indian values, [who] had seen the West, [and] came back. He wanted Indian values. His issue was simple: give me any material, but make it world class. His issue was never give me alucobond and steel. But then his organization was five hundred. As soon as it got to one thousand the aspirations of people who came in changed. The next set of people who came in were immediately: why don't you have glass? Most of these campuses are for their employees to feel comfortable. He would want a campus so that the MNC's coming in also don't have an edge over Infosys.<sup>44</sup>*

This shift in the aspirations of employees and the corporation, driven respectively by the need to see themselves as “global” software workers and to compete in a global marketplace, had a profound impact on the buildings constructed on the rapidly expanding campus. Infosys engaged several architects for these expansions, but Sundaram Architects of Bangalore designed most of the additional software-development blocks.

The buildings designed by Sundaram are of a completely different nature from Chandavarkar and Thacker's heritage building, and respond to the shift in corporate thinking.

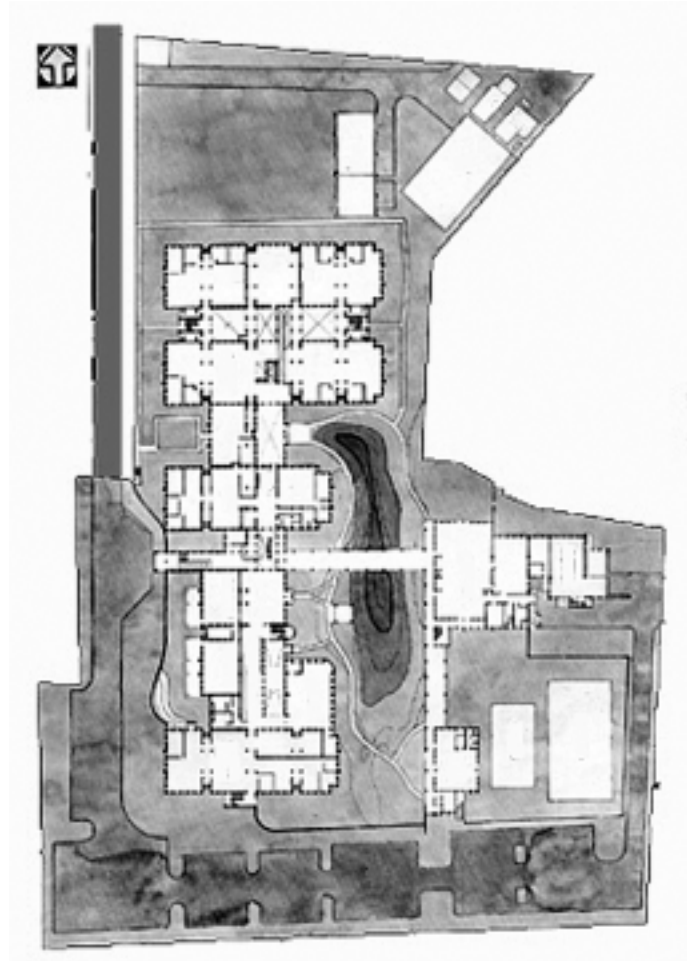


FIGURE 13. (TOP) Heritage building plan, Infosys. Courtesy Chandavarkar and Thacker.

FIGURE 14. (BOTTOM) Heritage building, Infosys.

In 2003, Mohandas Pai, then the Chief Financial Officer of Infosys, explained the company's thinking about the heritage building and the newer buildings, by saying “at that time . . . we didn't know what buildings were.”<sup>45</sup> Surveying the campus



FIGURE 15. Typical new office blocks at Infosys.

from the window of his upper-story office, he later added, “In terms of image, it has to be global.”<sup>46</sup> Or, as K.P. Nagaraj of Infosys’ infrastructure development office put it: “he [Mohandas Pai] likes to have more working space, more work stations — more money generating.”<sup>47</sup>

In other words, increased awareness of the relationship between architecture, image and revenue led to the remainder of the campus being filled with buildings that could be constructed on a very tight schedule (three to six months, typically), and that could seem at home in any office park around the world. Enclosed by a thin facade and sited amid green lawns, these newer buildings have large floor plates and a minimum number of columns, the better to house a maximum number of software workers (FIG.15). These new buildings are global, and they are banal. They are also the key element of a new “global” tradition, and they are the quintessential example of Castells’s and Hall’s, as well as Wright’s, descriptions.

To reinforce this new corporate image, the company also took the remarkable step of plastering and painting the heritage building’s exterior of rough-hewn granite. This happened at the time of a visit to the campus by Bill Gates. When asked about the reasoning behind this, Mohandas Pai claimed it had nothing to do with corporate image. He then averred: “It [the heritage building] didn’t reflect the high-quality feeling of the place we wanted.”<sup>48</sup> In other words, it *was* about image. As Sriraman J. of Infosys’ Infrastructure Development office confirmed, “the reason that the heritage building was thought to be changed was that we wanted to give a global picture. We wanted to give a modern building with technological facilities. We wanted to project to our clients.”<sup>49</sup>

Ironically, the *Indian Architect and Builder* article from November 1998, “Programmed to Fit,” which had praised the heritage building, had begun: “In this age of facade-ridden

buildings, the Infosys office designed by Bangalore based Chandavarkar and Thacker articulates a design intention which reaffirms that good architecture never goes out of style.”<sup>50</sup> Apparently, this is not the case.

More recently, Infosys has added a number of new buildings to the campus. Like the communications center shown in the accompanying photo, these have become even more like the Silicon Graphics building critiqued by Wright (FIG.16). As embodiments of a global transnational tradition, they are spectacular objects housing banal functions. This is most readily apparent on their interiors, which are essentially warehouses in which to locate software workers.

In my interviews with company officials, the projection of a “global” image was repeatedly articulated as the impetus for the development of the campus and for its architectural form. This global image is developed and deployed for two audiences: first, for clients; and second, for employees. The desires of both were reflected in the observations by Sudakhar Pai about the campus’ architecture, quoted earlier.

According to Mohandas Pai, the “global” image, as articulated in the more recent buildings, “is a marketing tool absolutely. It is a marketing tool and a brand tool.”<sup>51</sup> No building on the campus serves this image-building project more explicitly than the executive building, sited at the entry to the campus (FIG.17). According to Pai, this represented a “very conscious effort to have that as the entry for a very simple reason: what we wanted was a modern building in the sense that it can be placed anywhere in the world which could house software.” When asked why it was important that the building look like it could be anywhere in the world, he replied:

*It is important because . . . we are a global software company. We happen to be in India because India is the best*



**FIGURE 16.** Infosys communications center with village land use in the foreground.

*place in the world to develop software. Tomorrow, if some other country becomes the best place to develop software, we could be there. While we have an Indian nationality, we are brown-skinned, we are Indians. But the fact is we are part of a global workforce. We think of Infosys as a global company. . . . Building One is saying to people that it is solid. It is high-quality, it is neat. It gives a feeling that it is a part of the global culture. It is a very standard building.<sup>32</sup>*

Constructed for Infosys by Sobha Developers, one of the city's largest property developers, this "standard" building is used to market Infosys to a worldwide clientele. Discussing this with Pai, it became clear that this was an increasingly important motivation in developing the campus' image. As he related:

*Whenever clients come here, they walk in, they walk through this chaos; they are confused because they see . . . coming straight at them, they see cattle on the road; you see people crossing the road, you see the buses going helter-skelter, you see the road is crowded, you see dirt on the road, and you are confused. You don't know where you have landed. And they come here and suddenly they see order, they see beauty, they see aesthetics, they see a lot of well-dressed people moving about. There is order here. And then they believe that there can be quality software here. But you know we are dealing with someone who lives eight thousand kilometers away in a different culture where there is order, where there is high quality as they perceive it, and less disorder and chaos.*



**FIGURE 17.** Executive building, Infosys.

*We want that kind of atmosphere here so that clients get confidence, and it tends to reflect the kind of quality they want because we have extremely high quality in the most dirty place. But they will not believe you because they see the surroundings, so that here, when they come, they feel at home, and they feel more comfortable.<sup>53</sup>*

Aside from this client focus, the global image also serves Infosys by establishing an atmosphere that is conducive to the production of software. As a marketing tool, it appeals to prospective employees because it fulfills their image of themselves as members of a global ICT workforce. But it is also a means of isolating and transforming the employee while they are on the campus. As Sriraman made clear:

*He [Narayan Murthy, Chairman of Infosys] keeps saying that the moment the employee comes into the campus we want the employee to get into a world-class environment where mentally and physically he [they are predominantly male] transforms himself. . . . Once he comes to the office he switches off his mind from what he went through outside, gets into a different mode so that he [is] able to deliver an international-quality product.<sup>54</sup>*

The executive building and the rest of the more recently constructed buildings are explicitly about image, projecting their “global” and “international” associations predominantly through their exterior surface and placement in the green landscape. The success of this architecture is based on its equivalence and interchangeability with any other ICT space worldwide. An architecture of anywhere is the explicit aim, as it matches both the corporate need for an image that can compete with that of other ICT locations worldwide and satisfy the desires of employees to belong to a global community of software workers. It is the Silicon Valley tradition of the banal, constructed as spectacular, and transformed into the exemplar in Bangalore.

Given that the image these corporations and the government actor/institutions want to project is one of equality with other ICT establishments and cities worldwide, it is no surprise that they are striving to build and occupy space in ways similar to the Silicon Valley imaginary and to the actual Silicon Valley banal. In addition to seeking to replicate this physical image in their physical facilities, they are also seeking to portray their workforce as one capable of producing goods that meet global standards.

#### DYNAMICS OF A TRANSNATIONAL TRADITION

The architecture of Infosys and other sites within Electronics City transmits the image of a global informational culture. It also provides software workers with cues to appropriate behavior. If the transnational tradition of Silicon Valley, embodied through its architecture, is considered in this light,

one can better see how software workers of Bangalore and other informational cities define and redefine their identities as members of a global culture. This accords with AlSayyad’s argument that “the tangible products of tradition are those processes by which identities are defined and redefined.”<sup>55</sup> The transnational Silicon Valley tradition as constructed at Electronics City and Infosys is therefore a means to construct such an identity. It does not, however, represent the unlimited choice suggested by the global marketplace, where all choices seem equally available. On the contrary, it is deployed, as the management team at Infosys made clear, specifically to constrain choice in order to construct a globalized informational workforce.

To the extent that Infosys can homogenize the environment and construct it as equivalent to Silicon Valleys everywhere, the management team is able to achieve this end. However, this homogenization of culture and tradition can only be achieved within the limited geography under the control of Infosys. Even Mohandas Pai, who has now become the Head of Human Resources at Infosys, noted that

*. . . our culture is deeply steeped in us. So when we come to this place, when we come and work here, we behave culturally, in manner of speech, or whatever it is, like people who could be comfortable in the U.S. or the U.K. or wherever it is, working in the same industry. But when we go home we revert back to what we are. Our mode of dress is different, our eating styles are different, our . . . local language, our rituals, and our practices are totally different. We do it extremely well. Do you understand?<sup>56</sup>*

The architectural manifestation of the transnational tradition of global informational culture as seen at the Infosys campus in Electronics City serves to establish employees as members of a global community of software workers. It also establishes and legitimizes the apparatus and actions of the state as a part of a new global tradition based on an informational socioeconomic regime. In this respect, Silicon Valley tradition is “linked to the necessities of progress and competition in a global era.”<sup>57</sup> And, along with many other cues from the built and social spaces of Bangalore (like its new consumer culture and newly constituted nightlife), the architecture of this transnational tradition socializes software workers — and to a more limited extent, the larger community — inculcating a global system of behavior commensurate with “global,” “international,” or “Western” standards.

The intention, carried out with great success, is to use space to separate employees from the environment outside. As Sriraman noted, the company’s goal is to help employees switch identities from the local to the global.<sup>58</sup> Yet, as Mohandas Pai also pointed out, aside from the impact of this type of campus development on the corporate culture and employees of Infosys, “the greater impact of this kind of campus is what it has done to Bangalore and other cities. This has become symbolic of people’s aspirations.”<sup>59</sup>

I would posit the possibility that we are not witnessing the end of tradition in the era of globalization, but rather an interregnum. Whether and how a presently transnational, and therefore geographically unbounded tradition may be reterritorialized and eventually passed on from one generation to

another after a period of “hyper” mediated transmission will have to wait for the next generation to be revealed. That such transnational traditions will inevitably be altered as they are re-embedded within particular geographic locales and places seems to be a certainty given the evidence from Bangalore.

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All photos and drawings are by the author unless otherwise indicated.

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# Reconstituting Hmong Culture and Traditions in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

LYNNE M. DEARBORN

The experience of refugee populations, driven from their homes and into foreign lands, represents a force of globalization that is prompting both spatial and cultural transformation. For refugees, however, attempts to reconstitute and re-embed culture and traditions in new environments provide an important way to arrest cultural stress. Using Amos Rapoport's culture-core model, this article analyzes efforts by Hmong immigrants to reterritorialize their culture and traditions in Milwaukee's inner city. It also points out how Milwaukee's decayed urban fabric, layered by historical cycles of progress and decline, provides an example of how landscapes may offer a "loose fit," supporting various modes of inhabitation by different cultural groups.

Since the Hart-Celler Act took effect in 1968 the immigrant population of many cities in the United States has become increasingly diverse. The act changed the composition of the U.S. immigrant population by abolishing national-origin quotas and Asia-Pacific Triangle exclusions and by prioritizing family reunification.<sup>1</sup> As a result, while former generations of immigrants were mainly of European origin, new immigrants have increasingly arrived from Asia and Latin America.

In the last two decades, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, once known for its large population of European immigrants, has attracted a diverse new group of residents. And like European immigrants of the past, these non-Europeans are being transformed through acculturation within the city's neighborhoods. Although Milwaukee has experienced periods of prosperity and decline, its commerce, industry, and physical structure continue to provide immigrants with opportunities to begin new lives.<sup>2</sup> The physical layering of this history also continues to provide an open-ended framework for acculturation.

Immigrants from Asia, the Middle East, and Central and South America, who make up the current wave, now inhabit many of the city's inner areas. Today they have not only transformed these neighborhoods as physical environments, but they have adapted their enculturated socio-spatial practices to them.<sup>3</sup> One such immigrant group, the Hmong, refugees from the political order established with the formation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 1975, is the focus of this article.

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## CHANGING CULTURE AND TRADITION AMONG IMMIGRANTS

The Hmong, like many other immigrant groups, have made a transnational journey in moving from Southeast Asia to the United States. However, unlike the majority of other recent immigrants, they arrived as refugees, “unable or unwilling to return to [their] country of origin because of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution.”<sup>4</sup> The Hmong were forcefully uprooted — “pushed” from their country of origin — and experienced “profound social and cultural displacements, loss and trauma.”<sup>5</sup> As such, they share a number of experiences with other refugee groups in the U.S. Among these experiences were prolonged and dangerous escapes, loss of kin, and lengthy periods in refugee camps. But the Hmong stand out from other Southeast Asians in their immigrant cohort for other reasons, too: they are the most rural and the least educated; they have the largest households and the highest fertility rates; and they have spent the longest time in refugee camps.<sup>6</sup>

While Hmong individuals undoubtedly have particular and complicated histories that affect their experience as refugees, the characteristics and experiences they share as a group have also made them particularly vulnerable to the potentially stressful effects of cultural change.<sup>7</sup> In the words of Jane M. Jacobs, their migration from old homes to new homes has provided the preconditions for “attempt[s] at re-embedding and re-territorializing bounded spatial units whose pre-given sense of self has been compromised by the deterritorializing effects of globalization.”<sup>8</sup> In order to examine the deterritorializing effects of the refugee experience, this article will apply Amos Rapoport’s culture-core model in an attempt to understand how the Hmong have reconstituted and reterritorialized their culture and traditions within Milwaukee’s existing neighborhoods.<sup>9</sup>

In his 2005 book *Culture, Architecture and Design*, Rapoport wrote that culture is “the way of life of a people, including ideals, norms, rules and routinized behaviors . . . that are transmitted symbolically across generations through the enculturation of children and the acculturation of immigrants.”<sup>10</sup> Enculturation is the conditioning process through which children and youth gradually gain competence in their cultural context and learn to interpret codes for action and appropriate behavior. Popular traditions and patterns of activities, internalized through enculturation, inculcate rules and codes for appropriate spatial relationships and behavior. These rules dictate proper locations and relationships of various categories of people and objects in the physical environment. Acculturation is the process through which individuals adopt and assimilate the codes governing acceptable behaviors and activities of foreign cultures. For recent immigrants, enculturated codes are no longer adequate; at the same time, codes of the new culture cannot quickly nor wholly supplant them. In this interval of adjustment, the “conceptual distance” between an

immigrant and a host culture can be a very important influence on pace and degree of acculturation — as important as the social structure of immigrant culture, the size of an immigrant group, and any discrimination engaged in by the host culture.<sup>11</sup>

Rapoport has pointed out that a person’s ethnic identity is crucial to his or her ideas of appropriate activities and social and spatial relationships in the residential environment. And, in order to understand the “popular traditions” transmitted through these social and cultural constructions of space, one must look at the actions of daily life, as well as ritual actions and spiritual beliefs.<sup>12</sup> Embedded within environments, common physical and social patterns hold cues for appropriate action, and are understood by those enculturated in those environments. But, as Rapoport has written, they may be misread by outsiders.<sup>13</sup>

Extending Rapoport’s framework to examine findings from Milwaukee’s Hmong reveals that when an immigrant group arrives in a new culture, the popular traditions, cues and actions embedded in its previous environments no longer have physical foundations. The disorientation and sense of crisis attendant on this situation may impel efforts to reterritorialize culture and traditions in the new environment. In this regard, Renee Chow has demonstrated that certain physical environments may limit such efforts toward inhabitation in a more familiar, livable way, while others may facilitate them through their “loose or ambiguous fit.”<sup>14</sup>

In order to analyze relationships between the physical environment and efforts to reterritorialize culture and traditions within immigrant populations, culture and tradition must first be “disassembled” into observable manifestations (e.g., family and kinship structures, social roles and networks, status, identity, rituals and activities).<sup>15</sup> These can then be studied, documented, and related to the physical environment.

In relation to this effort, Rapoport’s “culture core” model proposes that in the process of cultural change, core elements are modified more slowly than peripheral elements.<sup>16</sup> The cultural core is composed of those important characteristics that members use to define the group (e.g., language, religion, rituals, and family and kinship structures). Because peripheral elements change rapidly, while core elements change more slowly, a unique mixture of old and new elements may occur. Rather than hastening adaptation, cultural change may also strengthen elements of an immigrant culture, further distinguishing it from the host culture as a means to cope with cultural stress.<sup>17</sup>

## HMONG EXPERIENCE AND CULTURE: CONTEXTUALIZING THE CORE

In order to study transformation and reterritorialization of culture and tradition among Hmong immigrants in Milwaukee, a brief examination of Hmong experience and culture, as well as of the physical setting of Hmong neighborhoods in Milwaukee, is necessary.



The Hmong who have resettled in the U.S. have traversed a great cultural divide. They are originally descended from the Miao people of southern China.<sup>18</sup> Dispersal from southern China to other parts of Southeast Asia occurred primarily between 1800 and 1860. At this time, accounts suggest, the ruling power attempted to force the Hmong to conform to the dominant Chinese culture. The Hmong had a strong desire to maintain their ethnic identity, however, and they fled and resettled in remote highland areas of southern China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Burma. The high altitudes and dense forests here offered a refuge that allowed them to continue their traditional swidden (slash-and-burn) agriculture.

The Hmong, who were exposed to both war and refugee-camp trauma during the years of conflict in Southeast Asia in the 1960s and 70s, have been further challenged as refugees and immigrants. In moving from remote mountain villages to cities in the U.S., they have experienced an exceptionally great conceptual distance. Their highland lifestyle was originally disrupted because of alliances they made with governments and armies opposed to Indochina's Communist regimes. And as their allies (notably the U.S.) pulled out of Southeast Asia in 1975, the Hmong were forced to hide in the jungles of Laos. After three years, many then fled to Thailand, where they remained in refugee camps until the late 1970s and 80s. At that time, changes in U.S. refugee policy enabled large-scale resettlement. Approximately 100,000 Hmong have now entered the U.S., most during the 1980s.

Initial resettlement policy dispersed refugees across the country to avoid concentrations that would impose burdens on local governments.<sup>19</sup> Many refugees were sponsored by charitable and religious organizations that attempted to ease adaptation to life in the United States. But later, refugee-run self-help groups formed to sponsor new arrivals. Over time, the policy of diffused resettlement also gave way to family and clan reunification, and by 2000, secondary and tertiary migration had concentrated 83 percent of Hmong in three states: California (38.4 percent), Minnesota (24.7 percent), and Wisconsin (19.9 percent).<sup>20</sup>

Milwaukee presents a particularly apt location to study Hmong immigrants. The 2000 Census showed that 8,430 individuals, 23.3 percent of Wisconsin's Hmong population, lived in Milwaukee.<sup>21</sup> Initially, the Hmong settled in Milwaukee's near south and southwest sides (FIG. 1). Here Hmong immigrants could access needed services such as the Lao Family Community Center. After initial settlement, however, some Hmong families entered Milwaukee's Urban Homesteading Program and other homeownership programs on the near northwest side of the city, in the area surrounding Vliet Street, between 20th and 40th Streets. As a result, many Hmong homeowners now live on the near northwest side of the city, and Hmong-owned businesses have now opened along Vliet Street. This area, identified in Figure 1 as the Vliet Street Hmong enclave, is the setting for the present study.

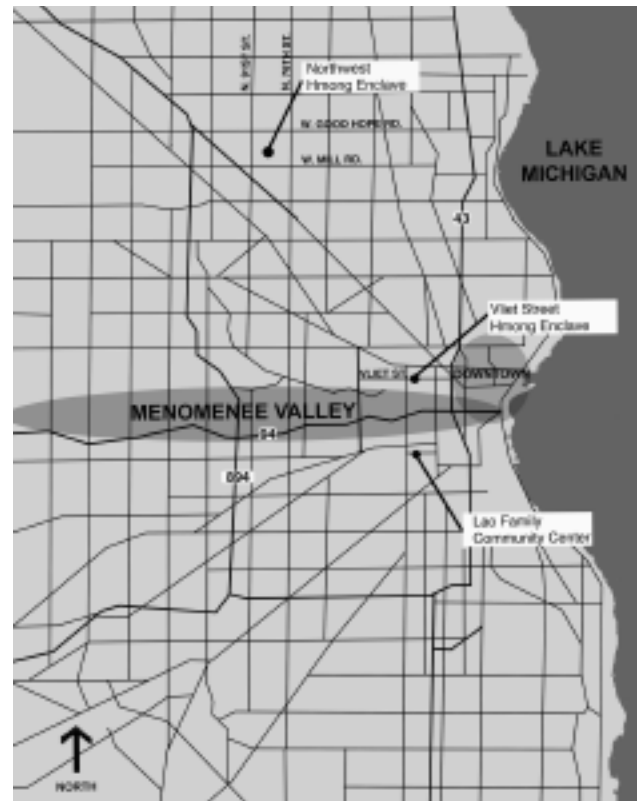


FIGURE 1. Map of the City of Milwaukee with key landmarks identified.

In recent years, some Hmong have also purchased homes on Milwaukee's far northwest side, in an area identified as the northwest Hmong enclave. The accompanying map of census tracts illustrates that while Hmong are dispersed across the city, there are a few areas of concentration: on the near south side, and north side in the Vliet Street Hmong enclave, and the northwest Hmong enclave (FIG. 2).

The 32 participant households in this study provide a broad cross-section of the Hmong cultural group. Three primary characteristics were used to select these households: 1) household heads needed to be Hmong immigrants who entered the U.S. in 1975 or later; 2) households needed to be of low-to-moderate income, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's income guidelines for Milwaukee County; and 3) households needed to live in owner-occupied housing.<sup>22</sup>

Rapoport's definition of "core elements" was further used to frame and bound the analysis of study data. By applying his definition of "core elements" to the literature on the Hmong as an ethnic minority, in their homeland, as refugees, and as immigrants, three cultural characteristics emerged to provide an analytical foundation from which to observe expressions of traditional Hmong culture: 1) settlement, 2) family and kinship, and 3) religion.

**Settlement.** Traditionally, Hmong villages were located in remote jungles on the highest mountains in Laos. Hmong

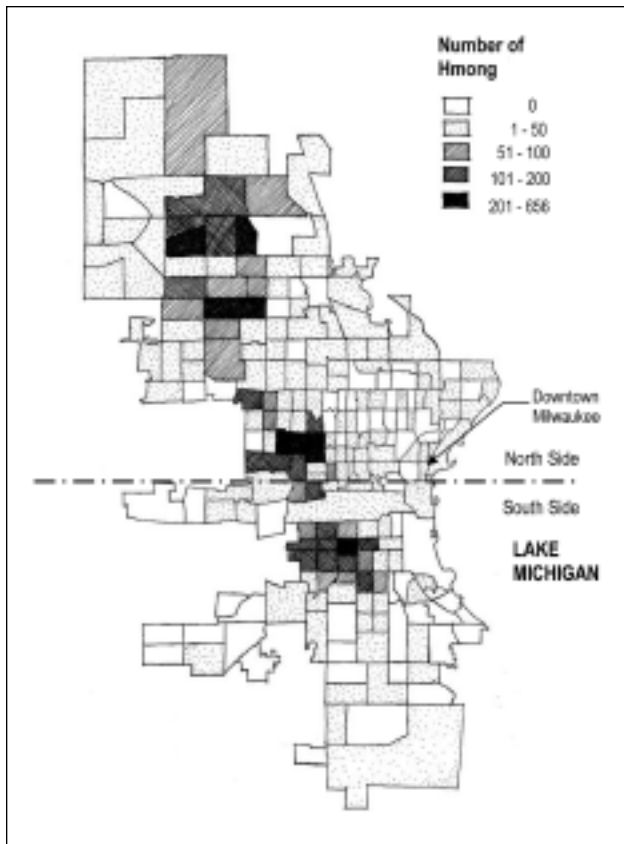


FIGURE 2. Distribution of Hmong by census tract, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2000 Census.

wanted to live near clansmen with whom certain ritual ties were shared; but, because of exogamous marriage customs, they also wanted to live near people who were of other clans. Thus, though villages varied in size from six to ten households (sometimes expanding to a hundred households during the war), they were usually composed of more than one clan. The village headman, who dealt with government officials, was chosen and supported by village household heads. Villages existed more for protection than for social or economic purposes.

**Family and Kinship.** From birth to death, Hmong have traditionally been enmeshed in a web of kinship connections. Almost never acting independently, Hmong lived within layered relationships of kin. The clans (*xeem*), with their origins recorded in orally transmitted Hmong creation myths, united Hmong social, political and religious behavior. The presence of a number of kinship terms also indicates the great importance of these roles and relationships.

The term *kwvtij*, used by Hmong to describe relationships to blood relatives, also refers to the members of a man's paternal lineage.<sup>23</sup> Close physical proximity to *kwvtij* was important for mutual support and because traditions such as New Year (harvest) celebrations and specific rituals of death and burial distinguish between insiders and outsiders.

The extended-family household, *tsev*, was the primary social and economic unit; *tsev neeg* was the term by which members of a household referred to themselves. While the term may have been loosely applied to the physical environment of the home, it most strongly connected members emotionally and spiritually, even with ancestral spirits after death.

*Tsev neeg* maintains its order through respect for age. The symbols of the *tsev neeg*, the ancestral altar and ashes from the hearth, were brought along to maintain spiritual connections each time a Hmong household moved. It was through the *tsev neeg* that many familial and spiritual traditions, particularly concerning ancestors and appeasing spirits, were passed from generation to generation.

**Religion.** A third determinant of Hmong cultural life has been their religious beliefs. The Hmong who arrived in the U.S. were "a people steeped in animistic ritual, bounded by good and evil spirits to a way of life filled with the magical and mystical."<sup>24</sup> They had three identifiable, interwoven components in their traditional religious practice: animism, ancestor worship, and geomancy. Hmong animism viewed supernatural beings as involved in every aspect of life, most critically birth, death and sickness. Shamans (*txiv neeb*) could see and communicate with the spirit world, and thus were consulted in the event of illness or misfortune. Traditionally, Hmong also believed that specific spirits inhabited the structure and spaces of a house. On a special altar, the spirit of wealth protected all household members.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, the Hmong practiced a form of geomancy (known as *loojmen*) when siting villages, houses, and the graves of ancestors. Strict criteria existed for following *loojmen* principles, for the placement of ancestor and other spirits to ensure the welfare of village and household inhabitants.<sup>26</sup>

These Hmong settlement patterns, kinship and family structures, and religious beliefs are specific characteristics of traditional Hmong culture, and they helped distinguish Hmong from the many other ethnic groups in Laos. The preceding descriptions provide the foundation for the following consideration of Hmong immigrants and their relationship to the physical environment in Milwaukee.

#### RECONSTITUTING HMONG CULTURE AND TRADITIONS IN ONE MILWAUKEE HMONG ENCLAVE

The Hmong who have purchased homes in the area identified as the Vliet Street Hmong enclave have chosen to inhabit what Dell Upton might consider a landscape of decay.<sup>27</sup> This neighborhood was one of Milwaukee's ethnically homogeneous German enclaves in the early 1900s, but by 1990 it had become an integral component of Milwaukee's "blighted Inner Core."<sup>28</sup>

Most of the houses in the area are "single-family detached frame cottages and double-decker two-family flats" constructed between 1888 and 1910.<sup>29</sup> Built on long, narrow

blocks, divided into long, narrow lots, most sit on parcels which were 120 feet deep, with 30 to 40 feet of street frontage. By the early 1990s, with some dilapidated buildings giving way to vacant lots and others still offering the possibility of renovation, the neighborhood was ripe for transformation (FIG. 3). Some Hmong immigrants saw an opportunity to house their large and extended families in this physical fabric of decay. Between the early 1990s and 2001, when this study was conducted, the Hmong population in the Vliet Street enclave increased substantially, allowing the Hmong there to reconstitute their culture and traditions in this “new world” of Milwaukee.

Hmong socio-spatial practices in the Vliet Street enclave clearly show the presence of a “reinterpreted” culture core. This has not involved a replication of the Hmong culture in Laos; among other changes, there have been substitutions and modifications to the kinship structure and reinterpretation of established socio-spatial patterns and traditions. Comparisons with study data from households in Milwaukee’s northwest Hmong enclave also suggest the Hmong in Milwaukee are not a monolithic group. Study findings do indicate, however, that Hmong who choose to buy houses and remain in the Vliet Street enclave do so because it offers a place to re-create, as far as possible, the enculturated order by which Hmong have traditionally understood their place relative to others, to the spirit world, and to the physical environment.

The study participants living in the Vliet Street enclave further indicated that they specifically chose to live in an area with concentrations of persons of their own cultural group. This is not unique to Hmong in Milwaukee, or to Hmong in general. Cultural and ethnic enclaves abound in cities in the U.S. Enclaves provide immigrants with a retreat, a place of

comfort, and a place where they can access needed resources. Rapoport has argued that discord or avoidance can result from fine-grained social heterogeneity; people prefer to retreat to secure places — in this case, an enclave of some number of blocks that “belong” to the Hmong.<sup>30</sup> For this group of Hmong, however, the desire to live around other Hmong also stems from the fact that they only trust other Hmong to ensure their safety and survival, an attitude resulting from their experiences during wartime and as refugees.

Another benefit of the enclave is that, as in other areas with large Hmong concentrations, Hmong residents can easily read nonverbal cues and act appropriately. Study participants said they trusted that, because they understood their culture and customs, other Hmong would unconditionally accept them when they lived side by side. They are aware that non-Hmong might perceive some practices associated with Hmong traditional worship as immoral or even criminal. Unlike those outside the culture, for example, Hmong do not criticize the size of other Hmong households or wonder at the fact that two nuclear families might live together in the same household. Also, Hmong do not pass judgment on those Hmong men who continue the traditional practice of polygyny. Hmong feel that in neighborhoods with high concentrations of other Hmong, they are free to be themselves and live the way they want to. According to one practicing polygynist:

*It doesn't really matter where I live so long as the people around are Hmong. . . . I wanted to live in this area because many Hmong have bought the houses here. . . . This is a good place to live because this whole block of houses is owned by Hmong. That makes me feel like I belong here. People don't care who lives with me. They accept me.*



**FIGURE 3.** Typical condition in the area around Vliet Street in 1990 where some dilapidated buildings gave way to vacant lots while others offered the possibility of renovation.

Thus it is that Hmong find that living adjacent to other Hmong reduces the possibility of conflict and provides a retreat where they can engage in activities that are distinctly of their own culture. When this refuge is not available, problems can develop. In particular, nearly all Hmong have had contentious encounters with African Americans in their present or previous neighborhoods. One mother of seven explained:

*I did not like the neighbors here because where we lived before there were many African Americans. They made us feel unwelcome because they tried to beat us up. We were afraid to go outside. . . . We felt unsafe. . . . The African Americans have hurt us. . . . There are fewer African Americans living here now but because I still remember their violence from the past, I do not want to live near them.*

More than 50 percent of Hmong study participants suggested that African Americans discriminate against or target Hmong specifically for vandalism, theft, and in a few cases, violent personal crime. Another Hmong study participant described this sense of being targeted:

*There were many blacks there then. They threw rocks at our car. We were afraid. They did not make us feel safe. . . . They kept destroying our property. They did it because we were Hmong. . . . Now it feels much better because there are fewer blacks here and more Hmong, so the neighborhood feels much safer.*

As a result of such experiences, many of the study participants said they limited interactions with African Americans in the neighborhood. While Hmong and African Americans are the two largest populations in the Vliet Street enclave, some Hmong also said they had conflicts with other non-Hmong neighbors. These usually have resulted from the practice of traditional Hmong religion, noise, and parking congestion during Hmong gatherings, or noise created by Hmong children.

The Vliet Street enclave identified as a desirable place to live contains several Hmong subclans that have reconstituted themselves through secondary and tertiary migration (e.g., Vang, Xiong). In fact, nearly two-thirds of the study participants had moved from their place of initial resettlement to Milwaukee to reconstruct kinship ties. A 36-year-old father of four, who settled in Milwaukee after thirteen years of moving around Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin, put his decision this way:

*I looked at the house and decided I would buy it because of the location. It was near my brother. . . . I moved to Milwaukee to be reunited with my brothers. We got together and planned that we would all end up here. . . . When we moved to Milwaukee, my two brothers who were then living in Milwaukee and I all decided this was the place we would settle permanently. Then later my fourth*

*brother came from Thailand and we are all helping him now. . . . We all help each other adjust to life in the United States. . . . There is no jealousy between us brothers. We work together. . . . Family is most important.*

In order to achieve a sense of security, however, reunion is not seen as enough. Hmong clan leaders understand that in order to reestablish Hmong culture and traditions, Hmong need to have the control that comes only with homeownership in the United States. A 33-year-old father of twelve, who originally resettled in Superior, Wisconsin, described the thinking of one clan leader:

*My uncle who came to the United States in 1975 suggested that Hmong people should buy a house in the United States. That way the Hmong will be able to live in the United States for a long time and have a stable place to live [i.e., not have to move because of landlords] — this is the place [U.S.] for reestablishing Hmong culture and customs because we are safe here and people will leave us alone and not try to change us.*

However, because most Hmong came with few resources, homeownership was not a possibility when they first arrived. Further, as seen above, the reunion of clans and subclans took time. In due course, however, younger clan members acting as advisors to Hmong elders (the traditional clan leaders), recognized that Milwaukee's inner-city neighborhoods offered opportunities for the creation of cultural and family security and growth.<sup>31</sup> Indicative of this, one 35-year-old father of five (an advisor to clan elders) noted, "The house was abandoned and boarded up. That represented an opportunity to look in to. Often these houses sell for very little because someone just wants to get rid of them."

What the Hmong realized was that these inner-city neighborhoods had many rundown and vacant buildings, which the Hmong could use as places to reestablish themselves and re-create their close-knit kinship structure. With the assistance of the city's community development office and the Landmark Housing Corporation, Hmong have been able to purchase rundown houses, like the one shown in Figure 3, and make them habitable. Typical have been the views of one 38-year-old mother of seven: "There was opportunity in this part of Milwaukee, the opportunity to own a house. Also the houses around here are much bigger than in other parts of Milwaukee."

The importance of close physical proximity to relatives, noted above, has a number of benefits for the Hmong. It allows easy resource sharing, assistance with daily tasks, shared childcare, and provision of comfortable surroundings. Close relatives form the primary social contacts for nearly all Hmong in the study group. One 32-year-old father of six provided the information represented in the accompanying map showing the distribution of his relatives (FIG. 4). He



FIGURE 4. Neighborhood map highlighting location of relatives of participant HMO12.

described his choice to move from Milwaukee's south side to the near northwest side to live by more relatives:

*I wanted to live here because my uncle lives on one side and [when I bought my house] my brother bought the house on the other side of me. Also, most of my relatives were here, and I am related to most people [40 households in eight blocks] in the neighborhood.*

Figure 4 suggests the density of kin that many Hmong have been able to accomplish by buying a house in the Vliet Street enclave.

Homeownership in such enclaves also allows Hmong to improve household well-being by providing a sense of belonging and permanent connection in a safe and comfortable environment. This sense of belonging is a complex mosaic of social connections and physical relationships. For Hmong, life near a concentration of people related to them (the *kwvtij*) is inextricably linked to the need to have control over that place. In Syracuse, New York, K.L. Monzel noted that Hmong feel attachment to a group of people larger than their nuclear family:

*A Hmong person's home or place of belonging is where his/her parents or kwvtij [several generations of male cousins] live. All males descended from one male ancestor belong to the same kwvtij, forming the strongest social bond of the Hmong. In practice, the kwvtij would only include two or three generations of men who felt particularly close to each other and chose to reside and work together. The kwvtij provides for the containment of souls within the family. Hmong believe that at death one of a person's [three] souls is reincarnated in another descendent of the kwvtij. Because of this recycling of souls within the family, it is important to give birth within a house belonging to the kwvtij so the familial house spirit will protect the child and the [reincarnated] soul that will be called into its body a few days after birth.<sup>32</sup>*

Not all reasons for Hmong attachment to the *kwvtij* are culture specific, however. Hmong feel attachment to the *kwvtij* in some of the same ways that Americans often feel attachment to the physical aspects of a place. Monzel found in Syracuse that members of a *kwvtij* often lived in houses closely clustered in the same neighborhood. In discussing homeownership,

Hmong participants in the Milwaukee study emphasized their feelings of belonging not only to their extended family and *kwvtij*, but also, by association, to the physical location (city and neighborhood) where these relatives have clustered. Two brothers, who live one block from each other, talk about family ties, belonging and staying in Milwaukee:

*When I first moved to Milwaukee, I began to feel it was a place I belonged because my brothers and their families are all here now. . . . Milwaukee is a place where I will stay permanently. Us four brothers came together to live here. . . . Family ties will cause me not to move even when I have the opportunity to move. (42-year-old head of extended-family household, older brother)*

*I felt that owning a house would make me feel like I belonged in Milwaukee, because Milwaukee is where my family is [parents and brothers]. We all decided we would come here to live. Because family is here, it is where I belong and so it is important to own property, a house. (36-year-old father of four, younger brother)*

Within extended families, older and younger brothers have frequently been able to purchase nearby houses and regenerate the extended-family household, albeit in a new and somewhat more autonomous form. Among study participants, several pairs of brothers had purchased side-by-side houses. Such situations have allowed Hmong immigrants to reinterpret the relationship between kin, family and household, and to relate generation to generation, generation to physical environment, and family member to family member in a variety of ways. The following statement and the accompanying images illustrate one such case (FIGS. 5, 6):

*Before I bought this house, I lived in my brother's house next door. When we first moved there, it was just my brother, his new wife, my mom, my other brother, and me. After my other brother and I got married and started having kids it seemed a little small [four bedrooms]. . . . We could have lived in the two downstairs units and my older brother live upstairs, but I wanted to buy this house because it was right next to my brother's house. It has always been an abandoned, vacant [burned out] house the whole time we lived there and it was in a good location for us. . . . The City gave us some trouble because they said I didn't have enough money to fix the house up [because it was burned out upstairs] but my brothers and I figured out how to do it. . . . Now I live here with my children and my other brother lives in the unit downstairs with his family, and my older brother lives in the upstairs of his house with his wife and my mom. . . . Living so close to my brothers makes it easy for my mom to go back and forth. It is easy for us to help each other out. . . . Our whole family wanted to be able to stay together, to have*

*our children grow up together, to have a place for our mother to stay. . . . If I bought it [this house] we could all live together on this piece of land. It would make life easier, and we could all help each other out. Also, it would make it good for our mom because she could easily move back and forth between the houses and live with all of her, family together in one place. We could all look out for her and she would be there to help with everybody's children. (26-year-old father of five, younger brother)*

Homeownership creates long-term security for Hmong, as it does for other cultures. But for the Hmong it also provides a culturally necessary social-physical and spiritual linkage. Thus, “belonging” is first to people, but also to place, because the “spirit” of the *kwvtij* must have a permanent place to dwell. The cohesiveness of the social unit of the household comes from its permanence in relationship to the physical place, and hence also to spiritual stability:

*It is important to Hmong to own a house. Every family should own a house. If you do not own a house you are not a family. . . . It is important for a family to belong to their house. . . . It is an important Hmong value that house and family go together. A Hmong family must have a house to be a family. The family spirit, the family soul, dwells in the house [the familial house spirit of the kwvtij]. If we do not own the house, the spirit will have nowhere to stay and be happy. . . . (54-year-old, father of six)*

This need to tie spirit to place through homeownership in order to achieve “belonging” is a unique product of Hmong traditional culture. But it has now been overlaid by Hmong refugee experience and the influence of mainstream American cultural norms. In Laos, prior to being uprooted as refugees, although Hmong did not own property, they had control over their physical and social environment. Therefore, the “permanence” of ownership was not necessary to the traditional Hmong sense of control. In Hmong culture, *kwvtij* moved from place to place to find fertile soil. But in the U.S. the need for permanence now also stems from the loss and disorientation so many Hmong feel as a result of their experience as refugees. It is only through feeling settled in a place that Hmong imagine they can regain what was lost when they were forced from Laos:

*I have always had a strong feeling to own a house is important in order to be rooted. . . . Having a place to call home is important in making you feel like you belong here. Here we had the opportunity to buy a house and had a good job. . . . Owning a house lets you put down roots. Our lives before coming here [to the U.S.] were unpredictable and unsafe. We had not felt like we belonged anywhere for years and had nothing to call our own. (32-year-old head of extended-family household)*



**FIGURE 5. (LEFT)** Drawing illustrating organization of extended family within the “family compound,” created when brothers purchased adjacent buildings as well as adjacent vacant lots.

**FIGURE 6. (BELOW)** Image of the family compound from the street.



Hmong know they may never return to Laos, so they try to establish themselves in the same city and neighborhood as their *kwvtij*, to make a place where they belong. In so doing, they allow for (indeed, perhaps require) the reconstitution of their culture and the reinterpretation of their tradition in a new time and place.

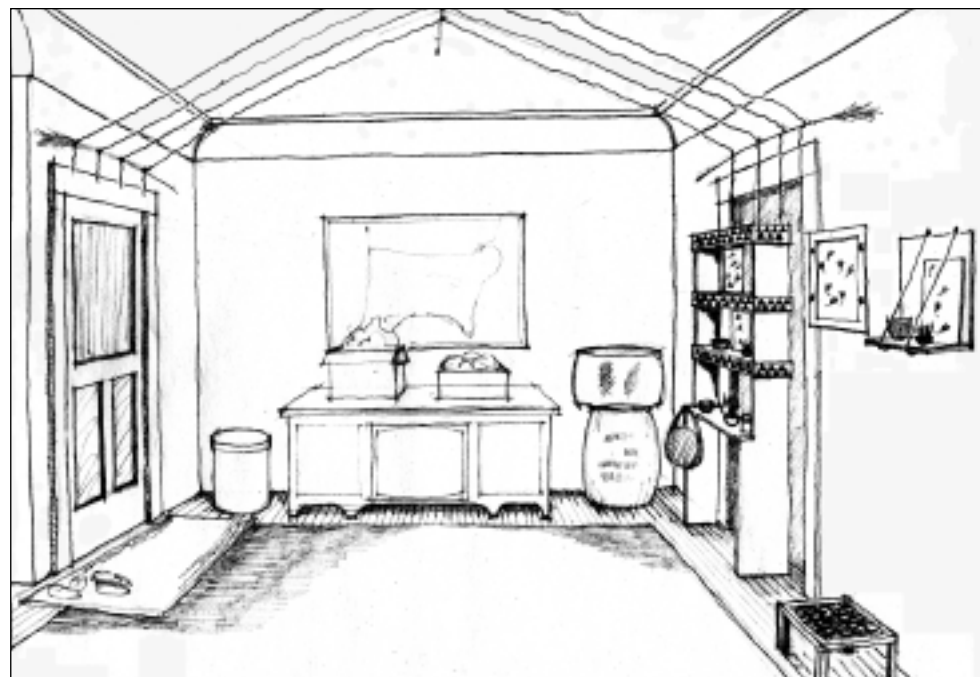
For the Hmong, regrouping in Milwaukee has allowed regeneration of kinship structure, rebuilding of extended-family networks, and property ownership. This has allowed the Hmong there to find roots in a new, different, very urban place. As seen above, Hmong kinship ties have aided in the process of survival and adaptation in the United States.<sup>33</sup> However, this Hmong reliance on kin and the creation of an ethnic enclave are not solely for pragmatic purposes. The Hmong also have a deep-seated need for ethnic homogeneity, which is linked to the great conceptual distance between the worldview that underpins their traditions and the worldviews typical of mainstream U.S. culture.

Identity-affirming traditions were also seen as particularly necessary by Hmong study participants, especially religious ceremonies and celebrations. Hmong religious practices differ substantially from those of the dominant culture. But in the enclave established around Vliet Street, household and shamanic practices of spirit worship are possible, where they had not been in some other places of prior resettlement. For example, when Hmong reconstitute *kwvtij* and extended family households, they reestablish the ancestral altar, and for the households of shaman, the shaman's altar finds its home (FIG. 7).

Hmong who continue to practice their traditional religion (including some who consider themselves Christian)

engage in two types of rituals to ensure the spiritual health of the household. First, ordinary Hmong perform rituals in their homes, intended to nourish ancestral spirits so that the spirits have the strength to guard souls of household members from the evil spirits that would otherwise appropriate their souls and cause illness and misfortune. Home rituals also are held to summon a baby's soul after birth and at the New Year to revive the soul of the spirit who guards the front door. These ceremonies often involve animal sacrifice and gathering of large groups of relatives. Second, shamans are called when healing of the soul is required, because Hmong believe shamans can intercede in the spirit world to affect a cure. The rituals of shamans engaged in retrieving wandering souls entail entry into a trance at the sound of a gong, the use of finger bells, and the sacrifice of a pig or chickens. The soul of the animal is then substituted for that of the wandering human soul. The noise and animal sacrifice associated with these rituals have created notable conflict with non-Hmong neighbors. One recent Hmong arrival expressed anxiety over this conflict:

*I just feel more comfortable with more Hmong in the neighborhood and less Americans and African Americans, because I worry that non-Hmong people might call the police on us when the shaman is performing traditional ceremonies that involve killing chickens or pigs. Non-Hmong people might think there was something wrong with doing that as part of a ceremony. This is a really big problem for Hmong and why we should live together.*



**FIGURE 7.** Places for Hmong traditional religious rituals — Shaman's Altar in living room with strings linking it to front door so spirits can travel from door to the altar. Family altar to the right.



The problem is indeed serious, as traditions associated with religion and spirit worship figured heavily in the ethnic identities of Hmong in Laos. It is true that some diminution of religious exclusivity has occurred; only fifteen of the thirty-two study participants (47 percent) indicated that they currently exclusively follow traditional Hmong religion and spirit worship. Nonetheless, all the study participants except one indicated that they engaged in rituals and celebrations associated with the Hmong traditional religion, because these activities ensured household health and preserved and transmitted Hmong culture to younger generations. Reliance on the traditional Hmong worldview in times of illness and misfortune, particularly by Hmong who consider themselves Christian, suggests the deep imbedding of this cultural characteristic in Hmong consciousness.<sup>34</sup> Thus it is clear that Hmong revere tradition in kinship and family ties, and that they perform rituals and celebrations of their animist beliefs even in new locations as a means to reconstitute their society. Though delinked from traditional locations, these remain a way to re-create an understandable cultural order.

#### ENVIRONMENTS SUPPORTIVE OF RE-EMBEDDING AND RETERRITORIALIZING CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

In discussing sites where scholars might study “The Tradition of Change” in the vernacular environments, Upton urged:

*We should turn our attention away from a search for the authentic, the characteristic, the enduring and the pure, and immerse ourselves in the active, the evanescent and the impure, seeking settings that are ambiguous, multiple, often contested,*

*and examining points of contact and transformation — in the market, at the edge, in the new and the decaying.*<sup>35</sup>

The area around Vliet Street where the Hmong first began to purchase houses in the early 1990s is one of those places Upton points to. It provides an example of a physical setting characterized by ambiguity and decay that became a point of transformation both in its physical and cultural dimensions. In regenerating core cultural characteristics and reconstituting Hmong culture and traditions to fit the urban fabric here, the Hmong have reinterpreted their culture and traditions to ease the process of acculturation. In the inner-city neighborhoods of Milwaukee, Hmong leaders have found a decaying environment ripe with assets for regenerating Hmong society, albeit completely different in physical terms from the mountaintop villages where they began their refugee journey.

Even if Milwaukee’s near northwest neighborhoods had suffered decades of neglect and disinvestment, they still presented favorable conditions for the Hmong. Many in Milwaukee saw the abandoned and boarded-up duplexes originally built to house German immigrants between 1888 and 1910 and the vacant lots resulting from demolition of decayed or burnt-out houses as eyesores. But the characteristics of these buildings fit with the more flexible kinship and household structures typical of the Hmong (FIG. 8). The price and availability of the buildings also meshed with the socioeconomic conditions that most Hmong clans faced. By taking advantage of the opportunity presented by conditions resulting from decades of Milwaukee’s layered physical history, the Hmong have been able to create a more supportive environment to ease the effects of rapid cultural change.

Ultimately, this change can be tied to globalization. As Jacobs wrote, “Globalization is marked by a peculiar set of transformations, many of which are explicitly spatial.”<sup>36</sup> The



**FIGURE 8.** Large two-and-one-half-story duplexes built for German Immigrants between 1888 and 1910, rehabilitated by Hmong immigrants in the 1990s.

example of Hmong refugees presented here demonstrates one such instance of transformation. It also reveals dimensions of cultural adaptation and change and of dynamic traditions which have been re-embedded in a new context as a means, in a sense, to arrest cultural stress.

In 1983 Rapoport proposed the use of the construct of a culture core as a means for architects to design environments “which modulate [cultural] stress by modulating rates of [cultural] change, thus providing time for creative synthesis [of cultures] to occur . . . to discover what would be supportive environments in any given case.”<sup>37</sup> In 2005 he addressed similar issues in design, writing, “designs need to respond to ‘culture,’ i.e., be culture specific.”<sup>38</sup> However, this landscape of decay in Milwaukee’s inner city suggests a slightly different precedent for designers. This is what Chow has called “the loose or ambiguous fit,” and Rapoport has labeled “open-ended design.”<sup>39</sup>

The example of the Hmong experience in Milwaukee suggests that rather than designing supportive environments

anew for groups experiencing rapid culture change in the current age of globalization, we should look at what exists in the physical fabric of history and decay. The example suggests that the physical environment need not be designed as highly culture specific, but rather should offer a loose fit that provides cues for multiple modes of inhabitation. Taking this track, designers and planners might embrace decaying environments as places of opportunity. Because of their layering of historical cycles of progress and decline, these environments present a framework that can be supportive for many cultural groups, in part because of their lack of specificity.

The example of refugees presented here, for whom Rapoport indicates supportive environments are particularly critical, demonstrates that some of these environments already exist.<sup>40</sup> That Hmong immigrants have chosen to purchase houses and live in the Vliet Street enclave suggests that the physical characteristics of that environment offer Hmong households an environment supportive of the re-embedding and reterritorializing their culture and traditions.

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The initial research for this paper was made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD]. The author acknowledges HUD support and support through release time from the Center for Democracy in a Multi-racial Society at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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27. D. Upton, "The Tradition of Change," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.V No.1 (1993), pp.9–15.
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29. R.D. Simon, *The City-Building Process: Housing and Services in New Milwaukee Neighborhoods 1880–1910*, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol.68 No.5 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1978), pp.15–16.
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31. The Milwaukee process is not unique. Other examples of places in which clan leaders have reconstituted kinship groups include the Blue Ridge Mountains around Morganton, North Carolina; Sacramento, California; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Hmong resettlement has proven more successful in places like rural Morganton, North Carolina, where characteristics of the environment provide support for a reconstituted set of traditions. See E. Sheehan, "Greens' Hmong Gardens, Farms and Land Ownership in America: Constructing Environment and Identity in the Carolinas," *Lao Study Review* 1, Global Lao Net (1997), accessed March 23, 2004, at <http://www.global.lao.net/laostudy/garden.htm>.
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All photos and drawings are by the author unless otherwise noted.



## On Theory

# Exploring a Cross-Cultural Theory of Architecture

PAUL MEMMOTT AND JAMES DAVIDSON

This article contributes to the development of a theoretical framework to address and explain all human behavior toward or linked with buildings, dwellings and settlements, in terms of both creating and using such environments. In promoting such a project, it is not our aim to demote Western architecture or elevate indigenous architecture, but to seek a theory that can be objectively applied to understanding interactions between the architectural values and building traditions of different cultures. Such a unifying theory of architecture must initially treat all forms of building as having intrinsic value within their own cultural contexts, without unreasonably biasing one form over another.

This article argues for the configuration of a theory of architecture that can serve as a tool for understanding the nature of all designed, arranged, and/or constructed environments used as human habitats across all cultural contexts. A corollary effort involves questioning why the Euro-American concept of architecture, sometimes referred to as “high-style,” and which the current authors refer to as “capital-A architecture,” has so far failed to achieve such a position, at times excluding non-Euro-American and indigenous building traditions. If we are going to contemplate the qualities and properties of building as a universal human activity, then surely our attention, as well as our sample of data, needs to address all human cultures in all historic periods.

The authors acknowledge the difficulty in this undertaking, but believe that such a unifying position is already embedded within the theoretical debates in vernacular architecture, architecture, people-environment theory, and anthropological (material-culture) research. Indeed, in assembling his *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World (EVAW)*, Paul Oliver demonstrated that not only are there many differing patterns of human built or modified environments, but there are many similarities. It is within these similarities that we must look for order, and attempt to build a theory of architecture.

No doubt, time will see our arguments improved or replaced, but the process of seeking a unified theory needs to be initiated. This exploratory article aims to reopen

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debate on this issue through a series of case studies that are both cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary. These examples may seem marginal to those preoccupied with canonical architectural history, but they are representative of the more modest building traditions of many non-Western cultures.

In assembling these examples, we have drawn upon a cross-section of indigenous cultures that are the subject of research in our part of the world, and are commonly sourced in the publications of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ). As well as some Polynesian and Melanesian examples, we have also drawn heavily on our own empirical research — viz., Paul Memmott's study of Australian Aboriginal ethno-architecture and people-environment relations carried out since the early 1970s, and James Davidson's more recent work on the house architectures of Maya peoples of Guatemala and Mexico. We have grounded these examples, some of which have a history of being labeled "primitive," within a set of constructs established by leading architect-anthropologists, particularly Amos Rapoport, Paul Oliver, and Nold Egenter.

Using this framework of sources, we have then selectively reached back to choose and revisit a range of theoretical ideas put forth over the last forty years that seem both persistent and potent in their explanatory powers. However, the stimulus for this article was equally the IASTE 2006 Conference on "Hyper-Traditions," which grappled with contemporary re-creations of architectural traditions in the face of globalizing forces of cultural conflict, and which highlighted the dynamic properties of people-environment relationships.

One value in attempting to reconfigure the definition of architecture in this way lies in popularizing the discipline so that it may have a greater relevance to all peoples and their cultural landscapes. This responds to current global conditions, in which "registered professional architects" design only a small portion of the total built environment. In 2003 Paul Oliver estimated that there were likely a billion dwellings in the world, and it was unlikely that even 1 percent had been designed by professional architects.<sup>1</sup> This calculation reveals how, if it is to be used effectively in a cross-cultural context, a new construct of architecture cannot be dominated by period aesthetics or popular Eurocentric philosophies. It must be useful for both theoretical and practical application to all human settlements. As Stephen D. Houston has written:

*Many definitions, particularly traditional ones, sit firmly in the Euroamerican tradition, which defines vernacular buildings mostly in terms of what they are not: they are not created by professional architects, they are neither "high-style" nor monumental, and they do not result from individual genius.<sup>2</sup>*

A wide range of scholars writing on indigenous building traditions have commented on various aspects of this problem. For example, writing from a Polynesian perspective, Mike

Austin has noted the inappropriateness of suggesting that all "primitive" vernacular styles share some kind of common identity, especially when such inclusiveness is not based on comparative analysis but on contrast to metropolitan, "civilized," Western traditions.<sup>3</sup> Amos Rapoport has suggested a split in the etymological distinction between vernacular and primitive traditions, with the "primitive" remaining unspecialized and isolated from "great traditions."<sup>4</sup> And in discussing the vernacular traditions of the Classic Maya, Houston added that the vernacular is generally characterized by diversity, specialization and heterogeneity, and "lies closer to high-style on the continuum of building traditions."<sup>5</sup>

Reflecting on Melanesian traditional architecture, Martin Fowler wrote:

*Others' architectures more generally were acknowledged and valued by anthropology and other disciplines, but were usually marginalised or simply ignored by Architecture. . . . [The] theoretical issues raised by Architecture's continuing cultural discrimination provide[s] a context for re-asserting the need for modernity to understand, respect, and value Others' cultural productions. Such works embed cross-cultural richness that contributes to the universal cultural heritage. . . .<sup>6</sup>*

One may ask why the realm of Euro-American architectural discourse has been so reticent to share its epistemological domain with non-Western and indigenous building traditions. Instead, it appears to have been easier to place such traditions out of the way, in the realm of the "vernacular" — a term which originated in the Western linguistic tradition to signify the language of the commoner, or the common language.<sup>7</sup> But are such indigenous building traditions any less significant in the value systems of their respective peoples than Euro-American architecture is to Westerners? And why should these traditions not hold equal billing in status and importance to the "capital-A Architecture" of the Euro-American tradition in a program of research?

We share the view of Lindsay Asquith and Marcel Vellinga, who have recently called for the Western tradition to rid itself of the stigma of underdevelopment, poverty, and the past that clings to the idea of vernacular building, and create a forward-looking vision for vernacular architecture in the twenty-first century.<sup>8</sup> Houston has made this case bluntly:

*The available literature on vernacular buildings tends to cleave modest dwellings from palaces or "great houses," a humble chapel from a cathedral. High-style buildings . . . form the preserve of other disciplines such as art history. For our purposes this is poor anthropology. We need sound theory that will . . . establish better understandings of . . . systems of design, patronage, and construction.<sup>9</sup>*

One might well ask whether the theoretical position we seek already exists within the study of vernacular architecture. Indeed, the need for such a unifying position has been discussed on many occasions.<sup>10</sup> But a final resolution has yet to be reached.

In a recent treatise, Nezar AlSayyad framed similar questions, asking if everything in the twenty-first century will simply become classified as vernacular. He then explained the etymological and epistemological limitations of such an approach.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, we are asking if everything built by humans and other species should simply be classified as architecture. This follows Egener, who (drawing on the work of Yerkes and Yerkes in the 1920s<sup>12</sup>) defined “architecture as all that hominids built and build.”<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps the answer lies in the establishment of a revised disciplinary approach which goes beyond the epistemological limitations of the current thinking on both architecture and the vernacular. Whatever the case, even when a unifying categorical label is adopted, there will still be a need for internal classification. Bundling highly diverse phenomena under one label is potentially confusing without the possibility of finer distinctions between types. Nevertheless, all variants need to be included in a unifying theory.<sup>14</sup>

In the *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World*, Oliver had no difficulty combining the term “architecture” with “vernacular.” But he assigned “architect-designed architecture” and “vernacular architecture” (as well as “popular architecture”) to separate categories.<sup>15</sup> He provided no explanation for how these separate traditions might be commonly defined as sub-branches of architecture, whatever the latter construct might prove to be; nor did he clearly address the definition of architecture in a cross-cultural sense. In a more recent book, Oliver lamented that

*As yet there is no clearly defined and specialized discipline for the study of dwellings or the larger compass of vernacular architecture. If such a discipline were to emerge it would probably be one that combines some of the elements of both architecture and anthropology with aspects of history and geography. The need for a multi-faceted approach has probably accounted for the limited number of comparative studies in the subject, for anthropological enquiry is not customarily a part of architectural education, and architectural principles have rarely been considered a significant aspect of the training of an anthropologist.<sup>16</sup>*

It is thus not accidental that our propositions here draw on the particular work of a number of architect-anthropologists. In our view the groundwork for an encompassing, cross-cultural theory of architecture has already emerged, and lies largely within the multidiscipline of people-environment (or environment-behavior) theory.

Working across cultures, Rapoport laid the basis for this theory by pointing out that the extraordinarily large number

and diverse range of built human environments, both contemporary and past, accommodate a significantly lesser range of human activities.<sup>17</sup> That is to say, many human behaviors (and units of such) enacted in architectural settings recur across cultures and historic periods. Rapoport’s premise to the theory of environment-behavior relations therefore posits that built environments are created to support desired behavior, and that “activities” can be taken to be specific units of enactments of behavior.

What we are suggesting here is that the theory of environment-behavior studies, the “EBS” of Rapoport and others, provides part of the necessary theoretical framework to understand the nature and diversity of human built environments.<sup>18</sup> This framework must capture both the requisite dynamics of people-environment interactions as well as the cross-cultural diversity of behaviors, values, customs and meanings associated with built environments and physical constructions.

In exploring what the dimensions and elements of a cross-cultural theory of architecture might be, and what principal theoretical issues should be addressed, we have chosen to explore the following themes that not only recur in the literature, but in our view must be central to such theory: (i) the architect-builder distinction and the significance of where authority lies in building and design decisions; (ii) behavior settings theory and the idea of such settings as constituting architecture; (iii) meanings in buildings and environments and the subsequent role of meaning as a property of architecture; and (iv) the change of architectural traditions and their time properties set within human social evolution.

In attempting to explore such a range of properties, we shall see that contributors to this complex issue draw on social anthropology, human geography, cognitive and environmental psychology, ethnology, household archaeology, material culture, and philosophy in their efforts to secure a theoretical framework.

#### ADDRESSING THE ARCHITECT/BUILDER DISTINCTION AND “AUTHORITY”

Bill Hillier has formulated one of the more recent dissertations about what architecture is, and what separates it from “building.” His definition is explicitly cross-cultural and posits a process that rises above the concept of culture. Hillier’s theory is that architecture arises from within a process of “intellectual choice and decision exercised in a field of knowledge of possibility that goes beyond culture into principle.” Thus, a building is architecture when we can observe the successful accomplishment of a systematic, “abstract and comparative manipulation of form within the general realm of architectural possibility.”<sup>19</sup> This definition also establishes a dichotomy between the “active” building systems of “architecture” in the Euro-American sense, and the “passive building systems” that reproduce a cultural template of vernacular design.

The strength of Hillier's approach (as opposed to other more socially and culturally oriented theories) is its emphasis on the creative agency of the individual as a proponent of architectural change. Architects have had a recurring professional role in creating novel solutions to human needs. Nevertheless, when we analyze this aspect of human-environment interaction, it is important to recognize that (a) the architect is a member of a cultural group and has been enculturated within a given social value system; and (b) the architect has encoded social meanings into his building (for if such were not the case, his or her buildings would fail to be recognized, used or valued by others, no matter how unique or controversial). While architects encode socio-cultural meanings into buildings, users decode such meanings from them. Therefore, no matter how much cognitive originality and creativity is brought to bear on a design problem, the process still occurs within a broader cultural context.

In developing this position, Hillier downplayed most so-called vernacular architecture as merely "building," asserting that "phenotypical variety is normal" within vernacular traditions. He argued that under certain circumstances, often in times of acute social or cultural change, a level of innovation may occur within a cultural group, which will catalyze a creative production of true "architecture." At those times (to use Hillier's technical terms) the spatial codes of a culture underlying the generation of their architectural phenotypes will be changed through the design process engaging at the level of the "genotype."<sup>20</sup> Others might call these innovations and creative cultural productions "hyper-traditions." This is to say, designers will experiment with space/form permutations that extend beyond the customary limits experienced within their own cultural context. However, despite the validity of these observations, we must ask, is this a sufficient theoretical definition of architecture?

Hillier's persistence in largely confining the definition of, and the distinction between, genotype and phenotype to spatial configurations ignores the possibilities of creatively manipulating materials, construction and structural systems, artifactual configurations, meanings and behavioral usage as other legitimate components of architectural process. To consider an example: analysis of the largest collection of photographs of the customary shelters of a single group of Australian Aborigines taken in a restricted time period (sixteen months) at a single locale reveals an immense diversity of structural variation of dome and platform types, despite little variation in space/form configuration.<sup>21</sup> Can this creative variation be dismissed as simply phenotypical variety?

Trevor Marchand has provided a pertinent case study from the Sahelian mud town of Djenne, where a professional association of masons, by training its apprentices, has preserved its building and design traditions. However, significantly, the apprentices have learned in the process to negotiate the boundaries of the tradition and inject innovation to generate reinterpretations of architectural meaning in local con-

texts.<sup>22</sup> Marchand emphasized the sociological significance of the masons' knowledge base and its mode of transmission, and the desirability for them to be engaged in a more holistic decision-making role in urban design and sustainability.<sup>23</sup>

We argue that a cross-cultural definition of architecture must systematically address this issue. "Architecture" is about the possibility of making choices between different combinations of spaces, artifacts, colors, textures, behaviors, ideas, meanings and identities, and the relatedness of such permutations to surrounding landscapes and different constructs of place and time. A challenging aspect is the downplay of physical components and the reliance on site properties, artifacts and meanings as a dominant sub-set of potential properties. In this regard, W.R. Lethaby has described architecture as "thought embodied in form," comprising "durability, utility, and the cosmos."<sup>24</sup>

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of Hillier's dichotomy between "building" and "architecture," what does seem important from this debate is the necessity to understand the spectrum of relationships between architectural design outcomes and differing social systems of authority in directing, controlling and designing buildings and places. Seldom in the Euro-American arena, is the expert, capital-A architect able to wrestle total control of his or her project from the client's (whether private or bureaucratic) political and economic parameters to ensure its architect-perceived design integrity and innovation. In the Western world architects usually work for large corporations, wealthy patrons, project managers, and builders who may and usually do override their design decisions and limit choice in the decision-making process. However, the authoritative figurehead of the "star-architect" is equally not a recent phenomenon in Western architectural discourse. According to Jacques Derrida:

*When Aristotle wants to give an example of theory and practice, he quotes the "architekton": he knows the origin of things, he is a theorist who can also teach and has at his command the labourers who are incapable of independent thought. And with that a political hierarchy is established: architectonics is defined as an art of systems, as an art therefore suitable for the rational organisation of complete branches of knowledge.<sup>25</sup>*

Perhaps this is why the architectural profession continues to struggle with accepting the importance of others' traditional built environments. And perhaps a key to this debate lies in the origin of the term "architect." According to Oliver:

*Architecture has been frequently defined as the science (or art) of building, the word being derived from the Latin architectura. In turn this stems from the Greek arkhitekton, the combination of archos, chief, and tekton, builder, thus placing the emphasis on the master builder and the product of his design and construction.<sup>26</sup>*



In the *EVAW* Oliver also stated that “vernacular builders” (note that he does not say “architects”) are customarily drawn from the communities that use the structures, and are frequently “owner-builder-occupiers.”<sup>27</sup> However, Austin concluded that the idea of traditional building being executed by everyone in a society is not correct for Oceania. His examples of more specialized practitioners included the Maori architect (*tohunga*), a skilled carver knowledgeable in myths and traditions, and a Samoan guild of builders (*tufunga*) who constructed the complex geometries of the *fale* and left the installation of only final building elements to the local people.<sup>28</sup> A number of colonial-era Maya dictionaries also refer to the role of an “architect” in traditional constructions. Thus, Suzanne Miles has discussed the Pokomam Maya term *ah noah*, or “master architect.”<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, in colonial Tzotzil Maya, the term for architect is “official builder,” *jch’ubajel* or *ch’ubavil*, or “man who makes walls.”<sup>30</sup>

Oliver’s position on this matter appears to hold true for most Australian Aboriginal societies in pre- and early contact times, with every individual being versed in shelter construction. Nevertheless, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that certain individuals excelled and would then specialize in more permanent shelter construction. For example, among the Wongkanguru and Diyeri, who utilized a variety of dome forms throughout the arid surrounds of Lake Eyre, certain builders were in such demand that they were borrowed from one camp by another and recompensed.<sup>31</sup> Later we shall discuss the special role of Aboriginal elders in reproducing ceremonial architecture. However, we note that Oliver also qualified his general proposition by stating that craftsmen at times become more specialized and may occasionally be organized into guilds.<sup>32</sup>

From the discussion above it can be seen that in many cultural contexts — vernacular or high-style — specific people within a community may either be given or may take the role of form-maker, creator, and guardian of building traditions. A relevant question for the current argument is on what “authority” do these people base their decision-making processes for the built environment? Our perspective is that this is the one area where it is possible to see a distinction between capital-A architects and their “ethno”-architect counterparts. It appears from the authors’ research of Maya and Aboriginal architectures that authority referents for form-making predominantly take on extra-ego forms (ancestral heroes or god beings); this differs from capital-A architectures, where the decision-making process is clearly centered on the architect’s ego-driven ability to make the correct and wisest decisions within the realm of the political and social status quo presented by clients and the powers-that-be.

This concept of authority in the decision-making process becomes a cultural and place-specific referent. It is this specificity and cultural sensitivity that leads the authors to believe the question of authority holds a key to an eventual configuration of a theory of architecture which is able to encompass what is currently thought of as vernacular envi-

ronments. The sociology of environmental power and the authorization of environmental change and architectural construction are thus also topics which we believe should be included in a cross-cultural theory of architecture.

#### A DYNAMIC DEFINITION OF “TRADITION”

Associated with the documentation of so-named vernacular architecture is the concept of tradition. At the outset, we wish to establish a working definition of this concept from among competing theoretical positions.

For fifteen years in Australia, anthropologists have been revisiting and reexamining in forensic manner the definition of tradition (as well as that of “custom”) in response to intense programs of Native Title Claim litigation. We shall thus utilize the definition provided to the court by the expert witness Bruce Rigsby.

*In Standard English, the term tradition has, I submit, the core sense of signifying the process(es) of the transmission or passing on of culture across the generations. In this sense, tradition is no more or less than the normal process of cultural change, as Kroeber . . . recognised when he wrote of “the passing on of culture to the younger generation” and said that “the internal handing on through time is called tradition.” Tradition has a second (metonymic) sense of signifying the product or products of this process, so that we can identify those elements of culture, e.g., customs or whatever, which have a history of inter-generational transmission to be traditions as well. Note then that the term tradition has two senses: a process and the product of the process. For their part, customs are simply patterns of behavior which are shared by members of a social group, i.e., they are social, not individual phenomena. In plain English, traditions (as products of the process of tradition) seem simply to be old customs, handed down across the generations from the past.<sup>33</sup>*

We note the emphasis within this definition on cultural transmission between generations. If applied to the phenomena of buildings and architectural activity, it implies concepts of enculturation, conceptual encoding and decoding of meanings, as well as adaptation to sites and landscapes, socioeconomic contexts, and user group needs. In this sense, traditions are all dynamic properties of architecture. Rigsby himself noted that “tradition” must be viewed as the normal process of cultural change.

Far from identifying the vernacular as a static architectural concept, this article is concerned with the dynamic qualities of building traditions, and of the many dimensions of people-environment interaction that characterize the various cultural categories of architecture.<sup>34</sup> We shall return in due course to the concept of “tradition” in relation to “change.”

## AUSTRALIAN LESSONS: THE TRAVELERS' CAMP

It is useful here to draw on research on the vernacular architecture of Aboriginal Australia, carried out at the Aboriginal Environments Research Centre, University of Queensland, Australia. This institute maintains that Aboriginal architecture is an expression of highly complex and diverse relationships between the physical, social and cosmological environment. This is of special interest because Australian Aboriginal architecture has regularly been portrayed during the colonial and postcolonial periods as little more than primitive huts, and certainly not deserving of the label "Architecture." To do so would threaten the status quo (the profession of capital-A architects). The nature of most Australian "Aboriginal architecture" thus poses a number of theoretical questions concerning the role of built form in Australian indigenous cultural traditions.

Leaving aside Aboriginal villages and seasonal and short-term camps, perhaps the most striking example of a culturally constructed domiciliary setting which employs minimal (if any) structure is that of a "travelers' camp."<sup>35</sup> This is a quickly made camp, comprising domiciliary spaces, hearths and artifacts, and sometimes windbreaks or shades, that is used overnight or perhaps for only a few hours (such as a "dinner" or midday camp) by a group traveling through the country. As there is little time to invest in the construction of shelters, the natural qualities of the chosen site are of substantial importance in enhancing residential comfort. Although such travelers' camps continue to be in daily use in many remote parts of Australia, there are limited numbers of recorded examples of them. The following case study of a traveling camp, recorded in 1991 by Memmott, concerns two central Australian tribesmen, elder P.W. (a revered ritual leader), and a younger man, S.B. (P.W.'s nephew).

*P.W.'s preferred campsite location is in mulga woodland. He will be grumpy if there are not any mulga tree communities available on the late afternoon route at which to camp for the night. In other types of tree communities, there is more likely to be prickles, burrs, grass and ground cover which can shelter snakes, centipedes, scorpions or the nests of stinging ants; whereas the floor of the mulga forest is free of grass and easy to sweep clean of loose dirt and needle leaves with a branch. Mulga is also a superior wood for cooking and warming fires as it produces long-burning, ash-free hot coals. In the mulga camp one notices the whirl of certain fast flying flocks of birds that adopt the mulga as their habitat. There is also a constant familiar and secure sound of wind in mulga.*

*Campfire discussion ranges across many topics but includes reflection on local Aboriginal history in the region surrounding the campsite, e.g., the totemic history and creation of sacred sites by Ancestral Beings, the history of*

*mortals from past generations in perpetuating the Dreamtime history in ceremonial performance and sacred site maintenance, and the violent contact clash with white pastoralists who settled in the region during the period from the 1890s to the 1930s. P.W. tells gruesome stories of his boyhood during this "revolver time."*

*. . . P.W. and S.B. sleep side by side with a small mulga fire burning between them. Several mulga limbs protrude to one side of their sleeping area, and are gradually fed into the fire through the night. P.W. travels with a "swag" of two thin frayed blankets — one blanket laid under and one over him. He always sleeps in his clothes and points his head to the east and feet to the west to prevent the infiltration of bad spirits during sleep. In the early morning, P.W. warms and smokes the inside of his hat over the fire; his first activity after sitting up. S.B. blows and fans the embers to produce flames for boiling tea.<sup>36</sup>*

Consideration of the properties of this camp illustrates the various elements required for human comfort — surface, vegetation, sound, smell, warmth, security, spatial definition, customary domiciliary behaviors, and connection with nature (FIGS. 1A, B). In the circumstance of a strong wind, a windbreak is quickly constructed of mulga limbs. If there is a rain shower, the fire is stoked up, while persistent rain results in stretching a plastic sheet or blanket over a tree. This is "architecture" at its most minimal; but it is not "primitive" as some might call it because the campers retain a certain level of comfort. Security partly stems from a shared understanding of the sacred meanings attached to the cultural landscape in which the campsite is located.

Australian Aboriginal architecture can be defined as one that is a selected, arranged and constructed configuration of environmental properties, both natural and artificial, in and around one or more activity spaces, combined with patterns of behavioral rules and meanings, to result in human comfort and quality of lifestyle. This definition includes selected environmental features, mental and behavioral rules, spatial properties, hearths and artifacts. It can also include buildings — but not necessarily. It incorporates such concepts as socio-spatial settlement structure, avoidance behavior, diversity of construction detailing and its impact on spatial experience, and ceremonial spaces imbued with meaning and theatrical moment. There are a range of cognitive, invisible, ephemeral and symbolic properties that instill Aboriginal Architecture with a culturally distinct nature. There are clear parallels here with Austin's description of "Pacific Architecture" as

*. . . an architecture of spaces open to the sky rather than closed rooms, or sticks and grass as against mud and stones, poles as against walls, of single cell pavilions rather than labyrinthine complexes, of buildings raised in the air on stilts rather than sunk in the ground, of temporariness*



**FIGURE 1A (TOP), 1B (BOTTOM).** Aboriginal men from the Alyawarr and Wakaya tribes, Central Australia, awakening from their overnight camps while traveling on ceremonial business in the 1980s. They are surrounded by their portable bedrolls and cooking utensils, and located within groves of gidgea trees. S.B. and P.W. are in the top photo. Photos by Paul Memmott.

*as against permanence, tension and weaving rather than compression and building, an outdoor existence and ocean voyaging as against a life grounded in the land.*<sup>37</sup>

Writers in the cultural studies field appear to be moving toward similar positions. Bob Hodge for instance, has acknowledged that Aboriginal residential camps utilize “space as walls,” and are organized using “semiotic strategies,” which he defines as “signs and laws” in relation to “centers.”<sup>38</sup> A more expansively cross-cultural position is taken by Gulsum Nalbantoglu and Wong Chong Thai, who

challenge the primacy of visual properties, which they claim dominate contemporary architectural studies.<sup>39</sup> Definitions of cross-cultural concepts of space draw on different combinations of sensory inputs and need to be incorporated into a theory of architecture for such a theory to be fully encompassing. For example, Fowler has classified Melanesian traditional architecture according to tectonic languages (weaving and binding) as well as form/space relations.<sup>40</sup>

## SETTINGS AS ARCHITECTURE

To accommodate the above case study within a theory of architecture, we draw on environment-behavior relations, and have selected “behavior setting” theory as a powerful and useful theoretical construct.<sup>41</sup> According to Roger Barker and Herbert Wright, certain attributes of people-environment interaction, such as territoriality, boundaries, ecological structure, and time properties can be observed to combine in a complex way to form a special class of places known as “behavior settings.” The behavior setting is “a standing behavior pattern together with the context of this behavior, including the part of the milieu to which the behavior is attached and with which it has [a] synomorphic relationship.” As can be seen in the case of P.W.’s overnight camp, it is an ecological unit consisting of an interaction between behaving persons and things, time, and the immediate environment.<sup>42</sup> The physical things and time (or “milieu”) are supportive of the behavior and surround it. There is an interdependent relation between the two, and hence the term “synomorphic.”

“Standing behavior pattern” implies that the behavior is persistently extra-individual, i.e., there may be a turnover of individuals in a setting, but even though they come and go, they display repetitive characteristic patterns in that particular setting. Thus the structural qualities of the setting are maintained independently of personality, except in cases of social deviancy or creative individuality (however, such cases are relatively few in most settings). Such settings involve forces which coerce individual behavior to conform to recognized models of what is correct under the circumstances.<sup>43</sup> However, according to Rapoport, the “boundaries of [the] milieu, how they are marked, by whom they are penetrated, and so on, vary with culture.”<sup>44</sup>

Settings are designed through the selection of particular environmental properties and the articulation of the setting space with artifacts, structures and meanings.<sup>45</sup> Various members of a cultural group will share an understanding of the ways and rules of how to create the setting, such that new settings can be established throughout the lands (and sometimes seas) of the particular group — although once again we may find a contrast between those settings that any cultural participant can create and those that require a specialist designer and/or builder. The setting also has a position in a cultural landscape, with meaningful connections to other settings and place types to ensure its effective interactive functioning.

In relating settings to architecture, Rapoport has stated that “architecture” is composed of activities, settings and meanings, with these three elements interwoven, whereby “meanings” are a function of “activities,” and “activities” are a function of “settings.”<sup>46</sup> In an adaptation of Hall’s proxemics theory, Rapoport also proposed a theory of the built environment as “consisting of fixed-feature elements (buildings, floors, walls, etc.), semi-fixed-feature elements (‘furnishings,’ interior and exterior of all sorts), and non-fixed-feature ele-

ments (people and their activities and behaviors).”<sup>47</sup> We agree that any definition of “architecture” should incorporate the activities, settings and meanings of people, in conjunction with the varying degrees of permanency — i.e., fixed, semi-, and nonfixed elements of the built fabric specific to its local context. Here we see the capacity of the theoretical framework to encompass both buildings (fixed) and those environments articulated with human spatial behaviors combined with the most minimum of artifacts and physical adjustments (semi- and nonfixed) (FIG.2).

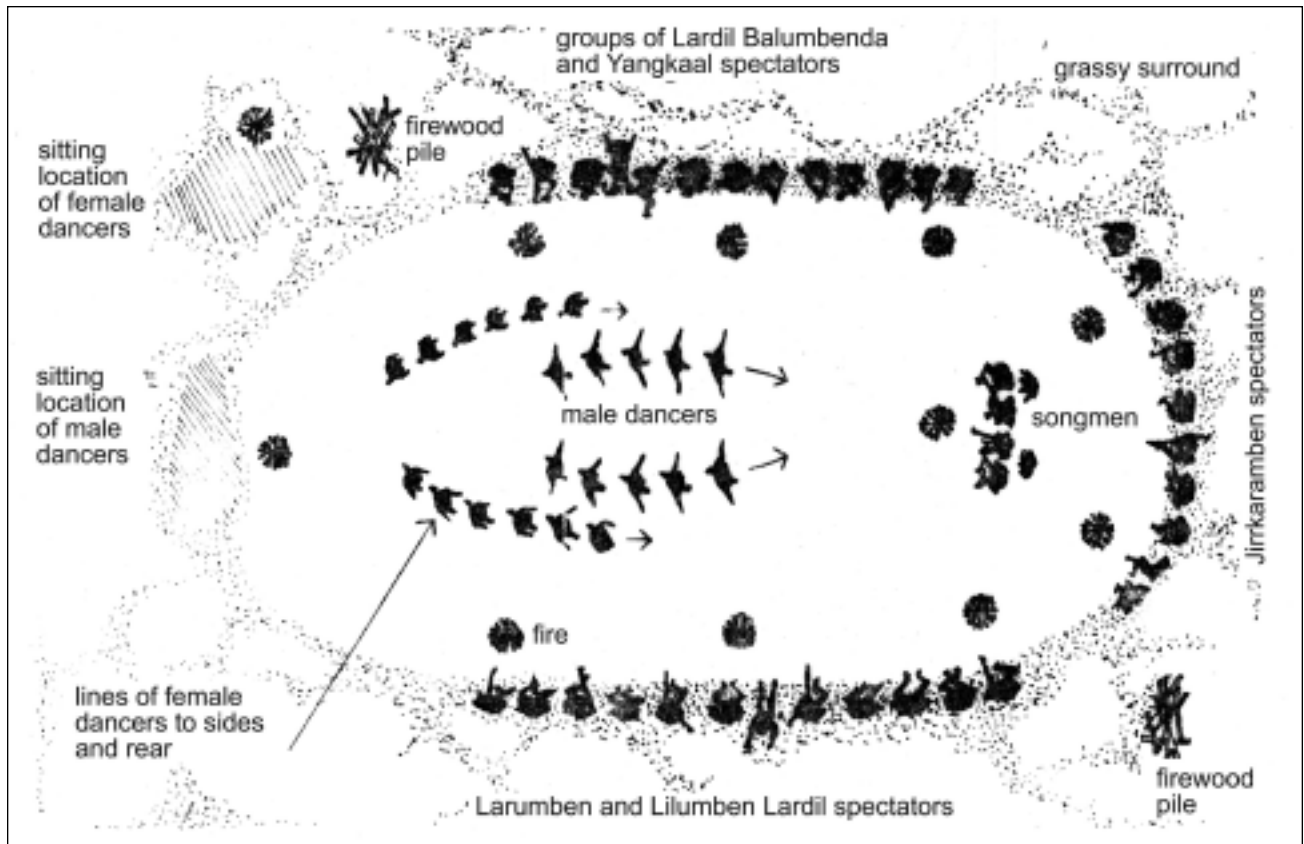
In line with our earlier Aboriginal case study, we suggest the need to incorporate this entire range of possibilities in a construct of “architecture.” We argue that behavior settings, whether designed or evolved through a process of selectionism, to use Rapoport’s term, are a form of architecture, facilitating a high degree of congruence between human needs and environmental attributes.<sup>48</sup>

## MEANING AND ARCHITECTURE

The idea of the authorization of environmental change and building can be extended to that of the authorization of meanings attached to particular pieces of environment. Architects and builders from all cultures encode meanings into buildings and environmental configurations. Whether those meanings take on widespread social currency and are regularly decoded by users depends on the social extent and intensity of the education with and authorization of those meanings. As the types of meanings that can become attached to environments vary enormously, their classification for analysis presents a challenging problem.

For example, a range of semiotic references have been recorded in the ethnographic literature on Australian Aboriginal ethno-architecture. Among certain groups (e.g., the Lardil of Mornington Island and the Warlpiri of the Western Desert) enclosed wet-weather shelters form an element in a myth or sacred history, albeit without any special symbolism attached to them. In an Eastern Arrernte sacred history, there is also a reference to secretive gender-specific knowledge on the construction technology of wet-weather shelters being derived from certain events in the Dreamtime.

Likewise, in Arnhem Land and Cape York can be found ethno-architecture rich in meanings and symbolism; in fact, structural forms and shelters were used as ritual components in a variety of initiation contexts. In the Lardil and Yolngu sacred histories, flaming dwellings act as “vehicles for change,” in which ancestral beings are metamorphosed into another state and then continue their respective journeys. In the “Wagilag” story from Arnhem Land, the shelter can represent the womb and its regenerative qualities, among other meanings. A number of Aboriginal groups clearly thought of their houses and shelters as bodies, and named their architectural parts after both human and animal anatomies.



**FIGURE 2.** Layout of an Aboriginal dance-ground in the Wellesley Islands, Gulf of Carpentaria, showing socio-spatial arrangement of seated sub-groups of spectators from the geographic divisions of the Lardil tribe. This is an example of a “behavior setting” with minimal physical structures. Illustration by Paul Memmott.

Dwelling names can also act as mnemonic devices alluding to the ancestral histories in which they feature.<sup>49</sup>

In a further analysis of meaning and its influence on human environments, Rapoport has persuasively argued that meanings permeate people-environment relations in three significant ways: “the human propensity to impose meaning on the world; the built environment as influencing behavior through meaning; [and] meaning as an important mechanism linking environments and people.”<sup>50</sup> Rapoport also provided a threefold categorization of meanings.<sup>51</sup> “High-level” meanings relate to cosmologies, cultural schemata, worldviews, philosophical systems, and the sacred. “Middle-level” meanings are those communicating identity, status, wealth, and power — that is, the latent rather than the instrumental aspects of activities, behavior and settings. Finally, “low-level” everyday and instrumental meanings comprise mnemonic cues for identifying uses for which settings are intended as well as the associated expected behaviors of such social situations, making co-action possible. We can refer to these three levels or categories of meaning as respectively ideological, social and behavioral.

Rapoport explained that low-level meanings must always be present if the environment is to work in a practical manner

for users, visitors, and those uninitiated into the higher levels of meaning. In many cultures only a minority may know the higher-level meanings of the environment (coinciding with the idea of authority figures as discussed before). The extent of use of high- and middle-level meanings will also vary cross-culturally. For example, there may be no higher-level meaning in the complex technological design of a modern architect (capital-A variety), but there may well be an intense religious meaning to the simply constructed domes of Yolngu Aborigines in northern Australia. All levels of meaning need to be clearly understood in order to fully explain the relation between built environments and human behaviors.

Rapoport has conceded that his threefold classification of meaning is overly rigid, and requires a more flexible capacity so that meanings may shift.<sup>52</sup> A theory of architectural meaning must explain the ways in which the different levels of meaning are generated and transform from one another.

The propensity for semantic shift can be illustrated with an example from the Maya. The construction of traditional Maya dwellings in Guatemala, Belize and Mexico has always been intimately linked to elements of Maya cosmology and socio-religious philosophy.<sup>53</sup> However, in contemporary Maya settlements, Euro-

American-style cottages constructed of concrete and galvanized iron are proliferating through processes of both directed (imposed) and voluntary cultural change. Maya peoples in many communities now aspire to the ownership of such housing, which has supplanted traditional housing stock in status and security. Davidson's findings show that people now prefer to adapt aspects of their customary behavior to these Euro-American-inspired dwellings, despite their not being architecturally accommodating of such behaviors or being climatically responsive. Maya traditional domiciliary architectures are gradually diminishing in use. Indeed, they now stand as reminders of a time past, as well as signifying poverty in the contemporary circumstance of Maya peoples in Guatemala and Mexico (FIG. 3).

In his treatise on levels of meaning, Rapoport placed "cosmology" and "status" as high-level and middle-level meanings respectively. The contemporary Maya preference for concrete cottages does not imply that the once high-level meanings of "cosmology" have been "lost" due to the transformation of the traditional domiciliary environment in the latter twentieth century. The majority of Maya families, who previously lived in traditional dwellings, still maintain a strong connection to traditional cosmologies and religious philosophies, even if these are no longer expressed in their architecture. Thus the role of traditional socio-religious philosophy in domestic architectures appears to have been "eroded" as a high-level meaning, and

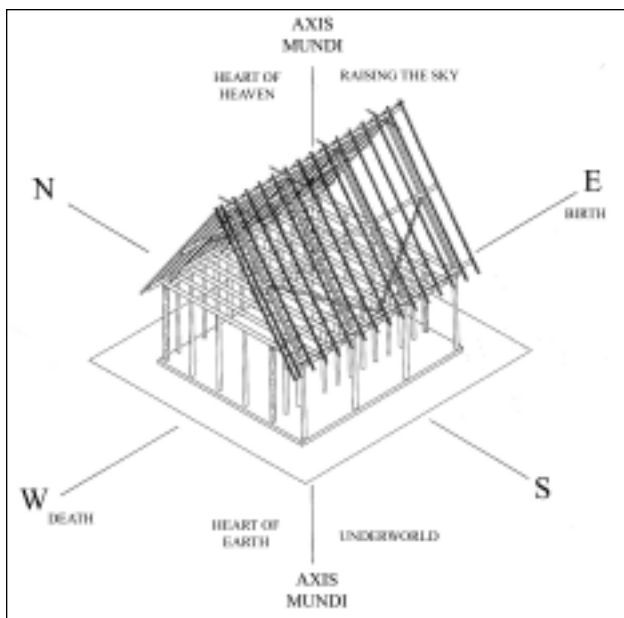
replaced by "status," which appears to have shifted from its former position as a middle-level value, and now seems to exist at a higher plane as a primary symbol (authority in decision-making) in relation to the contemporary cottages.

During fieldwork, Davidson found a limited number of cases where certain individuals overlaid their contemporary cinder-block houses with historical symbolism (numerological cosmology of structure spacing). These individuals were mostly those "traditionalists" who followed the old ways.<sup>34</sup> These individuals were also more than likely to be Catholics as well as believers in traditional shamanic religion. The built environment is therefore not static with regard to its attached values and meanings, but very much dependent on the cultural milieu of place and time. Transformations of the extent, intensities and nature of these values and meanings under conditions of cultural change must also be a key dimension of research for a program of cross-cultural architecture theory (FIG. 4).

The "shifting" levels of meaning presented above underscore one of the major distinguishing premises of this article — the influence and role of cultural change on architectural traditions. We believe that a theory of architecture must consider the historical, socioeconomic and political circumstances which have influenced and continue to influence the transformation of the built environment. Understanding moments of cultural change in architecture present useful opportunities for the architect and the social scientist to establish a common and useful dialogue.

In another comparative study, James Fox has assembled and compared ethnographies of Austronesian houses that were drawn from Malaysia and Sumatra in the west, to New Zealand and Goodenough Island in the east, and from Southeast Asia to Melanesia and the Pacific.<sup>35</sup> He noted that most Austronesian homes possessed what he called a "ritual attractor," or a preeminent structural element of the house's architecture. This is usually a focus of ritual or at least acknowledged in ritual, and generally recognized as such from the time of construction. It represents the house as a whole in a concentrated or symbolic form. This clearly corresponds to Rapoport's higher-level meaning category. For Austronesian houses, Fox concluded that the ritual attractors most frequently encountered were the post, the ladder, the ridge-pole, and the hearth within an encompassing roof.

In a separate study from northern Australia, Shaneen Fantin has elicited evidence for the symbolism of the archetypal forked-post and cross-pole in Arnhem Land and Cape York, indicating that these components were also "ritual attractors." In her study of the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land, she examined the creation of religious architecture through ceremony. A creative synthesis of song, dance, ground sculptures, ceremonial artifacts and shelters thus becomes imbued with ancestral presence and power, and constitutes a temporary Yolngu religious architecture which contains ancestral aesthetic qualities. Yolngu elders are the architects of the ceremony and oversee the preparation of the



**FIGURE 3.** Cosmology associated with traditional Maya house architectures. Four main timber structural columns represent the cardinal points of the earth's surface. Maya houses also contain an internal three-stone hearth representing a fifth invisible "column," or axis mundi, metaphorically seen as raising the sky-roof and connecting the heart of heaven with the heart of the earth. This particular house is from the Pokomchi' Maya of Las Pacayas, Guatemala. Illustration by James Davidson.



**FIGURE 4.** *The transformation of Pokomchii house architecture in Las Pacayas, Guatemala. Despite the introduction of new architectural technology, the semi-otic schemata used within the concrete block additions remain based on the cosmological principles of the greater Maya belief system. Photo by James Davidson.*

ground, the creation of the appropriate structures to be used, and the enactment of the songs and dances, all carried out in a highly ordered process.<sup>56</sup> It is significant that this ceremonial architecture is constructed of semi-fixed and unfixed features, since all traces of it are usually removed or erased after performances to safeguard its perceived potency (FIG. 5).

In seeking to construct a cross-cultural theory of architecture that places “meaning” at a high premium, it also seems sensible to draw on phenomenology, which is preoccupied with producing theory “and concepts of human science which are more in tune with human behaviours and actions as they happen and exist in the world of human experience.”<sup>57</sup> One goal of phenomenology is thus deepening the experience of environment.<sup>58</sup> The phenomenological method can provide descriptions of events or situations as they are lived, and the intrinsic properties and various meanings of such, from the perspective of the participant’s mental experience and understanding.<sup>59</sup>

We note, in passing, Rapoport’s repeated rejection of phenomenology as being less useful for theory building than the conventional sciences of psychology, cognitive science, and cognitive neuroscience. But we humbly suggest that phenomenology nevertheless has a valid contribution to make (FIG. 6).

Phenomenology has shown that people always try to be at home in a place, regardless of how poor conditions might seem to the outsider.<sup>60</sup> A potential of phenomenology is thus to explore and describe what Husserl has called the “life-world,” the everyday world of taken-for-grantedness, which includes surroundings, artifacts, gestures, behaviors, events and meanings.<sup>61</sup> Underlying this focus on life-worlds is the wider concept of “dwelling,” which joins people with environment and provides a link across time.<sup>62</sup> However, the temporal prop-

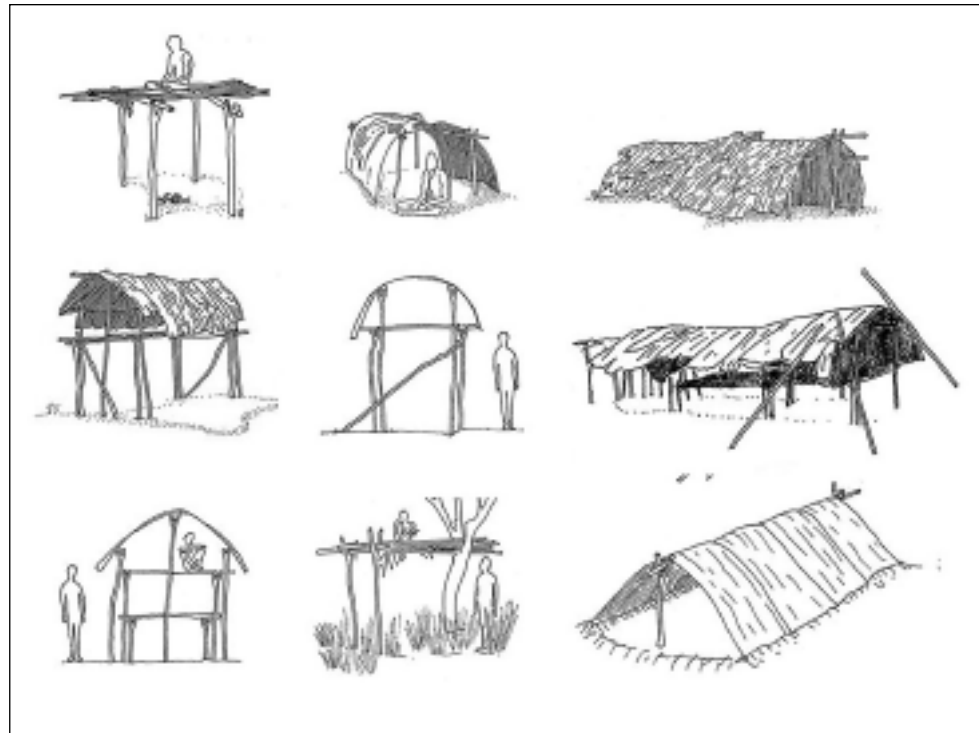
erties of architecture require separate discussion and necessitate reconsideration of the dynamic qualities of “tradition.”

#### CHANGING ARCHITECTURAL TRADITIONS

Within the study of cultural change, anthropologists have identified a range of types of change processes, although this field of study is by no means coherent or unified. A wide range of studies have addressed processes of acculturation and syncretism in architecture, and these have contributed to an understanding of cross-cultural architectural exchanges, borrowings and appropriations which result in blended patterns and transformations of architectural forms, structures, meanings and other properties.

In considering the nature of cultural change, it is useful to return to the construct of tradition, as defined earlier. A closer examination of the literature reveals two competing theoretical paradigms of what tradition is as a scientific construct. The first paradigm considers tradition naturalistically, as a bounded entity made up of constituent parts that are themselves defined properties. In this atomistic paradigm, culture and its constituents are regarded as entities having an essence apart from any interpretation of them. Anthropologists may prescribe, for example, which traits are old and which are new innovations, and show how such traits fit together to make up the abstract concepts that we call “tradition” and “culture.”<sup>63</sup>

If we return to Rigsby’s point about change occurring to traditions within the processes of intergenerational transmission and enculturation, we note that a key reason for this is that, as Edward Shils has pointed out, “interpretations are made of the tradition presented.”<sup>64</sup> The alternate paradigm, then, is



**FIGURE 5.** *Examples of Yolngu Aboriginal shelters and dwellings employing the symbolically laden forked-post and cross-pole in Arnhem Land, northern Australia. Illustration by Tim O'Rourke.*



**FIGURE 6.** *Arrernte men, ca. 1893, en route to a ceremony, resting in a midday camp in a clean, sandy riverbed with ritually decorated weapons arranged about them. They are "positioning themselves" in the landscape. Photo by Baldwin Spencer and Frank Gillen.*

that tradition is an interpretive process, and that any tradition is continually reinterpreted. According to Shils, unchanging traditional societies have never existed.<sup>65</sup> And since all cultures change regularly, there can only be what is new — although, as Handler and Linnekin have argued, what is new can take on symbolic value as “traditional” in reference to what is perceived

as being “old.”<sup>66</sup> Our view is that the above paradigms of “tradition” can usefully coexist, and that our task in configuring a theory of architecture is both to explore the attributes of cultural traits and to understand the interpretative styles and methods of cultural participants in their daily processes of creative cultural production, including architecture.<sup>67</sup>



The combination of findings from several papers presented at the 2002 “ADDITIONS to Architectural History” Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand provides an interesting overview of the transformation of architectural constructs over several hundred years within a Polynesian context of colonial encounter.<sup>68</sup> One of these papers, by Albert Refiti, considered the appropriation of a Western architectural construct, the European Christian church, and accompanying Christian ritual by the Polynesian people of Samoa in the nineteenth century. Refiti pointed out that this was accomplished within the intellectual terms of the Polynesians, with neither a comprehensive understanding of the Christian culture nor an attempt to authentically create a facsimile Christian religion. Only particular Christian ideas were selected and integrated with the local belief system, as these churches became local idealized versions of Christian spirituality. Refiti analyzed the transposition of that architectural form to the contemporary urban context of New Zealand by a nonindigenous New Zealand architect who attempted to use it to reflect a Pacific identity. “Pacific architecture, is a New Zealand European architect’s fantasy of what a Pacific heavenly paradise might be, based on a Pacific fantasy on what a European missionary paradise might be,” he wrote. He described the overall process of transformation of architectural properties as “a double movement of cultural exchange.”

Bill McKay also wrote on appropriation, but his case study began with the appropriation by colonists of selected indigenous architectural stereotypes. He examined the stereotyping of Maori architecture by Anglo New Zealanders through the media of politics, museums and texts into a single genotype, that of the Meeting House, or “Marae.” Any post-contact architectural acculturation by Maori was seen by the colonists to represent a loss of indigenous identity and to be somehow nonauthentic. However, McKay provided examples of the mixing of “Pakeha” (European) and Maori motifs by Maori builder-architects as a distinctly New Zealand form of bicultural expression, and certainly not as an outcome of assimilation. These examples demonstrate the cyclic nature of the transformation and dissemination of an architectural construct between two cultural groups.

There is one further point that needs to be made from these Polynesian studies. We note that the examples of cultural change processes vary in their type, intensity and scale from the individual-inspired change (the New Zealand architect) to the promulgation of change through a specific medium. It is the technological power of a new medium (e.g., the printing press or the computer) that can result in far-reaching global impacts and changes of tradition at an unusually large scale. Perhaps it would be appropriate to apply the term “hyper-traditions” to this category of cultural change (FIG. 7).



**FIGURE 7.** Bicultural house architecture at St. Paul's Community, Torres Strait Island, northern Australia. A collaboration between a Torres Strait Islander family and an architect (Paul Haar) resulted in a self-designed, self-constructed house using a mix of local bush materials (mud bricks, pole timbers, bamboo) and commercial building products (steel roof, recycled glazed windows) with decorative cultural themes. Photo by Paul Haar, 1992.

## TEMPORAL PROPERTIES OF ARCHITECTURE

The dynamic qualities of architecture introduce the properties of time into any reading of buildings and their settings. Here we need to discount those architectural theorists and historians (e.g., Bannister Fletcher) who have separated “modern” society from the “primitive vernacular world,” with the latter being fictionalized as existing in a vacuum of timelessness. As Anderson wrote, indigenous cultures are “dynamic societies, in a continual process of adaptation, choice, and constraint.”<sup>69</sup> Any understanding of the dynamic nature of vernacular or traditional architecture must therefore, for completeness, consider temporal properties.

The types of change associated with architectural settings include their articulation with activity (involves a time, frequency and duration of usage); their internal transformation during periods of characteristic place-bound activity; the mental

association of beliefs, values, names, and other meanings with them (a mental change which does not necessarily occur at the place under focus); and externally imposed changes to them (directed cultural changes, natural catastrophes). However, as Memmott has noted, a constancy of setting or architectural character is often maintained, together with repetitive internal change, due to the stabilizing or equilibrating effects of the internal forces which control setting form.<sup>70</sup>

Indigenous constructs of time tend to integrate natural time orders which are dynamic in their own right, displaying cyclic changes of properties caused by natural environmental rhythms (solar rhythms and associated diurnal/nocturnal rhythms, seasonal cycles, changes in climate, flora, fauna, lunar rhythms, and associated tidal movement and animal behavior). For example, natural time orders play a significant role in the traditional time concepts of Australian Aboriginal hunter-gatherers, with seasonal influences affecting local movement patterns, campsite selection, choice of settlement and shelter form, and campsite behavior and lifestyle. Aboriginal constructs of time often emphasize the social quality of an event and its sequential and causal relation to other events.<sup>71</sup>

There are then no abstract units of time and space that indigenous people use to measure distance between events, i.e., no quantified geometry of space or chronology of time. The overall result is the possibility of expanding or compressing time and/or space in historical and geographical thought. Scale is thus less important than the sequential correctness of events in space and time, and the nature of causal links between them. Such concepts of space and time correspond closely to the topological concept of space.<sup>72</sup> To cite one Polynesian example from McKay:

*... the Maori space and time construct can be thought of more like a constellation with the past and the people of the past always felt in the present, like the constellations of the sky — enmeshing, surrounding — always before you, always behind, forming patterns that can be interpreted in various ways.<sup>73</sup>*

Similarly, in the case of Aboriginal elder P.W. in his “traveling camp” presented earlier, there is a sense of the presence of Ancestral Beings from the Dreamtime having an active presence at the campsite, linking the ancient past to the present. The imposition of Western space and time structures and concepts has disrupted traditional Indigenous structures. Nevertheless, in many cases those traditional structures have been transformed and may well prevail in contemporary situations. Contemporary experiences of space and time in relation to architecture and place are often based upon multiple cultural constructs.<sup>74</sup>

## RECONCILING VALUES

Drawing on the foregoing framework of theoretical ideas, which we could collectively call architectural anthropology, we now return to our earlier definition of architecture as one that is a selected, arranged and constructed configuration of environmental properties, both natural and artificial, in and around one or more activity space or behavioral setting, combined with patterns of behavioral rules and meanings, as well as incorporating cultural constructs of space and time to result in human comfort and quality of lifestyle — all within a wider, large-scale system of cultural landscape and settlement. Within this broad definition sits the entire genre of Euro-American architecture, as well as many other genres from all of human societies and cultures, past and present. Within these diverse cultures there are a range of cognitive, invisible, ephemeral, spiritual and symbolic properties that can instill architecture with a culturally distinct nature, in addition to the physical attributes of buildings (FIG. 8).

Central to the task of accommodating the world’s diverse cultural traditions is the development, analysis and comparison of case studies, which, when integrated, generate several robust explanations: (i) of the dynamic properties of architectural activity occurring both within and between cultural groups and longitudinally and cyclically through time; (ii) of the study of the environmental, social, economic and cultural origins of places and buildings; (iii) of the full complexity and range of architectural articulation from the minimalist adjustment of natural environments to highly complex structures with multiple overlays of properties; (iv) of the full range of properties of people-environment transactions that might contribute to what or how architecture is defined; and (v) of the sociology of power and authority in environmental decision-making, and the ways that different authority systems can result in culturally distinct differences in architectural design. It has been beyond the scope of this article to execute such a program of analysis; we have merely begun to sketch out some of the central topics, which we believe such a program must address.

One key issue of nomenclature and definition is whether it is more theoretically useful to broaden the definition of architecture to encompass all human building and place-making, or to broaden the definition of vernacular architecture to incorporate all capital-A architecture. We have chosen the former path, arguing that non-Euro-American cultures need not be burdened with the idea that “architecture” must be presupposed as being a success word when compared with mere “building.” If other cultures can be recognized as having their own law, medicine and art, why cannot they also have architecture?<sup>75</sup>

One strong proponent of a differing nomenclature is Rapoport, whose views nevertheless share much with our theoretical proposition. Whereas we have argued by way of a revised and broadened definition and theory that all



**FIGURE 8.** A selected, arranged and constructed configuration of environmental properties to generate a habitat in the landscape. The worldly items of this Aboriginal man from Western Australia include a faithful hunting dog, a boomerang (under his knees), a pipe, a billy, several blankets, a roof to protect from sun and dew, and a sleeping hollow. Photo courtesy of the Battye Library, Perth.

designed, arranged, constructed and selected environmental configurations could be included as “architecture,” Rapoport has classified all such environmental types under the category of environmental design, which he subsumes within his Environment-Behavior Studies (EBS) approach. Rapoport also included cultural landscapes, which in the case of Aboriginal Australia would consist of sacred sites believed to have been created by both stationary and traveling ancestral heroes — what might appear to the scientific mind to comprise imposed cognitive properties of landscape meaning.

Rapoport’s theory has been criticized as being “extremely deterministic and . . . [eliminating] the agency of the individual member of society, leaving little if any room for improvisation and innovation.”<sup>76</sup> However, there is no reason why ongoing research could not target this specific problem, perhaps drawing partly on Hillier’s work, in an integrative approach. We also converge with Rapoport insofar as recognizing that the full range of historical built environments needs also to be included in such a theory.

We also converge with Egener in that animal architecture needs to be included, covering topics such as habitat building and the socio-semantic elaboration of such. However, unlike Egener, we would cast the net wider than primates and extend the scope of theory on the social properties of places and structures to other species, as enlightened ethologists engaged in earlier people-environment research have already done. For example, consider the contribution of Glen McBride. Based on his earlier empirical research on chickens and pigs, he engaged in the construction of a general theory of social organization and behavior that applied to all animals, including humans. His later work then moved

to the specific application of this theory to people-environment interaction (attention, perception, behavior and social process) and the challenge of therapeutic architectural design for institutional settings.<sup>77</sup>

One of the ongoing theoretical tasks is how all environmental types and productions may be classified under such a revised definition of architecture and be distinguished and sorted into subcategories that are useful in understanding their design properties and values. We hope that this analysis will further the current debate and prompt or provoke others to challenge and add to the overall treatise.

The purpose of this article has been to commence the development of a theoretical framework of architecture with strong explanatory power that addresses and explains all human behavior oriented toward or linked with buildings, dwellings and settlements — both in terms of creating and using such environments. As we pointed out at the beginning, it is not our aim to demote Western architecture or to elevate indigenous architecture, but rather to create a theory that can be objectively applied to explaining or understanding interactions between the architectural values or building traditions of different cultures. With the acceleration of globalization and its inherent conflicts and dilemmas between urban development, tourism, and preservation of cultural heritage, such interactions are becoming increasingly commonplace. Such a theory must (initially, at least) treat all cultural forms of building and architecture as having intrinsic value within their own cultural contexts without unreasonably biasing one form over another. But it must also explain the many processes of cultural change whereby architectural traditions interact, are merged, and become synthesized in varying configurations.

## REFERENCE NOTES

The authors are affiliated with the Aboriginal Environments Research Centre, School of Geography, Planning and Architecture, University of Queensland. This paper builds on an earlier work, an introduction and overview of a set of papers presented under the theme "Architecture + Building Traditions" at "ADDITIONS to Architectural History," the XIXth Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ), held in Brisbane, Oct. 4–7, 2002. An overview of the conference, abstracts of individual papers, and biographies of participants are available at <http://www.sahanz.net/papers/webpages/frameset.html>. The edited conference proceedings are available on CD-Rom through the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand, by contacting Andrew Leach (SAHANZ Secretary) at [www.sahanz.net](http://www.sahanz.net).

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15. Oliver, *EVAW*, Vol.1, p.vii.
16. Oliver, *Dwellings*, pp.13–14.
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44. Rapoport, *Culture, Architecture, and Design*, p.26
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67. Mike Austin has addressed the concept of "hybrid architecture," as "bicultural architecture," being a syncretization of customary and Western elements. Elsewhere, Michael Linzey has defined biculturalism as the phenomenon of two cultures co-occupying one place. See M. Linzey, "Bi-Cultural Architecture: Evaluating the Contribution of Te Kooti," in *Making: Architecture's Past* (the collected and edited proceedings of the 18th annual conference of SAHANZ, Australia, Sept/Oct 2001), pp.103–10.
68. The papers are Refiti, "Uneven Boundaries That Do Not Flatten Easily"; B. McKay, "Looking at Maori Architecture"; and E. Anderson, "Pukekaraka: A Study in

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69. Anderson, “Pukekaraka: A Study in Architecture and Whakapapa.”

70. Memmott, “Lardil Properties of Place,” pp.486–87.

71. Benjamin Whorf expressed this idea in his discussions on the Hopi of America, by stating that length of time is not regarded as a length but as a relation between two events in lateness. See B. Whorf, *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings* (Cambridge: Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1956), p.140.

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74. Memmott, “Lardil Properties of Place,” p.484.

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## Beyond Space

# Wireless Sites: Architecture in the Space of British Radio, 1927–1945

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Between 1927 and 1945 the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) aired an average of two radio programs a month on architecture. This article explores the effect of these simulated wireless sites on a traditional mode of knowledge like architecture. What happened when architecture, framed within the institutional vision of the BBC, encountered the specific mode of production, reproduction and diffusion of the radio? I argue that early radio in Britain was not just another medium of *representation*, but one of *simulation*, which reinvented the social identity of architecture. This historical account of wireless sites enables us to rethink the perceptual category we call “tradition.”

Since the early 1980s Jean Baudrillard has mesmerized the imagination of the intellectual community across disciplines and continents with his formulation of an order of things he insists is new. This order, he has demonstrated, is established by electronic mass media. In particular, modern media have destroyed the relationship of mimesis between a model and its representation characteristic of classical media like painting and the novel. This has freed images from the function of representing reality and enabled them to simulate messages with no reference in life. Baudrillard’s inquiry has revealed a role reversal between image and reality. Images now precede reality, and, conversely, reality imitates images. We — the producers and consumers of simulations — misrecognize this role reversal and make our lives in the shadow of these autonomous images. We, thereby, create a reality that is based on unrepresentative images. This is what Baudrillard has called “hyper-reality.”

This revisitation of the ideas of Baudrillard stems from a paper I presented at the tenth IASTE conference in 2006. The conference invited participants to consider the rise of hyper-traditions for the study of traditional built environments. Hyper-traditions are engendered by the confluence of globalization, electronic mass media, and the latest technologies like that of travel. These three forces have a common trait: they foster contact between “uninformed” and “fleeting” consumers (TV viewers, tourists, ordinary home

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buyers) and environments that have hitherto been rooted in what can heuristically be called vernacular modes of sense-making. This contact necessarily unhinges and undermines the previously more stable relationship between the appearance of places and spaces and their traditional cultural context.

In this article I look at the form and content of architectural programs produced on the radio by the British Broadcasting Corporation, from its establishment in 1927 to the end of World War II in 1945. During this interval, the BBC aired more than three hundred programs on architecture-related topics, involving at least 120 speakers. These programs provided a platform for the articulation of views about issues such as town planning, housing, civic responsibility, architectural history, modern life, archeology, and art appreciation, giving voice to the extreme poles of the field. Presenters included established authorities (Sir Reginald Blomfield, Sir Gilbert Scott, H.S. Goodhart-Rendel); individuals recently admitted into the architectural profession (Amyas Connell, Serge Chermayeff); professional educators (Howard Robertson); historians (Sir Banister Fletcher); critics (John Summerson); municipal architects (Fredrick Towndrow); journalists (James Richards); and external champions of design (Frank Pick, Lord Gorell). This endorsement of faith from the BBC came at a time of immense crisis for the practice of architecture. A decline in country-house commissions after 1914 and an import embargo on steel in the 1920s were followed by the world economic crisis of the 1930s. The BBC's patronage, indifferent to the reality of this situation and governed by the necessities of broadcasting as seen by its staff, lifted British architecture from the pits and put it at the heart of the national debate on democracy, culture and education.

In certain respects, this investigation bears great affinity to the problematic of hyper-tradition. Hyper-traditional environments, produced by the logic of global trade and simulated media imagery, involve the subjugation of traditional modes of knowledge to modern modes of production, reproduction and diffusion. They involve practices, buildings and settlements that do not grow organically from local traditions, but are imposed from without. No differently, I examine here the transformation faced by an established form of communal knowledge, discourse, and artistic expression when confronted for the first time with the possibility of an untested mode of mass production and diffusion. More specifically, I consider the effects of simulated "wireless sites" on the discipline of architecture.

This article limits its examination to the properties and possibilities of the BBC's wireless sites, particularly their independence from the physical sites to which they referred. While it may be difficult to empirically substantiate the kind of hyper-tradition these sites produced, the investigation nevertheless enables reflection on the historical and social existence of simulacra and the hyper-reality generated in their wake. Most importantly, this historical account enables a rethinking of the perceptual category we call "tradition."

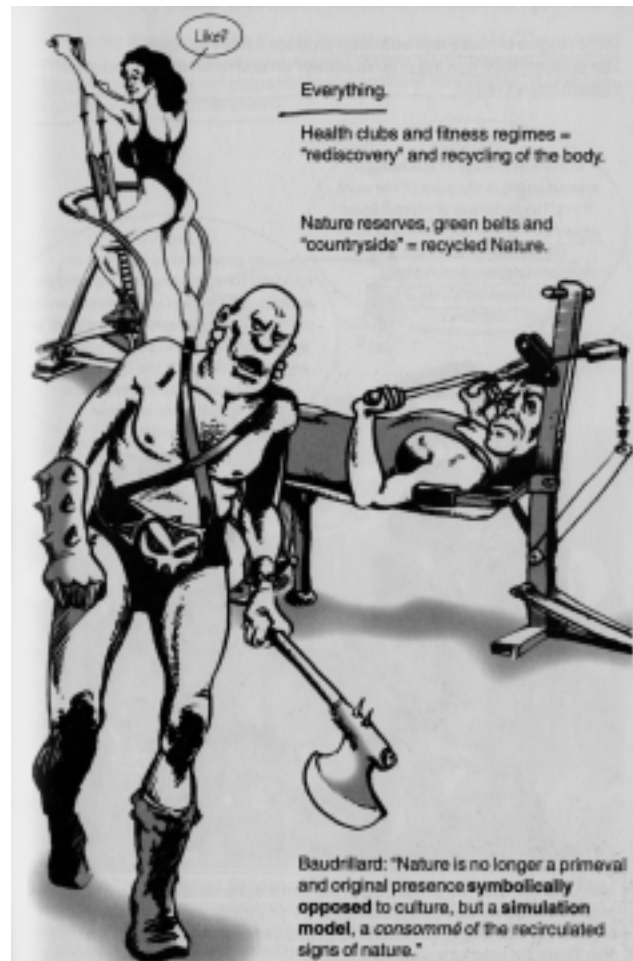


FIGURE 1. *Hyper-reality: reproducing our bodies after an image.*  
Drawing by Chris Horrocks and Zoran Jevtic.

Today, nothing lies outside the condition of hyper-reality (and here the term can be used synonymously with hyper-tradition). Whether we work out at a gym, practice architecture in an office filled with magazines, or are active in the environmental movement, we all contribute to its perpetuation (FIG. 1). Our activities obliterate the opposition between nature and culture and collapse the real with the imaginary, the true with the false. The erosion of these categories is fundamental to Baudrillard's model of social existence, an existence that has reached new heights in the postmodern stage of electronic media.<sup>1</sup> Baudrillard believes it is impossible to resist these sovereign images, because it is impossible to recognize them. The result is the end of political and social meaning, the end of history. All we are left with, as Baudrillard has pointed out, is the *passive* consumption of images and their faithful reproduction in ourselves and our surroundings.

Baudrillard expressed this view most succinctly in *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*:



*The medium is the message signifies not only the end of the message, but also the end of the medium. There are no longer media in the literal sense of the term (I am talking above all about the electronic mass media) — that is to say, a power mediating between one reality and another, between one state of the real and another — neither in content nor in form. Strictly speaking this is what implosion signifies: the absorption of one pole into another, the short-circuit between poles of every differential system of meaning, the effacement of terms and of distinct oppositions, and thus that of the medium and the real. Hence the impossibility of any mediation, of any dialectical intervention between the two or from one to the other, [in the] circularity of all media effects. Hence the impossibility of a sense (meaning), in the literal sense of a unilateral vector which leads from one pole to another. This critical — but original — situation must be thought through to the very end; it is the only one we are left with. It is useless to dream of a revolution through content or through form, since the medium and the real are now in a single nebulous state whose truth is undecipherable.<sup>2</sup>*

As an idea, the critical power of hyper-reality, and of hyper-tradition, rests in its break with common-sense perception. Thus, Baudrillard's structuralist reading has dealt a blow to what some call the "illusion of the transparency" of facts and representations when studying the built environment.<sup>3</sup> In this regard — as many presentations at the tenth IASTE conference showed — it has done much to improve our vigilance.

In the spirit of such critiques, my assessment of wireless sites begins with a consideration of the structural specificity of the medium of radio and what this, at a generic level, meant for the representation and diffusion of a traditional mode of knowledge-making like architecture. *Prima facie*, the collaboration of radio and architecture is a curious one; radio is the preeminent nonvisual medium, meaning that a "wireless site" cannot possess such constitutive elements of architectural identity as materiality, visibility, spatiality and locality. How does one evaluate this loss?

The greatest danger with the concept of hyper-reality, however, is that it grasps society merely from the outside. It cannot account for varied, personal appropriations of simulated space. Its premise on a single-dimensional world thus holds up only by suppressing the questions addressed today across disciplines about the "interests" and "competence" of social beings.<sup>4</sup> It makes sense, for example, only if we agree that a farmer in Afghanistan and a professor in the United States read image-governed environments identically (i.e., that they have the same cultural competence to decipher the images). Furthermore, it presupposes that all parties have the same interest in the images — which is mandatory for a faithful upholding and re/production of the hyper-reality.

Calling the social agents put "on vacation" by Baudrillard back to work (to use an expression by Dennis Wrong<sup>5</sup>), the

second half of the essay thus considers how the properties of broadcasting were perceived by the BBC leadership and its architectural speakers. Here, I first look at the institutional mandate in which architecture programming was enframed, and then evaluate the content of the programs and the costs and benefits of the collaboration to both parties. In this regard, I argue that wireless sites made a unique contribution to architecture's historic struggle to come into its own as a discipline.

In the end, Baudrillard's view that media of mass communication can only engage in the "fabrication of non-communication," because they do not maintain the "reciprocal space for speech and response," is indefensibly narrow. Signs communicate — whether traditionally representative or simulated, whether entailing face-to-face reciprocity or not.

## RADIOPHONIC SIMULATION

Radio overcomes distance through a unique mechanical process that involves detaching audition from the rest of the body. It first *transports* the sense of hearing to places where the body of the receiver is not, and then returns it by *setting* it immediately before the listener. Technology in this case does not constitute an extension of the body, as Marshall McLuhan held.<sup>6</sup> As Samuel Weber demonstrated, it is a surrogate of the body.<sup>7</sup> It does not merely heighten the naturally limited power of hearing; it displaces the body while maintaining the *presentness* associated with sense perception. Though radio (like any aesthetic medium) involves artifice, technique and technology, this uncanny combination of presentness and displacement distinguishes it — and the other forms of electronic communication that have followed — from the older mediums used to represent works of architecture.

Inscription, drawing, models, photographs, and even film, according to Weber, maintain the traditional notion of representation by keeping *in place* the time difference between something that has happened and its reproduction in images capable of recalling it to mind. In other words, these older media presuppose a radical distinction between what is doing the representation and what is being represented — the original and the copy, before and after. By contrast, live broadcasting (given the poor recording facilities of the interwar years) took place simultaneously in at least three different locales: the recording site, the reception site, and the space in between. This meant that it *overcame distance by splitting the unity of place*.

Like other subjects, what can be heard about architecture on the radio, thus, does not involve previously accomplished work, but the quasi-simultaneity of *another audition* produced here and now. Radio shatters the temporal relation between past and present, original and subsequent copy. The minimal difference necessary to tell apart the reproduced and reproduction, model from copy, the repeated from repetition, is reduced tendentiously to the imperceptible. Radio renders the logic and ontology that governs the mimet-

ic relationship between signifier and signified meaningless, while the immediacy of hearing conceals its doing so. Radio broadcasts, therefore, cannot be considered as representing oral images, but as transmitting *the semblance of presentation as such*. It is radio's power to disrupt the reality principle while maintaining reality effects that makes it one of the most privileged sites for the production of simulation.

Theodor Adorno was probably the first to point out that electronic mass media produce sounds and images of the world according to the structural logic of their technology and the institutions that control them, not the logic of their original existence.<sup>8</sup> This is what allows it to disrupt the existing hierarchies and orders of things.

As Weber has also noted, radio, like television, "sets only by unsettling." It "brings the most remote things together only to disperse them again."

"The more technology seeks to put things in their proper places, the less proper those places turn out to be, the more displaceable everything becomes and the more frenetic becomes the effort to reassert the propriety of the place as such."<sup>9</sup>

#### THE BBC'S VIEW OF THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS

Turning from reflection on the generic properties of radiophonic simulation, I will now consider the properties that became important to the actors most closely involved in establishing the BBC's architecture series. Here, what Weber would describe as "upsetting the set up" (and what I call "the disorder") of interwar British radio in the hands of the BBC held the seed of a new order.

Considered historically, the pre-World War II and wartime BBC was not just another radio station; it was the preeminent mass media institution in the world. In Britain, it was an autonomous but government-regulated monopoly, established at a cultural moment when notions of aristocracy and democracy, nationalism and imperial responsibility, public responsibility and market freedom were all at issue. At this time, there was also a general acceptance of the importance of cultural education for building democracy. The inculcation of a common ethos in the political community was seen as a means both of overcoming inherited inequalities and freeing public opinion from the vulgarizing values of the marketplace, as they stood at the time, without educational and cultural merit.

The BBC turned radio into *the* authoritative instrument for the realization and implementation of such views. Broadcasting would improve knowledge, taste and manners, and such acculturation would transform its mass audience into better citizens, modernize class relations, strengthen nationalism, and create a participatory democracy. Yet, while the BBC's monopoly freed it from competition and the need to pander to popular demands and gave it the liberty to take up a pedagogic challenge, the Corporation still had to capture and maintain the attention of its audience. Powerful leader-

ship in the person of the BBC's founding Director General, John Reith, translated this vision (and the challenges implied by it) into a coherent yet diverse output of programs.

Historian Asa Briggs has shown that for Reith, political education was the most vital element of his pedagogic mandate.<sup>10</sup> But there was also resistance to Reith's ambition. The National Press Association, political parties, and bureaucrats all used the Corporation's monopoly and semi-official status to legislate limits to its freedom to broadcast political news and commentary, forcing it to channel its resources into cultural programming. Perhaps in compensation, in the span of only two decades, its cultural programming came to enjoy an authority unrivaled by all other forms of cultural production, and was unparalleled elsewhere in the world.

The BBC celebrated broadcasting for its ability to "overcome distance." By taking the voice where the constraints of the body had previously limited its reach, it provided an opportunity to surmount the separation between the mental worlds of "educated" and "ignorant" classes. According to Reith, radio could take

*... an event, be it speech, or music, or play, or ceremony" to the "very room [of the listener]. . . . It is carried to him among all the accustomed and congenial circumstances and surroundings of his own home, and in his leisure hours . . . it comes in such a way that enjoyment on the one hand, and assimilation on the other, is induced with comparatively little effort . . . and great effect."<sup>11</sup>*

For Reith, the transmission of programs to an unprecedented number of people simultaneously gave radio a new power to command *at a distance*. The pioneering work of broadcasting, for him, consisted of overcoming the "opposition [that] comes . . . from the indifference or ignorance or hostility of man." "The roads to be laid are not merely for passages of transport wagons or railways, but for influences and developments which shall be permanent and good and widespread, in the sphere of the things to remain" (FIG. 2).<sup>12</sup>

The BBC's service on arts (music, art, gardening, literature, film and drama) in the period belonged to an intellectual tradition that bore the imprint of Mathew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). Its purpose was nothing less than the socialization of the working classes through the inculcation of the cultural values and tastes of the educated. In the unsettled and



FIGURE 2. The BBC's view of enlightened listening at home. Courtesy of the BBC Picture Archives.

xenophobic years of the 1920s and 30s, the BBC imagined that its programs could guarantee a more peaceful and settled society, and it accepted this role as a public duty in the name of the nation-state. All the imagined products of the process — bureaucratically produced men, things, values and relationships — were active in the institution's understanding of its social role. Its cultural programming would change the very psychological and spiritual make-up of the masses.<sup>13</sup>

Within this framework of liberal intervention, art education through radio owed much to conventional Kantian beliefs about taste and the imagined interrelation between aesthetic, social and moral judgments. In Britain there was a longstanding tradition of such thought among the cultured classes, including literature on aesthetic appreciation going back to Joseph Addison, David Hume, and Edmund Burke. It was only natural that BBC policy-makers would consider the cultivation of a taste for the fine arts an important vessel for social and political education. Change in aesthetic judgment would bring about change in the other two. Taste, the most passive faculty of the body, yet the one responsible for orienting human perception and appreciation, would painlessly deliver a community of judges to constitute what Reith called the “nation into one man.”

The BBC'S policies thus epitomized the fusion of humane sentiment extending from a Victorian liberalism enthused at the possibility of democracy with strategies to forestall the dangers of that same democracy. Under the leadership of Reith, a number of BBC area directors, including J.S. Stobart (Education), Hilda Matheson (Talks and News Dept.), Richard Lambert (*The Listener*), Charles Siepmann (Adult Education and Talks Dept.), and Kenneth Clark (Music), worked to make the BBC *the* modern patron of the arts. Such pioneering broadcasters saw themselves as preserving the artistic achievements historically supported by wealthier classes. After 1919 these traditional arts had been threatened by a reconfiguration of these classes and the recasting of social relations between minority and majority culture, accelerated by the development of laboring classes into consumers with very different cultural values.<sup>14</sup> Many of those concerned saw democratization not only as the moral thing to do, but the only plausible means of preserving the arts.

By taking up this mission as the basis for its program policy, the BBC embarked on a process aimed at institutionalizing the culture of some as the historical heritage of all. It was in this framework of cultural politics that architecture came to the radio.

#### COSTS AND PROFITS OF COLLABORATION

The collaboration of architects and the Corporation had costs and benefits for both parties, in some ways akin to the tacitly accepted unequal relationship between architects and clients. Their responses were governed by the logic of their

respective worlds (architecture for the speakers, journalism for the BBC producers) and what was likely to be positively sanctioned in them. These responses were “moves,” organized as strategies, but as Pierre Bourdieu has stressed, “without being a product of a genuine strategic intention.”<sup>15</sup>

In the early years of broadcasting, producing a program was a tedious, drawn-out affair — even in its simplest form with only a single speaker. Preparations included meetings, correspondence (written and telephonic), rehearsals, and training for the actual presentation. There were contractual negotiations, the back-and-forth of editorial comments, and rehearsals. And the contract did not end with the airing of the program; it mandated that speakers respond to select audience letters, some of which were then prepared for publication in the BBC'S weekly journal *The Listener*. For the speakers, this meant having to rewrite, abridge and furnish texts of broadcasts with pictures and credits (FIG. 3). On average, the whole process lasted six months. Maxwell Fry and Harry S. Goodhart-Rendel, who maintained busy practices and other professional commit-



FIGURE 3. Noel Carrington, “Architecture as History,” a book review, adapted from a broadcast, in *The Listener*, Vol. 7 No. 159 (Jan. 27, 1932), p. 136. Courtesy of the BBC.

ments in the late 1930s, for example, protested that their work for radio talks was taking a toll on their office work.<sup>16</sup>

When the BBC commissioned architects and critics it was staking energy and money without any guarantee of satisfactory programming. To get a sense of the gamble involved, one only has to consider the frustration inherent in presenting a visual medium through a nonvisual one. There was also the challenge of addressing an audience on the whole less culturally informed than that which architects were used to. Yet Hilda Matheson (the first Director of Talks) didn't worry. She insisted that architects provided a good pool of "ready-made speakers" and eager participants.

Another risk related to the BBC's preference for architectural modernism — hitherto an unproven idiom. It exposed the Corporation to criticism that it was biased against established styles — in effect, most contemporary design practice. But the BBC executives saw this as a chance worth taking. In their estimation, modern architects had a greater capacity to contribute to the legitimization of radio as a medium of communication. The fresh definition of work and the role of the architect signaled by modernists gave them confidence in this opinion.

There were great costs for the presenters (architects, critics, curators, historians, etc.) too. The shows demanded time and effort that was unmatched by the pay. And afterwards a successful show did not guarantee further commissions. Unlike conditions after 1945, when Nikolaus Pevsner, James Richards, John Summerson, and John Betjeman became radio regulars, in its early years this new patron of architecture was more interested in featuring a variety of topics and voices rather than grooming specific personalities.

Historians Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff have observed that established writers and poets of the time largely ignored radio, partly because the monetary rewards were "meager in the extreme."<sup>17</sup> Yet, architects, who do not enjoy the same control as writers over the realization of their work, repeatedly accepted invitations — in fact, even sought them out. Harry S. Goodhart-Rendel, when president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, an institution established to protect the profession, advised all architects "who had the interest of architecture at heart to pursue the patronage of BBC."<sup>18</sup>

Rendell's economically nonsensical advice only made sense within the particular value system of the "space of architecture." As a field, architecture has historically demanded that its members distinguish themselves and their work from others. This demand, as arbitrary as it may be, has made "personal" and "original" expression a necessity for survival in a "universe where to exist is to be different."<sup>19</sup> Such a condition, however, presupposes educated consumers and a continuing emphasis on education by the producers to ensure cognition and competent evaluation of their production. This means that education is an accompanying necessity of self-expression.

Furthermore, architecture is among the most weakly organized professions. H  l  ne Lipstadt has written that

"Architects cannot claim to have . . . exterminated their rivals, as the medical profession did the charlatan."<sup>20</sup> Indeed, they competed for services like imagination, design and construction with nonarchitects. For architects — who were the most literate group in the building sector until World War II — this meant that speech and writing were powerful tools to attract clients from a common pool shared with builders and other nonarchitects. It was precisely this connection of buildings and words (to use Adrian Forty's book title<sup>21</sup>) that explains why radio was more attractive to architects than to other professionals. The BBC gave architects — who were not public figures (like bureaucrats, politicians or lawyers) or popular celebrities (like singers and actors) — a wireless classroom to expand their public reach beyond the narrow confines of the cultured classes.

#### ESTABLISHED MODES OF COMMUNICATING ARCHITECTURE

When radio appeared on the scene, British architecture already had a vibrant culture of word. Its members were involved with different means of outreach: they participated in preservation societies; spoke at public conferences; organized debates and exhibitions; wrote for popular and quasi-literary press; led walks and guided tours; and circulated pamphlets, posters, articles and books on all sorts of burning issues. Innovation in book publication, especially the 6p pocket-size paperbacks introduced by Penguins in 1937, and changes in the format and content of the architectural press made architecture even more open to lay readers (FIG. 4).

Such changes in publishing were significant. After 1919, *Builders' Journal* reinvented itself as the more attractive and trendy *Architects' Journal*. *The Architect* and *Building News* also joined forces and changed their editorial style. In general, writing moved away from the technical and the formidably factual to become more literary, reflective and historical. These modifications attracted new middle-class writers and readers beyond the immediate world of the construction industry, facilitated new and multiple ways of thinking about design, and allowed both those architects with and without an opportunity to build to rethink the principles of the profession.<sup>22</sup> This placed professional journals, previously on the sidelines of professional practice, right at the heart of it.<sup>23</sup>

Preservation, after the economic reshuffling of 1914–1919, had begun to emerge as a pressing issue to architects and critics. In 1926, at the behest of the Royal Institute of British Architects, planner Patrick Abercrombie and architect Clough Williams-Ellis registered the Council for Preservation of Rural England. In 1937, *AR* editor James Richards and writer Robert Byron, with two other friends, set up the Georgian Group. They fought for preservation amidst much public aversion and political skepticism to the idea. Though to little effect at the time, the purpose of the preservationists



**FIGURE 4.** Existing forms of communication. Anthony Bertram, Design (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938).

was to gain recognition for cultural value of buildings and landscapes as something over and above their material and entertainment value.

There was also an increase in the number of design exhibitions during the interwar years in Britain.<sup>24</sup> The annual "Ideal Home Exhibition," the 1933 "Exhibition of British Industrial Art in Relation to Home," and the two Modern Architectural Research (MARS) Group exhibitions in 1934 and 1938 characterized these years (FIG. 5). Such events addressed a public beyond the circles of architecture's traditional audience and attracted visitors from outside the sphere of influence of magazines and societies. Their popularity and success made old-world venues like J.C. Squire's Architect's Club appear to be "inward looking coterie affairs with little effect on outside public opinion," which preached mainly to the "soft public," "the already saved," and the "illuminated."<sup>25</sup>



**FIGURE 5.** Extracurricularists: preparing the MARS Bethnal Green Exhibit. Robert Townsend, by courtesy of John Allan.

#### ENTERS RADIO AND WIRELESS SITES

To these existing sources for arousing interest in the built environment, the BBC added the wireless — a colossal classroom with invisible walls, potentially open to the entire country. However, committed to high cultural standards, the Corporation did not invite just any practitioner to the microphone. The BBC encouraged only the "extracurricularists" to turn the audience created by radio into a public for architecture. And for this group of nontraditional practitioners there was a reciprocal benefit. BBC radio provided "soft" advertising that would allow them to compete for attention with commercial architects and builders, who had access to market-based publicity. Radio was also a legitimate means of self-promotion, because it did not compromise their claim to "internally determined," as opposed to "externally imposed," production.

Radio was not the first institution to introduce oral representations of architecture into the English tradition of cultural pedagogy. Lectures with lantern slides and guided tours had been used for decades by municipal museums, preservationists, and the Workers Education Association (FIG. 6). What radio did was reproduce these representations in radically different classroom conditions, and transform the inti-

**FIGURE 6.** An 1894 walking tour of a fourteenth-century clergy house in Sussex. Courtesy of the British National Trust.



mate sociability of a traditional classrooms by opening such learning to an amorphous, faceless group of students. In the process, it separated the site of utterance and audition and collapsed special educational events into the everyday.

For the visual arts, radio translated the scale, material, space and locality of works entirely to audition. Yet, while architecture in the space of radio lost its structural specificity, this loss had several unexpected positive effects. To begin, the conditions of architectural practice — the need for clients, capital investment, the scale of works, and their existence in public space — have historically subjugated architects to economic and political interests, making their work an instrument of domination. However, radio freed representation from the constraints attendant upon the materiality of building. This enabled the producers to relocate the discourse of the built environment within the field of political power. Buildings were no longer simply a tool of subjugation, but were framed as a force of democratization. Second, unlike a lecture in a classroom with slides or a site visit, a lecture on radio detached the senses of hearing and seeing. This limited radio's capacity to explain the physical properties of places and put the burden of understanding entirely on imagination and on imaginative completion in the mind. It heightened the speakers' power to reproduce the identity of works and the discipline afresh. Third, since all visual arts suffered from the disembodiment of material form when put on air, the space of radio created a unique equality between architects and more autonomous culture producers like artists and writers.

The interest of the BBC in the built environment was generated by the fit of the topic with the Corporation's search for topics that could combine maximum outreach with the mandate of "uplift." John Reith valued broadcasters who were "engaged in advancing the boundaries of knowledge," and hoped "to select from among the highest authorities in the universities and elsewhere those who ha[d] already exhibited the most conspicuous powers as popular interpreters of their subject." The ideal presenter was one who could "stimulate the interest of those who have no previous interest or acquaintance with the topic yet are able to provide material for their fellow experts."<sup>26</sup>

Simple and lively presentations that could grab and sustain the attention of the interested and uninterested alike were preferred over dense ones. The operative word in the

halls of Broadcasting House was "topicality." In particular, the producers favored social topics. Research into listener preferences indicated that social topics made better subjects of discussion, as they involved the immediate quality of life on which everyone had an opinion. This led administrators in all branches of BBC programming to believe that if abstract topics like art and philosophy could be tied to the concrete social concerns of listeners, they could continue to give them "advanced" (as opposed to "more popular") treatment and still be trusted to spark broad interest.<sup>27</sup> Accordingly, speakers were asked to demonstrate the relevance of their topic to the immediate concerns of different groups of listeners.

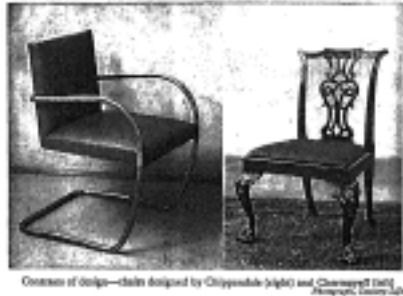
Architecture was subject to these general programming requirements. It was also subject to demands made on all art programs. While speakers were given great freedom in what they chose to talk about, they were asked to demonstrate that art affected social conditions and social outlook. Charles Siepmann, Director of BBC Adult Education, in particular, wanted visual arts presentations to be inquiries "into the factors of change and the forces of transformation that can be traced within the lifetime of an ordinary man."<sup>28</sup> Presentations were to lay down the criteria for evaluating works that could lead to the "improvement of taste, understanding, extend privilege and influence." Siepmann favored architecture as a topic of presentation because it was at once an art and a rapidly industrializing component of the economy that he believed could bridge highbrow and lowbrow differences in taste.<sup>29</sup>

Within the discussion of the purer visual arts, the demand of relating, say, a Picasso or a Gainsborough to the everyday concerns of listeners was a tall order (FIG. 7). But the more adventurous critics accommodated this demand. Herbert Read called for the reinvention of artists as designers.<sup>30</sup> Eric Newton asked for accessible and enjoyable public art.<sup>31</sup> "Before you make any judgment of a work of art," went the advice of archeologist Stanley Casson, "look very closely at it indeed, and ask yourself what was the intention of the artist, what did he think and want when he did it."<sup>32</sup> Yet, despite such overtures, when it came to the "concrete" value of art, most artists and critics inevitably turned to spiritual or psychological explanations.

For program producers, great buildings also rose above their worldly entanglements and had as much cultural worth as art and literature. Indeed, the public existence of buildings gave them a much greater power of cultural education and enlightenment than other arts. As A.E. Richardson insisted, "Each person who has the cause of education at heart will realize the enormous influence a really good station [a public building] could exercise on the mass mind."<sup>33</sup> The experience of domestic work and public places (churches, schools, hospitals, shops), the BBC producers estimated, gave the listeners, who did not have a regular contact with "works," the necessary preparation to be interested in the topic. Architecture's involvement in questions of shelter, safety and health also endowed cultural topics with a political

**FIGURE 7.**

Promoting good taste over the radio. An illustration of the tradition of “sound” English design. Serge Chermayeff and Chippendale chairs, in G. Boumphrey, “What’s Wrong with Design,” *The Listener*, Vol. 9 No. 223 (Apr. 19, 1933), p. 608. Courtesy of the BBC.



edge otherwise prohibited in BBC programming. All in all, these properties made architecture a better fit than the fine arts in terms of the Corporation’s search for topics that promised outreach without sacrificing the mandate of “uplift.” Its appreciation stood as the gateway to the appreciation of more esoteric cultural enterprises.

The BBC’s interest in topical broadcasting drew out the socially modern elements in architectural thinkers of all stripes, including Arts and Crafts vernacularists, Edwardians, and proto-Continental modernists. But it was particularly compatible with the modernist impetus, because the exaltation of “fitness for purpose” by the moderns made their works more open to the new public constituted by radio. Purpose here embraced a wide array of aspects — use, health, safety, firmness, ease of maintenance, suitability of material, and financial logic. With the exception of the Arts and Crafts movement, the nineteenth century had shed many of these conceptions. But their return had the effect of validating the appreciation of those who were uninitiated in the ways of critical and informed appreciation but who consumed works naively and from the perspective of practicality.

In 1924 Clough Williams-Ellis and Amabel Strachey published a book, *Pleasures of Architecture*, in which they argued that it was perfectly okay for laymen to have opinions about architecture. Starting with questions of purposiveness and structural efficiency which did not require familiarity and regular contact with works in the past, everyone could be confident of the soundness of their appreciation. It is precisely such inclusiveness that attracted the BBC. *Pleasures of Architecture* made its authors the first speakers the BBC recruited for its series on architecture, in the very first week of 1927, showcasing BBC’S vision. Follow-up transmissions on this theme included a Banister Fletcher talk based on the “Romance of Architecture” (1929) and a Fredric Towndrow one for school children entitled “Adventures in Architecture” (1929).

During these years the collective labor of young architects transformed housing, industrial design, and planning into aesthetic challenges and made the man-in-the-street a stakeholder

in an aesthetic domain. This gave modernists an edge over the neo-Georgianism and neo-Tudorism of their senior contemporaries. For example, “The House of the Future,” an Ideal Home exhibition (1928), provided the first use of modernism for English for worker housing.<sup>34</sup> Two years later, the BBC asked its co-designer, R.A. Duncan, then teaching at the Architectural Association, to explain the importance of shifts in architectural thinking for working-class living.

The BBC’s director of talks in 1932 also commissioned J.E. Barton, a keen observer of recent concepts in French urbanism, to weigh its merits and address for listeners the question “Will the New City make New Men?” Later, during the war, when Britain started making long-term plans for the metamorphosis of its economy from that of an empire to that of a welfare state, the BBC asked another publicist of modernism, F.S. Yerbury, to compare the situation at home with discoveries on “Housing and Social Conditions in Sweden” (1944). F.R.S. Yorke’s books also described modernism as a return to the beauty of essentials. They presented the movement as a socially responsible reply by artists to the economic pressures and the transformed political reality of the day. In particular, prefabrication, when it became widely available, would democratize architecture.

In this case the supply of discourse and its proof in the emerging works of younger speakers on urban, industrial and architectural design and Reith’s demand that BBC productions realize the democratic potential of the medium made a great fit. Speakers experienced this coincidental accord in the form of unprecedented leeway and freedom of maneuver in bringing topics, agendas and colleagues important to them to the microphone and setting the tone for the radio debates (FIG. 8).

The commitment of the BBC to modernist views signaled a general acceptance of its power to transform class relations. Moreover, the Corporation gave its architectural presenters the backing of an institution that by 1939 had established a reputation for greater objectivity than the press. BBC radio was also able to procure the participation of prestigious personalities in every domain of human activity.<sup>35</sup> This established the conditions for a certain efficacy of words, enabling speakers to assert their views as representing a rational and common good. The consistent invitation of sympathetic voices was the greatest



**FIGURE 8.** John Summerson’s rendition of a house not as property but as a cultural production included an eye-witness account of Blenheim Palace in *Radio Times*, 1937. Photo courtesy of the BBC.

protection the BBC afforded young architects, and it implied acceptance of the validity of their challenge to professional practice. The BBC boosted this challenge by recognizing the claim that the functions of a building could be aesthetically expressed; by acknowledging that the latest innovation in artistic principles was valuable to the communal needs of a democracy; and by giving young architects a public-service platform.

The demands the BBC administration placed on its speakers also favored the extracurricularists, who could indulge in self-serving propaganda — assuming it demonstrated a generalizable interest. The economically irrational practice of this group indicated a sense of the long-term value of disinterestedness over the “economy” of the “commercial,” and over “economic” profit in the short term. Together with increased autonomy and disinterestedness, a stake in generalizable interest, exhibited by and in collaboration with the BBC, augmented the authority of architects.

Accepting an invitation to enter the space of radio also meant a willingness to face up to its explicit and implicit challenges. Speakers accepted that this space favored expressive ideas over visual evidence, and engaged those with or without material examples to back them up in a zero-sum game. They competed under new conditions and different criteria without a traditional client to finance their designs.

The BBC'S interest in a variety of programs created an occasion to demonstrate the variety of activities in which architects were and, if given a chance, could be involved. They talked about “Painted Furniture” (1929) and “Art in Industry” (1930); gave tips on “Garden Design” (1930) and “Damp in the House” (1932); and introduced “The Town and Country Planning Bill” (1936). To these, with the onset of World War II, were introduced new concerns like “An Archive for Architecture” (1944) and “Reconstruction: Plymouth Rebuilding Plans” (1944).

They were asked to give advice to new home buyers, (which Howard Robertson used to correct the demands of home builders), and provide guidance on the minutiae of domestic design, consumption and style. Stanley Casson counseled “On Using Our Eyes” (1931); Margaret Bulley, a student of Heinrich Wölfflin, gave “A Test in Taste” (1933); and Peter Carter explained “Good Manners in Architecture” (1945). The BBC accepted these young campaigners for design reform as arbitrators of taste, and encouraged them to make a new public for their new goods.

The listener-conscious focus led speakers to show how design touched on extra-formal issues of paramount importance. The roster of speakers also included prominent public personalities — members of Parliament, social scientists, health officials, urban psychologists, anthropologists — who checked innovation in design against “external” considerations. In 1933, John Gloag, an architect-turned-critic, and Frank Pick, the celebrated director of London Transportation, discussed simplicity in function-respecting household things. In 1935, in a debate moderated by Patrick Abercrombie, critic G.M. Boumphrey weighed the merits of flats for the regener-

ation of cities against the dissenting view of Sir E.D. Simon, a Labor MP, known for modernizing housing in Manchester. These transmissions demonstrated that extra-formal objectives could be given adequate formal responses.

By taking up an issue, presenters put themselves in a situation where they had to illustrate competence as to architecture's social, historical, and recent technical developments. And they had to publicly address the reactions, especially of informed opinion, to their positions both on and off (in *The Listener*) air. The public scrutiny to which this exposed them offered a chance to show how their education had prepared them to take up social responsibilities.

Explanation and defense gave them opportunities to reinvent themselves — from being simply cogs in the machine, to being “thinkers” on social housing and town planning. This helped radio shape itself into a mechanism for transforming the conditions of patronage, creating possibilities for architects to provide not just for private clients but also for communal needs. Returning to the realm of ideas, architecture in the space of radio no longer appeared in its usual form as a means to aggrandize wealthy clients. It enframed architects both as “experts” and “caretakers” of design.

Radio serviced speaking and “less outspoken” architects alike. Publication announcements, book reviews, exhibition information from RIBA and MARS, RIBA's Presidential Speech, historic properties on the occasion of their sales — all these events became occasions for programs. They represented architecture not just as a technical activity, but as a literate profession, and design not just as pattern-making, but as an intellectual activity.

Architects and critics used radio to create a need for themselves by identifying “needs” they could fulfill and the “problems” that had arisen when the public did not employ them. They used radio to create projects and propose design solutions, a practice first and most powerfully put into action by C.R. Ashbee. In 1929 Ashbee addressed listeners in the capacity of an “informed and trained” architect and planner, not as a mere user or city official. He posed a problem (that the English countryside was being visually destroyed); he pointed to the novelty of his reading (that until recently this decline had not been treated as an aesthetic issue); and he made a proposal (“What we reformers want to do is to check all this in the public interest”). He identified stakeholders (“local community and tourists”); and he formulated a client (“the local municipal councils”). Finally, he made a three-stage design proposal, discussed the policy change required to implement it, and left listeners with a clear sense of their role in the process.

Ashbee's talk exemplified the transformation of the wireless classroom into a studio-like environment — a place where architects and critics, not clients, defined the building program, and where peers, not an indifferent public, would judge design proposals. The new order of things put in place by the wireless classroom both complied with its properties



and transcended the limits of a studio. And this was not only because it was charged with making listeners see the stakes for them in matters that mattered to architects. It was mainly because speakers used it to expand the horizons of professional practice and extend the involvement of the members of its community with new design tasks they could create for themselves through extra-practice activities.<sup>36</sup>

#### IN CONCLUSION: TRADITION AFTER BAUDRILLARD

The BBC provided architects and those with an interest in architecture a new site with entirely different conditions for the production and communication of what architecture could be. In this space, the properties of radio combined with a number of more programmatic concerns to allow speakers essentially to practice architecture without a practice. Among these concerns were the challenge to speakers to think outside the traditional dependence of architects on private patrons, a new insistence on exploring the variety of ways design could have social impacts, and the chance for architects to present and defend their conceptual positions outside the protective shelter of the space of architecture.

The BBC did this in ways that exhibitions, professional press, photography, drawing, built structures, and other older forms of representation could not. Wireless sites were pure simulacra, which allowed a relative autonomy and authority for the producers of architecture. Since architecture represented a marginal intervention into culture compared to other fields (art, literature, music, philosophy), this was something its physical existence and the “reality” of its practice at the time did not offer.

Architects gained this relative autonomy not just by being able to act as artists, but because of the difference of their artistry from those of other producers of culture. Moreover, the analysis I have given here is a production-centered one, and it speaks only to the possibilities of radiophonic simulation for the material existence of buildings. If it also contributed to the transformation of the identity of the built environment, then it had a broader social effect.

Presenters at the 2006 IASTE conference demonstrated that Baudrillard has convinced his academic peers that hyper-tradition is a system which pretends to be representational, though, in reality, it is not. Presentation upon presentation showed how societies disregard this revelation and incorporate and accept simulacra at face value. Today both popular and academic views mull over whether the physical environ-

ment — tangible, experiential space — falls within the realm of “reality” or “representation.” But beyond this dissonance, lies an unspoken consensus that, unlike hyper-tradition, a traditional environment is what it seems to be. Tradition does not “collapse the real with the imaginary, the true with the false.” Traditional settlements belong to an early phase of history in which reality and representation knew their place.

Is it not ironic that Baudrillard has had such great impact within a contemporary intellectual world that has broken with the view of reality as something that can be pre-given? Today, following Loïc Wacquant (sociology), Roger Chartier (history), Hélène Lipstadt (architecture), Paul Rabinow (anthropology), Hubert Dreyfus (philosophy), and most prominently Pierre Bourdieu (sociology), we believe that reality is socially constituted by a dynamic struggle between competing representations (definitions). By the same token, traditional environments can themselves be interpreted as never self-evident. Physical spaces objectively exist as repositories and products of tradition only insofar as their status as *tradition* is accorded credit by the public to whom tradition’s presenters turn for validation.<sup>37</sup> Reality and “tradition” are nothing but a function of accepted representations.

What is important to realize here is that it did not become this way in an age of hyper-traditions. Nevertheless, it has taken hyper-traditions for us to clearly see that it has always been so. The question, then, is: Is the function of hyper-traditions in our history any less legitimate, any more apocalyptic, than the traditions we leave unhyphenated?

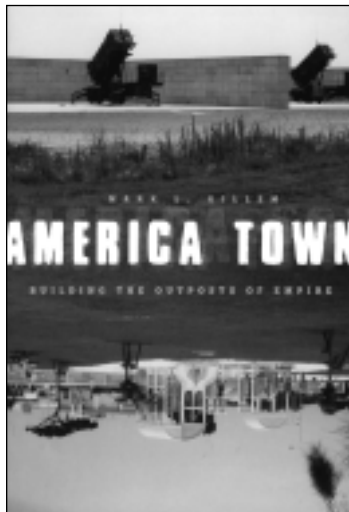
The role of “wireless sites” in the history of British architecture (a traditional mode of knowledge) illuminates this critical aspect of what we call “traditional environments.” Yet to speak to the BBC’s role in “maintaining” or “inventing” traditions — and, of course, transforming our understanding of tradition — requires that we keep the concept of hyper-tradition, but break with both the conclusions and intellectualist bias of the scholar to whom we owe its cognition.

Unlike Baudrillard, we must not interpret our scholastic relation to the objects of analysis, the distanced relation that makes our observation possible, as the basis for the practices analyzed. The methodological error here is to construe the relation of users and producers of simulations and hyper-reality as spectacle, as a set of significations for the benefit of the analyst only. Only when we observe the participation of simulation in concrete problems to be solved practically by historically constituted actors can we refine our traditional notion of tradition in the aftermath of the metaphysical-world-of-representation-turned-upside-down.

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34. A. Powers, *Serge Chermayeff: Designer, Architect, Teacher* (London: RIBA Publications, 2001), p.39.
35. H. Jennings and W. Gill, *Broadcasting in Everyday Life* (London: BBC, 1939). Jennings and Gill were sociologists at Birmingham University who undertook this widely publicized study on behalf of BBC.
36. Radio programming on architecture presupposes the acknowledgment of the discipline of its transformative power on its practice. By the end of World War II, critics and architects who had made reputations as radio presenters added it to their titles. RIBA archives today use “broadcasts” and “broadcasters” as a minor category of classification. The archives at Centre Canadien d’Architecture shows that Wells Coates kept an extensive record of his work for *The Listener*, Adult Education and Talks Department. RIBA archives indicate the same about John Summerson. He kept a log of the announcements and reviews of his programs alongside public appraisals of his work that historiography has valued. As soon as the early thirties, John Betjeman, a senior editor at *Architectural Review*, already considered BBC capable of the same kind of role that professional magazines performed inside the discipline. Given the scarce design opportunities during the Depression, he advocated for a greater intervention by the BBC and asked its director of programs to produce talks for the cause of English architecture.
37. This definition of “objective” position comes from Blaise Pascal. B. Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. by H.F. Stewart (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950), p.43. Also see R. Chartier, *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations*, trans. by L.G. Cochranel (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), p.9.

## Book Reviews



*America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire.* Mark L. Gillem. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. Xx + 350 pp., b&w illus.

“After the tragedy of war comes the occupation of land.” So writes Mark Gillem in describing U.S. military facilities in South Korea, in this analysis of “the way that the U.S. military consumes land.” In this insightful book, Gillem explores “the spatial implications of exporting American suburbs” (p.xv), the model for what he calls “American Towns.” These “towns” are embedded in the larger spatial bootprints of U.S. bases around the world, which in turn reflect significant assumptions about how the United States either interacts with or avoids interaction with other cultures.

This is a probing work that seeks to unravel assumptions about the present-day “New American Empire.” Gillem attaches some perhaps unexpected adjectives to this concept: an “Ambitious Empire” (p.23); a “Supersized” and a “Franchised Empire” (p.236); an “Extravagant, Arrogant, Isolated or Entangled Empire” (p.269); and — one of my favorites — an “Overparked Empire” (p.251). Of course, after the annoyance of the parking violation comes the payment of the fine, and no one seems better suited to speak about both the violations (in purely planning and architectural senses) and the fines (which all Americans are still paying) than Gillem. An architect, planner, historian, and former U.S. Air Force officer, he is truly positioned at an “outpost at the border of academia and empire” (p.283).

In this work, Gillem offers a captivating tour of several U.S. military outposts. But rather than analyzing the strategies of empire *per se*, he restricts his arguments to how these “play out on the landscape” (p.xvi). A clear writer who avoids jargon, he divides the book in three parts. Part I, “Empire’s Reach,” seeks to place the U.S. military’s “gluttonous use of foreign land” in historical perspective, reaching back to describe Roman occupation of conquered territories, the Laws of the Indies that regulated Spanish colonization of the Americas, and the forms of British control in India.

In Part II, “Familiarity on the Frontlines,” he gets to the core of his argument, asking two key questions: What are imperial U.S. designers building today? And how do they go about implementing their plans? His answer is that designers “have exported the suburban ideal to overseas outposts while remaining largely ignorant of the host nation’s planning and design practices” (p.xviii).

Part III, “Outposts Under Construction,” trains its sights on the small but telling universe of three U.S. Air Force bases, in Italy, South Korea and Japan. In conclusion, Gillem argues that his exhaustive scrutiny of these outposts demonstrates that the U.S. military — contrary to what its actions in Iraq or Afghanistan might suggest — is engaged in “a new, imperial, land use model of avoidance” (p.263).

Finally, in a useful Appendix, Gillem explains the methodology he uses to unravel the sometimes confounding ways the military roots its operations in space and time. His dual approach employs “institutional ethnography” and “autoethnography” to elucidate both internal and external perspectives on the topic.

There are many qualities to appreciate in this study, as well as a much smaller number of weaknesses. Besides the clarity of the prose, there is also Gillem's wonderful choice of the figure-ground drawing to convey some of his main points about the disparity between U.S. assumptions of good land use and how other cultures craft their own landscapes. The book's photographs, however, are more disappointing because of their small size and muddy reproduction.

Gillem devotes attention to issues that run the gamut from small to large. At times he examines micro-level questions, such as the types of roof tiles designers choose for supersized residences in Korea; at others he considers macro-level concerns such as how, by choosing the suburb as an exportable prototype, designers in the employ of the U.S. military are working with "a perfectly disciplined spatial order" (quotation from Christine Boyer, p.169).

The citation is typical of Gillem's use of well-chosen references from other perceptive analysts of the global built environment. In addition to Boyer, Gillem cites Henri Lefebvre, Edward Said, Sharon Zukin, Dolores Hayden, and Nezar AlSayyad. What I missed, however, were references to two other keen observers whose work bears on this topic: Elizabeth Gill Lui and Rajiv Chandrasekaran. Lui, a captivating photographer, is the co-author of *Building Diplomacy: the Architecture of American Embassies* (Los Angeles: Four Stops Press; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), a book whose focus on another key building type reflecting America abroad is a good complement to *America Town*. Chandrasekaran, of course, is the author of the more famous *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone* (New York: Knopf, 2006), another companion piece to *America Town*.

On occasion, I hoped Gillem would relate in more direct ways his intimate knowledge of cases in Italy, South Korea, and Japan to other examples, such as the Green Zone or Bagram Air Base. And I yearned for a chapter examining what has happened to U.S. military installations that have reverted to the control of "host" countries, such as Subic Bay in the Philippines, or any number of U.S. bases in Vietnam. Perhaps in a follow-up study, Gillem will address some of these concerns in his own, ethnographically sensitive way.

In *America Town*, Gillem is an officer, a scholar, and a perceptive writer who helps elucidate a far-flung constellation of outposts that are not often enough on our collective radar screens. The book provides an eye-opening examination of the kind of peculiar, but strangely predictable "American town" that the Department of Defense has been spending its millions on, at military installations around the world, all these years. The question I have been pondering since finishing this book is what comes after the tragedy of avoidance? ■

#### NOTE

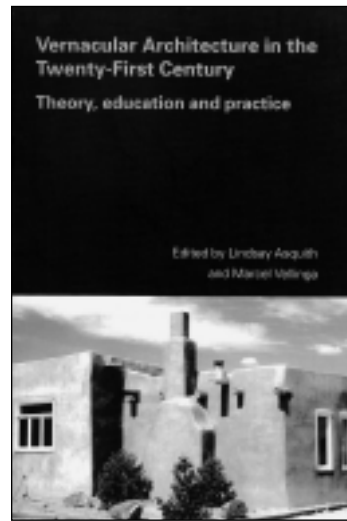
1. The title comes from an actual America Town, "an officially sanctioned red-light district set aside for the private use of the U.S. military, in South Korea" (p.56).

Jeffrey W. Cody

Getty Conservation Institute

*Vernacular Architecture in the Twenty-First Century: Theory, Education and Practice*. Lindsay Asquith and Marcel Vellinga, editors. London and New York: Taylor & Francis, 2006.

Xviii + 294 pp., 56 b&w illus.



The origins of this book lie in the decision by its editors, Lindsay Asquith and Marcel Vellinga, to convene a multidisciplinary group of researchers to celebrate the outstanding work of Paul Oliver on vernacular architecture research. Invited contributors were asked to highlight the theoretical relevance of the field, both for teaching and practice, and assigned specific problems to address.

Valerie Oliver, Paul's wife and intellectual partner, also participated in this project, but died before its completion. To acknowledge her role, the editors also dedicated the book to her.

The book is divided into three parts. "The Vernacular as Process" has four chapters; "Learning from the Vernacular" has five; and "Understanding the Vernacular" also has five. Most chapters include graphic support — diagrams, charts, drawings or photographs. An additional eighteen pages of references list important works on the subject, and there is a useful onomastic and thematic index.

The editors not only admirably fulfilled their purpose of collecting, organizing and publishing all this material prepared by the contributors, but they wrote a general introduction to the topic of vernacular architecture as it stands at the beginning of the twenty-first century. They also introduced the subjects of all fourteen chapters, emphasizing common themes and relating them to each other. They undertook this difficult task for each part of the book, and then for the whole. As a result, Asquith and Vellinga have perhaps provided as much to the field with their editorial work and introductory arguments as with their own authored chapters.

Among those invited to honor Oliver were some of his students and collaborators, either in the first books he edited or more recently. It is not surprising then that constant reference to his writing is made in initial epigraphs or quotations. Among the contributors, Suha Özkan accurately mentions that Oliver not only pioneered the field of study in vernacular architecture, but actually named it (p.99). I might add that Oliver has provided the best definition of vernacular architecture to date, that included in his magna opus, the *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World (EVAW)* (1997, I, p.xxiii) — a definition he later complemented in a revised edition of his seminal *Dwellings: The Vernacular House World Wide* (2003, p.14).

Any field of study must be defined, but it is revealing here that not the authors in this volume accept the term “vernacular architecture,” or Oliver’s definition of it. A quick survey of its chapters indicates how several indistinctly write of “vernacular” or “traditional” architecture. Only Simon Bronner directly quotes Oliver’s definition. Ian Davis does not explicitly refer to vernacular architecture, and Amos Rapoport prefers the term “vernacular design.” Perhaps more surprisingly, Vellinga, himself, dedicates a good part of his chapter to criticizing the term “vernacular,” on grounds that it signifies a process that is too static and anchored in the past. Other chapters, meanwhile, allude to a “dynamic” vernacular.

To give a more complete sense of the scope of the work presented in this book, I will describe some of the main arguments in its Foreword and Afterword, and in several chapters from each part of the book.

In the Foreword, Nezar AlSayyad concisely states that the study of vernacular architecture should address three challenges in the coming century. The first involves etymological and epistemological problems related to the vernacular concept. The second has to do with methods, in order to understand the meaning of vernacular architecture research. To overcome the third challenge, he argues that the utility of vernacular knowledge must be tested in urban squatter settlements, which he proposes as the new vernacular. Finally, he looks forward to the rise of the vernacular as a political project, “whose principal mission is the dynamic interpretation and re-interpretation of [the] past, in light to an ever-changing present” (p.xviii).

Chapter 1, “Building Tradition: Control and Authority in Vernacular Architecture,” by Simon J. Bronner, confronts the simplistic critique, advanced by mainstream architecture, that tradition equals conservatism and lack of creativity. Bronner asserts instead that tradition provides a structure that permits people to choose with reliance and adapt solutions. He also writes that creativity is a necessary component of tradition, since the possibility of change is related to continuity of form and process through time. After this theoretical preview, Bronner presents three case studies of living traditions immersed in the complex society of the United States: the Jewish celebration after Yom Kippur, in which the “Sukkot” is built; the communal practice of building barns among the Amish (for whom such structures are not only warehouses but spaces for religious services); and the so-called “Beer Can House.”

Chapter 5, “Traditionalism and Vernacular Architecture in the Twenty-First Century,” by Suha Özkan, manifests its author’s knowledge of relevant research and expertise in the history of architecture. A former student of Oliver’s, Özkan stresses Oliver’s most outstanding contribution: his scientific approach. He argues that this set Oliver apart from other pioneers in the domain, such as Bernard Rudofsky and Hassan Fathy. It climaxed with his editing of the *EVAW* in 1997. Özkan then expertly deals with the sphere of modern architecture in the mid-twentieth century, when interest in vernacular architecture came to the fore. As part of this

analysis, he classifies researchers in vernacular architecture as either “classic” or “traditionalist,” according to their approaches and methods. And after a critical review of the work of the traditionalists, he concludes that in the twenty-first century, architecture must be sustainable, a fundamental quality of vernacular architecture.

Chapter 9, “Journey through Space: Cultural Diversity in Urban Planning,” asserts that urban planning lacks interest in cultural diversity. Its author, Geoffrey Payne, concludes that most works on the topic mistakenly consider the European urban spatial concept universally relevant. As a good Englishman, Payne enjoys traveling, so he reports on his early visit to the East, following publication of Bernard Rudofsky’s work, and then through the whole length of Japan under the intellectual guidance of Gunter Nitschke. In the 1970s he met Oliver, who awoke in him an interest in the cultural aspects of architecture and settlements and introduced him to the work of authors now considered classics. Payne subsequently dealt in the East with quite a few empirical cases — some successfully, other less so — and these led him to construct a holistic and multidisciplinary method. Graphic support and the right choice of case studies is fundamental to this chapter. However, the maps are at a scale that does not facilitate comprehension, a fault more of the publisher than the author.

Chapter 11, “Generative Concepts in Vernacular Architecture,” will fascinate anyone interested in the evolution of architecture. Its author, Ronald Lewcock, was already researching vernacular architecture when he collaborated with Oliver on the now classic *Shelter and Society* (1969). Here he presents a masterful synthesis of research that balances theoretical and empirical issues. His interdisciplinary approach to the subject combines with a clear presentation to explain complex relationships among functions of the human mind, aspects of the evolution of buildings, and events in the prehistory and history of architecture. Lewcock employs what he terms “generative concepts” to explain the genesis and evolution of the dwelling as built space worldwide. He presents five of these here, whose essential character is their extreme simplicity: the cave, the covered courtyard, the open courtyard, the hearth, and the anthropomorphic analogy. This was undoubtedly the chapter I enjoyed most, and which gave me most food for thought.

Chapter 13, “Architectural Education and Vernacular Building,” turns to the teaching of architecture. In it, Howard Davis presents a critique of stagnant approaches, developed in the nineteenth century, and the implications of this model for studying the vernacular. Davis first wonders whether a formal education useful to producing a healthy vernacular architecture may even be conceived. By this he means an architecture that will differ from place to place, and which will emerge from the daily life of people and groups. Davis collaborated with Christopher Alexander, who pioneered user-participation in architectural design, and with John Turner, a leading figure in the promotion of self-building, another important aspect in vernacular architecture. He

argues that vernacular architecture must develop from its roots and be centered on process, not place, style and form. A professor at the University of Oregon, he argues that training architects in the vernacular is essential so that they can adequately understand issues related to what remains the greatest percentage of building in the world.

The Afterword, “Raising the Roof,” was written by Oliver himself. As a form of acceptance speech pronounced by the guest of honor, it points out that despite the many issues, approaches and problems brought forward by the contributors, much remains to be said. There are aspects not yet fully analyzed, nor understood, such as the aesthetics and craft abilities embodied by vernacular architecture. These remain to be studied, in addition to new considerations brought about by the twenty-first century. Oliver also points to the need for research on new topics, such as ecology, given the rising demand for housing in the coming decades. In the end, he asserts that “vernacular architecture is the time-honoured, truly sustainable architecture that, in its multitudinous manifestations has evolved over the centuries, changing or adapting when necessary to variable environments and the nature of family and social growth” (p.265).

The quality of the editing process and the content of most of the chapters in this book is a fair and long-deserved tribute to Valerie and Paul Oliver. The collection of essays is also a welcome contribution to the study of vernacular architecture and settlements, since it presents new works, along with new developments in the thought of some of the pioneers in the field. Undoubtedly, this book will raise interest in the subject in the 2000s, just as other seminal works awoke interest in the topic in the 1960s and 70s. ■

*Juan Fernando Bontempo*  
Guadalajara, Mexico

*Gunyah, Goondie & Wurley: The Aboriginal Architecture of Australia.* Paul Memmott. St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2007. 412 pp., b&w illus.

At first glance, it would be easy to mistake this publication for yet another of the ubiquitous “coffee-table” books on topics like Australian Aboriginal bark painting, dot painting, and rock art. Many of these are big and contain lavish illustrations but do not inform beyond a superficial level. Don’t be fooled! This book by Paul Memmott of the University of Queensland is not one of these. It represents a major scholarly treatment of a neglected and complex subject. It is both encyclopedic in scope and intimate in detail. And its illustrations — especially the photographs — are not merely decorative, but exceptionally well chosen to support the text.

So much for first impressions. Digging further, it becomes apparent how Memmott has also made a special effort to identify and critique some of the dominant assumptions that have historically structured European views of Aboriginal domestic architecture. This is appropriate because so much of traditional Aboriginal culture has been characterized by negative stereotyping. Based on assumptions about their attitudes toward local government, land tenure and land rights, material culture, and subsistence, Aborigines until recently have generally been described as lacking or deficient. For example, because they lacked courts of law, they were seen as lawless. And because they lacked developed agriculture and relied instead on the mobility of groups across the landscape in search of wild food products, they were considered to have little attachment to the land (a judgment that has also provided convenient legal rationale for expropriating their lands for mining and pastoralism).

Anthropologists, archaeologists, historians, and other scholars have done much recently to correct assumptions like these, and the concept of Native Title to land is now firmly established in Australian law. Memmott joins these efforts by addressing the issue of domestic architecture, which has also been characterized largely in negative terms.

For some readers, the notion of Aboriginal domestic “architecture” might seem like a stretch. How could the opportunistically constructed and relatively flimsy structures of so many Aboriginal groups be called architecture? Memmott’s approach is to develop an externally oriented view, in which physical construction is seen to connect inhabitants with the outside environment instead of simply separating and sheltering them from it. The author presents this view as a better approximation of the true character of Aboriginal construction, which, he argues, raises it to the level of architecture. The most appealing feature of this approach is that it is a serious attempt to understand and explain Aboriginal domestic architecture from an “insider’s” point of view — that is, that of the Aborigines. It avoids imposing a Eurocentric set of expectations on an indigenous, non-Western tradition of domestic construction.

This effort is especially evident toward the end of the book, where Memmott reviews the construction practices of different “fringe dwellers.” These were marginalized com-

munities of Aborigines and part-Aborigines living on the fringes of European settlement. Here they were subjected by local councils to ethnocentric and often arbitrary rules of conduct, and suffered as a result from poverty and poor health. It seems ironic that just this week, as I wrote this review, the Australian Commonwealth Government formally and finally apologized to the Aborigines for past injustices like these.

One of the biggest difficulties in an encyclopedic treatment of Aboriginal domestic architecture is the uneven availability and quality of sources. Many Aboriginal groups succumbed early to European encroachment and to introduced diseases — not to mention violence and other atrocities that diminished their numbers and erased much knowledge of their traditions. For some areas, like the southwestern corner of Australia, the information is fragmentary and requires diligent archival investigation. Other areas, like the Central and Western Deserts, as well as Arnhem Land and northern Queensland, present more detailed ethnographic and ethno-historic records, which permit a fine-grained, as opposed to a broad-brush, treatment of Aboriginal domestic architecture.

The author consistently takes advantage of opportunities to present detailed, experiential accounts of behavior by Aborigines whenever these are available, while also recognizing that for other areas the record is spotty at best. Photographs of Aboriginal camps and structures, many of which were painstakingly recovered from archives across Australia, provide images that impart a sense of reality to even the spottiest ethnographic accounts. This book may, in fact, be the most completely and carefully compiled compendium of images on this subject, including photographs, plan drawings, and some sketches by Aborigines, themselves.

Memmott's continent-wide treatment of this subject provides a good initial basis for observing variability in housing, shelter and settlement among different Aboriginal groups. This variation was pronounced and arose from unique combinations of cultural and situational factors. The book presents examples in sufficient detail to show how patterned elements of traditional knowledge in minimalist domestic construction were shaped and constrained by situational factors like mobility, local geography, and resources. What emerges is a picture of people whose ability to adapt to changing circumstances was both opportunistic and, paradoxically to a degree, structured along traditional lines that at times were tied to extreme, culturally conservative rules of Aboriginal sacred life and cosmology.

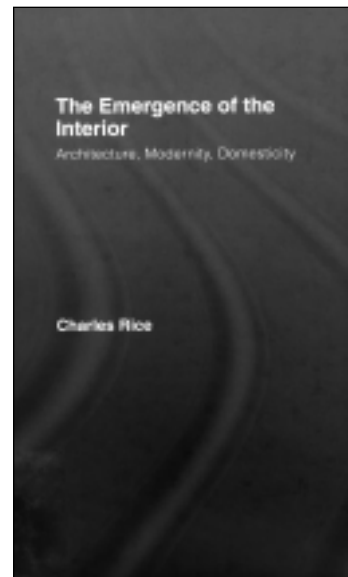
This Aboriginal ability to adapt to new and unforeseen conditions appears most strongly in the final part of the book. Here Memmott reviews both planned and unintended developments arising from close contact with recent and contemporary Euro-Australian culture. The discussion ranges from minimalist "travellers' camps" and more structured outstations, to self-conscious designs by Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal architects within such organizations as the Merrima Aboriginal Design Unit of the NSW Department of Public Works and Services. Here, too, the "outwardly oriented" theme of Aboriginal architecture is evident in such structures

as the Wilcannia Hospital and adjacent mourning courtyard and the Warlukurlangu Art Centre at Yuendumu, NT.

In short, Memmott's book is a welcome and overdue contribution to Australian Aboriginal ethnology. Perhaps more significantly, it represents a serious effort to understand and appreciate this aspect of Aboriginal life from the indigenous user's point of view. ■

**Richard A. Gould**  
Brown University

***The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity.*** Charles Rice. London, New York: Routledge, 2007. Xii + 161 pp., b&w illus.



The September 2004 issue of *Journal of Architecture* contained an article by Charles Rice that examined the "emergence of the interior." This book can be seen as a culmination of this research. While following the same primary thesis, it has been expanded and refined into a thought-provoking deconstruction of a fundamental category in architectural history and theory.

Rice's historiography is clearly indebted to Foucault. The "interior"

here is conceptualized as an unstable field of meanings, and he sets out to trace its historical emergence within a discursive formation. Rice's primary thesis is this: that the interior emerged historically in the nineteenth century in a state of "doubleness" as both space and image, and that in this state the image is not transparent to its spatiality. Thus, for example, photographs cannot be used innocently to evidence the interior.

Following Foucault's central notion of discourse, Rice illustrates how such concepts do not remain limited within the minds of their conceivers, but come to thoroughly permeate professional/institutional practices. Thus, the interior became a "new topos of subjective interiority, and framed newly articulated and increasingly widespread desires for privacy and comfort, for the consolidation of specific gendered and familial roles in life, for the linking of a consumer culture to the attainment of domestic arrangements that demonstrated acceptable norms, and for practices of self-representation in the context of domestic life" (pp.2–3). Indeed, the popular notion within professions that architecture is *more* than just interior design is perhaps one of its most obvious effects.

The book is organized into two parts. In Part One, Rice discusses the work of Walter Benjamin and Sigmund Freud. In his discussion of Benjamin, he explains how interiority is figured as both the private room in which bourgeois collections are kept and a metaphor for a different way of understanding the subjectivity of interior space. Following this, Rice explores how interiority became a more specific psychoanalytical problem for Freud, concerning the uncanny and the sublime. “[A] confusion between the two-dimensional reflection and the three-dimensionality of the (interior) space” was central to both Freud’s clinical practice and to his theorizing of the psyche as “doubleness.”

In Part Two, Rice presents a refreshing analysis of specific buildings and ideas by architects such as Muthesius, Loos, and Le Corbusier. By treating the plans or photographs of these buildings as a layer of text in their own right — not as evidence or supplement — he attempts to articulate what he finds so alive and dense about them as images. In one amazing section, he compares two buildings, one by Muthesius in London and another by Barr Smiths in Adelaide, represented by two almost similar images of their interior spaces. He then deconstructs these to show that “the only thing they really had in common was a technology of representation that could provide an externalized picture, a ‘proof’ of their materialization of this fantasy.” As a reader, I was often drawn to reexamine these images in a curious manner, as if I had lost my ability to read them. In that respect, Rice has succeeded.

The structure of this book reflects its particular form of historiography, and so needs further explication. As Rice states, the first part is not meant to be the “theory” required to understand the second, which is more specifically about architecture and space. Rather, all this material is presented as “case studies,” meant collectively to visualize an order or pattern in the way “interiority” moves across conceptual territories and institutional frameworks. Paul Rabinow’s 1989 *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* shares significant structural similarities with this approach. In the same way that Rabinow illustrated the emergence of the “social” in the French modern state by tracing historic events (ruptures) and intellectual figures (agents authorized to make truth-claims), Rice works through specific moments and actors to reexamine the interior.

Rice’s book is clearly not exhaustive or complete, nor is it meant to be. However, this should not keep the reader from asking what it is about this constellation of actors that Rice has put together that constitutes a plausible and discernable force in this new conception of the interior. Rabinow argued in his book that the actors — he called them “technicians of general ideas” — collectively formed the “middle ground between high culture and everyday life.” As such, they invented and practiced the discourses contributing to the rise of the “social.” In Rice’s case, there does not seem to be a clear explication of what binds these actors in terms of agency, class or values. This is my main discomfort with this otherwise erudite work of scholarship.

In reading this book, it is most productive not to become immersed in the individual case studies (even if they can be attractive, given their discreteness and the way the book is divided into chapters). Rather, it is better to read across the different case studies and ask how they coexist, and what are the nature of their resemblances. That Rice often cross-refers between chapters is also evidence of how this book was written. The resemblance that I perceive is this: it is simply impossible to articulate the interior outside a preconceived binary totality; the interior immediately conjures its exterior as a way of stabilizing itself. Rice’s research problematizes this stability by scrutinizing its modes of mediation, as image and space, from production to reproduction, from transmission to reception, in the construction of what we know as “domesticity.” To his credit, Rice always recasts the conclusions of the previous chapter at the beginning of each new chapter in a way that bridges very different territories.

At the risk of decontextualizing his highly nuanced arguments, I suggest that the “doubleness” between the image and space can be fruitfully thought through in the context of other disciplines where such modes of representation are common. To take his thesis seriously — that the image cannot be used easily to evidence the space it represents — will radically challenge scholarship in many disciplines. ■

*Lee Kah Wee*

*University of California, Berkeley*



# Conferences and Events

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

***Southwest Summer Institute for Preservation and Regionalism, Albuquerque, NM:*** June 2008. In partnership with government preservation agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other universities and departments at the University of New Mexico, the institute provides a national and international forum for students, practicing professionals, and the public. Courses make extensive use of New Mexico's historic cultural landscape to incubate and master best practices for the conservation of tangible and intangible heritage. For more information, contact: Meghan Bayer, Summer Institute Program Coordinator, mbayer@unm.edu.

***"True Urbanism: Designing the Healthy City," Santa Fe, NM:*** June 1–5, 2008. The 46th Annual International Making Cities Livable Conference continues its focus on the city as an organism with interdependent social and physical elements, making essential the understanding of the relationship between the built environments, patterns of urban social life, and city inhabitants' experience of well-being. For more information, visit: <http://www.livablecities.org>.

***"History in Practice," Geelong, Victoria, Australia:*** July 3–6, 2008. The conference is the 25th annual meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ). It continues the group's discussion of the architectural history and historiography of the region and the status of its architecture, landscape, and cities in the wider world. For more information, visit: <http://www.sahanz.net/conferences/index.html>.

***"Community, Capital, and Cultures: Leisure and Regeneration as Cultural Practice," Liverpool, United Kingdom:*** July 8–10, 2008. The 2008 conference of the Leisure Studies Association examines the role of the cultural industries, their relation to leisure and tourism, and ideas and practices of regeneration in the so-called "postindustrial" world. For more information, visit: <http://www.leisure-studies-association.info/laweb/2008/Main.html>.

***"Public versus Private Planning: Themes, Trends, and Tensions," Chicago, IL:*** July 10–13, 2008. The 13th IPHS Conference coincides with the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Burnham and Bennett Plan of Chicago, a major landmark in modern planning history. This privately produced plan was ultimately adopted as public policy. As such, it highlights an enduring theme in the history of planning, one which has changed dramatically over time. For more information, visit: <http://www.dcp.ufl.edu/IPHS2008/participate.html>.

***"Economic Flexibility and Social Stability in the Age of Globalization," San Jose, Costa Rica:*** July 21–23, 2008. The 20th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE) will focus on the themes put forth by Karl Polanyi in his notion of "double movement." For more information, visit: <http://www.sase.org>.

***"Bridging the Divide: Celebrating the City," Chicago, IL:*** July 6–11, 2008. This joint Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) and Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) Conference will examine innovative approaches to city planning and governance that may help bridge the divides between racial, ethnic, religious and national groups. For more information, visit <http://www.aesop-planning.com> or [www.acsp.org](http://www.acsp.org).

***“Space, Time, and Image,” Buenos Aires, Argentina:*** August 6–8, 2008. The theme of the 2008 Conference of the International Visual Sociology Association is the multifaceted relationship between public and private realms, how they are shaped by human action, and how at the same time they condition our lives. For more information, visit: <http://www.visualsociology.org>.

***Inaugural Conference of the International Society for Cultural History, Ghent, Belgium:*** August 27–31, 2008. The conference addresses a series of fundamental questions about the recent impact and the near future of diverse forms of cultural history, including its precise nature and the types of disciplinary models and/or critical paradigms that can be brought together under this label. For more information, visit <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/isch/index.shtml>.

***2008 Pacific Northwest Preservation Field School, Cape Disappointment State Park and Fort Columbia State Park, WA:*** August–September 2008. The location offers students a chance to work with the North Head Lighthouse (built in 1897–98) as well as the historic homes, bunkhouses, and military battlements of Fort Columbia State Park. For more information, visit <http://hp.uoregon.edu/fieldschools>.

***The 10th International DO.CO.MO.MO Conference: “The Challenge of Change: Dealing with the Legacy of the Modern Movement,” Delft and Rotterdam, The Netherlands:*** September 16–19, 2008. The architecture of the twentieth-century’s Modern Movement now belongs to the past and has become eligible for listing and preservation. This has created the paradox of the “modern monument,” and raised questions of principle concerning issues of conservation, renovation and transformation of modern buildings. For more information, visit: <http://www.docomomo2008.nl/index.php>.

***“Diversity in Heritage Conservation: Tradition, Innovation and Participation,” New Delhi, India:*** September 22–26, 2008. Meetings of the International Council for Museums Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC) celebrate diversity and differences in approach to conservation; recognize that the world is enriched with different cultures (national, professional, social, etc.); and address the daily challenge of recognizing and respecting cultural diversity, avoiding cultural elitism, and integrating reflection into every aspect of conservation practice. For more information, visit: <http://www.icom-cc2008.org/en/home.html>.

***“Attractions and Events as Catalysts for Regeneration and Social Change,” Nottingham, United Kingdom:*** September 24–25, 2008. This conference will bring together researchers with an interest in the role of tourist attractions and events in place-making and the shaping of destinations. As the tourist economy becomes increasingly competitive, the conference examines how “regional capitals” are coming to play an increasingly pivotal role, overshadowing “third cities.” For more information, visit <http://www.tourism-culture.com>.

***“The Right to the City: New Challenges, New Issues,” Vadstena, Sweden:*** October 11–15, 2008. The ongoing constitution of “urban citizenship” involves a set of social demands which are, by definition, contradictory. The conference addresses a number of subjects related to a “right to the city” that reflect on urban policies and the transformation of citizenship regimes. For more information, visit: <http://www.esf.org/index.php?id=4624>.

***“Our Hi-Tech STORY for the Future,” Limassol, Cyprus:*** October 20–26, 2008. The 14th International Conference on Virtual Systems and Multimedia will examine multimedia and virtual-environment technologies and how their applications provide a new medium for the advancement of human expression, interpretation, and preservation of the human spirit and essence of humanity. For more information, visit <http://www.vsmm2008.org>.

***“Digital Media and its Application in Cultural Heritage,” Amman, Jordan:*** November 3–6, 2008. Organized by the Center for the Study of Architecture in the Arab Region, this conference will focus on the opportunities and challenges of using digital media in the research, preservation, management, interpretation and representation of cultural heritage.

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## CALL FOR ARTICLES/PAPERS FOR PUBLICATION

**“Modern Architecture in East Asia: Regionalism/Transnationalism,” 2009 College of Art Association (CAA) Conference, Los Angeles, CA:** February 25–28, 2009. The architectural boom of the past decade has shifted attention within the field from Europe and North America to the Asian Pacific Rim. Is prospering East Asia the future, the other modern, or simply the land where famous architects deploy their most recent innovations? In a world of increasingly global practice, is architecture defined by a building’s location or its designer’s identity? Proposals on interdisciplinary, comparative aspects, either between geographical regions or between time periods, are particularly welcome. Please submit abstracts to Ken Tadashi Oshima at [koshima@u.washington.edu](mailto:koshima@u.washington.edu) and Vimalin Rujivacharaku at [vimalin@udel.edu](mailto:vimalin@udel.edu). For more information about CCA, please visit: <http://conference.collegeart.org/2009/>.

**“Rethinking Theory, Space, and Production: Henri Lefebvre Today,” Delft, The Netherlands:** November 11–13, 2008. This international conference will address questions about the relationships between research and design, critique and performance, analytical methods and planning technique, by focusing on the theory of production of space by Henri Lefebvre and its mobilizations and development in contemporary urban research, architecture and urbanism. Please send an abstract of up to 300 words, institutional affiliation, and short curriculum vitae to Lukasz Stanek, [ls@henrilefebvre.org](mailto:ls@henrilefebvre.org) by June 15, 2008. For more information, please visit: [www.henrilefebvre.org](http://www.henrilefebvre.org).

**Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change (JTCC)** is a peer-reviewed, transdisciplinary and transnational journal. It focuses on critically examining the relationships, tensions, representations, conflicts and possibilities that exist between tourism/travel and culture/cultures in an increasingly complex global context. JTCC continues to welcome submissions on all aspects of the tourism. For more information, visit [http://www.multilingual-Matters.com/multi/journals/journals\\_jtcc.asp?TAG=&CID=](http://www.multilingual-Matters.com/multi/journals/journals_jtcc.asp?TAG=&CID=). The deadline for submission is rolling.

## RECENT CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

**“Analogous Space: Architecture and the Space of Information, Intellect, and Action,” Ghent, Belgium:** May 15–17, 2008. This conference examined the analogies between spaces in which knowledge is preserved, organized, transferred or activated. Although these spaces may differ in material, virtual or operational ways, there are resemblances in their “structure,” “form” and “architecture.” For more information, please visit: <http://www.analogousspaces.com>.

**“Urban Encounters: Photography, Ethnography and the City,” London, United Kingdom:** May 16–17, 2008. Speakers reflecting an interdisciplinary range of photographic, theoretical and research areas explored the nature of past and contemporary photographic approaches to the representation and evocation of city life. They explored “the encounter” both through ways that photographers experience the city and through discursive encounters between urban social science and visual practice. For more information, visit: <http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/cucr/>.

**“In the Garden of the Sun: California’s San Joaquin Valley,” Fresno, CA:** May 7–10, 2008. The annual conference of the Vernacular Architecture Forum used the city of Fresno to address California’s San Joaquin Valley, though an examination of its distinct historic and cultural landscape, including vestiges of the Central Pacific railroad, agricultural colonies, its lacework of canals, and tree-lined boulevards of the late nineteenth century. For more information, visit: <http://www.vernaculararchitectureforum.org/fresno.html>.

**“Developing a Comprehensive Approach to U.S. Participation in the Global Heritage Community,” Washington, D.C.:** May 28–31, 2008. The 11th US/ICOMOS International Symposium examined the U.S. role in international preservation. Its Global Community panel made recommendations in four areas: community building, stewardship, leadership, and capacity-building. For more information, visit: [http://www.icomos.org/usicosos/Symposium/SYMP08/2008\\_Symposium\\_Theme.htm](http://www.icomos.org/usicosos/Symposium/SYMP08/2008_Symposium_Theme.htm).

# Guide for Preparation of Manuscripts

## 1. GENERAL

The editors invite readers to submit manuscripts. Please send three copies of each manuscript, with one copy to include all original illustrations. Place the title of the manuscript, the author's name and a 50-word biographical sketch on a separate cover page. The title only should appear again on the first page of text. Manuscripts are circulated for review without identifying the author. Manuscripts are evaluated by a blind peer-review process.

## 2. LENGTH AND FORMAT

Manuscripts should not exceed 25 standard 8.5" x 11" [A4] double-spaced typewritten pages (about 7500 words). Leave generous margins.

## 3. APPROACH TO READER

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the journal, papers should be written for an academic audience that may have either a general or a specific interest in your topic. Papers should present a clear narrative structure. They should not be compendiums of field notes. Please define specialized or technical terminology where appropriate.

## 4. ABSTRACT AND INTRODUCTION

Provide a one-paragraph abstract of no more than 100 words. This abstract should explain the content and structure of the paper and summarize its major findings. The abstract should be followed by a short introduction. The introduction will appear without a subheading at the beginning of the paper.

## 5. SUBHEADINGS

Please divide the main body of the paper with a single progression of subheadings. There need be no more than four or five of these, but they should describe the paper's main sections and reinforce the reader's sense of progress through the text.

*Sample Progression:* The Role of the Longhouse in Iban Culture. The Longhouse as a Building Form. Transformation of the Longhouse at the New Year. The Impact of Modern Technology. Conclusion: Endangered Form or Form in Transition?

Do not use any numbering system in subheadings. Use secondary subheadings only when absolutely essential for format or clarity.

## 6. REFERENCES

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

*A condensed section of text might read as follows:*

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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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

*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.

## 7. DIAGRAMS, DRAWINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Illustrations will be essential for most papers in the journal, however, each paper can only be accompanied by a maximum of 20 illustrations. For purposes of reproduction, please provide images as line drawings (velox, actual size), b&w photos (5" x 7" or 8" x 10" glossies), or digitized computer files. Color prints and drawings, slides, and photocopies are not acceptable.

Digitized (scanned) artwork should be between 4.5 and 6.75 inches wide (let the length fall), and may be in any of the following file formats. Photos (in order of preference): 1) b&w grayscale (not rgb) TIFF files, 300 DPI; 2) b&w grayscale Photoshop files, 300 DPI; 3) b&w EPS files, 300 DPI. Line art, including charts and graphs (in order of preference): 1) b&w bitmap TIFF files, 1200 DPI; 2) b&w grayscale TIFF files, 600 DPI; 3) b&w bitmap EPS, 1200 DPI. Zip cartridges are the preferred media for digitized artwork.

#### 8. CAPTIONS AND FIGURE PREFERENCES

Please mount all graphic material on separate 8.5" x 11" sheets, and include as a package at the end of the text. Caption text should not exceed 50 words per image and should appear on each image sheet. Please do not set caption text all in capital letters. The first time a point is made in the main body of text that directly relates to a piece of graphic material, please indicate so at the end of the appropriate sentence with a simple reference in the form of "(FIG. 1)." Use the designation "(FIG.)" and a single numeric progression for all graphic material. Clearly indicate the appropriate fig. number on each illustration sheet.

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*Sample attribution:* If the caption reads, "The layout of a traditional Islamic settlement," add a recognition in the following form: "(Courtesy of E. Hassan, *Islamic Architecture*, London, Penguin, 1982.)" Or if you have altered the original version, add: "(Drawing by author, based on E. Hassan, *Islamic Architecture*, London, Penguin, 1982.)"

#### 10. OTHER ISSUES OF STYLE

In special circumstances, or in circumstances not described above, follow conventions outlined in *A Manual for Writers* by Kate Turabian. In particular, note conventions for complex or unusual reference notes. For spelling, refer to *Webster's Dictionary*.

#### 11. WORKS FOR HIRE

If you have done your work as the result of direct employment or as the result of a grant, it is essential that you acknowledge this support at the end of your paper.

*Sample acknowledgement:* The initial research for this paper was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts [NEA]. The author acknowledges NEA support and the support of the sabbatical research program of the University of Waterloo.

#### 12. SIMULTANEOUS SUBMISSION AND PREVIOUS PUBLICATION

Submission of a manuscript implies a commitment to publish in this journal. Simultaneous submission to other journals is unacceptable. Previously published work, or work which is substantially similar to previously published work, is ordinarily not acceptable. If in doubt about these requirements, contact the editors.

#### 13. COMPUTER DISK

If you have prepared your paper using a word processor, include a floppy-disk version of it in addition to the printed versions. Please indicate the hardware and the software used. We prefer *Microsoft Word* on an IBM PC or a Macintosh.

#### 14. NOTIFICATION

Contributors are usually notified within 15 weeks whether their manuscripts have been accepted. If changes are required, authors are furnished with comments from the editors and the peer-review board. The editors are responsible for all final decisions on editorial changes. The publisher reserves the right to copy-edit and proof all articles accepted for publication without prior consultation with contributing authors.

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