TRADITIONAL DWELLINGS AND SETTLEMENTS REVIEW

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AND SETTLEMENTS REVIEW

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Editor's Note

Since its inception, the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE) has had unparalleled support from its host institution, the University of California, Berkeley. In the current economic climate, U.C. Berkeley, like many public universities, is facing great crisis as budgets have been slashed, faculty have been furloughed, and the U.C. system has made movements toward privatization. Even while IASTE remains healthy, these developments are troubling to scholars who have relied on the open, inclusive nature of public institutions as places of inspired discourse and investigation.

Even in the midst of this crisis, scholarship on tradition and the built environment remains exciting and innovative. This issue of *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* explores a variety of geographies and themes, demonstrating the continuing creative production within our area of interest. The issue opens with Amy Murphy's "Future Traditions of Nature," a revised version of her paper that was co-recipient of the Jeffrey Cook Award at the 2008 IASTE conference. Using the virtual lens of Japanese anime, Murphy shows how postindustrial societies need to reorient their understanding of nature away from an unsustainable ideology of resourcism. As in the postapocalyptic landscapes of these films, this will require reassessment of spatial metaphors, constrictive binaries, and false hierarchies. From the fantasy geographies of anime, the issue moves to the streets of New York's Lower East Side, where Lara Belkind examines how newcomers have adopted a strategy of urban camouflage over the last thirty years to blend in and build cultural capital. Here, she argues, claims to tradition (particularly the preservation of traces of the neighborhood's working-class and immigrant past) have been used to mask the gradual cultural and economic transformation of a "found territory" of low-income tenements and commercial buildings into an increasingly globalized milieu. Questions of authenticity are also at the heart of our third paper, Andrei Serbescu's discussion of the changing rural environment of post-socialist Romania. In this case, the sudden opening to capitalism has created new patterns of vernacular building that clash with old village forms. Nevertheless, Serbescu argues, these embody a return to traditional building practices (largely banished under the Communist regime), even if the emerging forms currently lack aesthetic distinction.

Issues of continuity and change also dominate a Special Article from Alona Nitzan-Shiftan that interrogates the effect of the changing border with Palestine on Israeli architectural production. She argues that ongoing construction of a concrete security wall is only the most recent shift in this border, whose physical location has altered the relation between Israelis, the land, and its history; and whose symbolic qualities have led to heated debate over appropriate forms and materials. Finally, in the Field Report section, Yishi Liu explores the domestic architecture of Korean migrants to northeast China as an expression of identity and changing Chinese ethnic and frontier policies. Unlike other instances where hybrid architecture has been theorized as a form of resistance to state power, in this case it has been a cooperative effort by the population and the Chinese government. However, its hybrid quality may still be seen as resisting the effects of globalization.

In the last issue, it was our pleasure to announce that the IASTE 2010 conference would be held in Beirut, Lebanon, and that its theme would be "The Utopia of Tradition." Many of you have received the Call for Papers Poster, which we hope you have shared with your colleagues. The full text can also be found at the end of this issue. We hope you will all submit abstracts and join us in Beirut in December of 2010.

Nezar AlSayyad

Future Traditions of Nature

AMY MURPHY

This article examines a set of contemporary anime films that use the apocalyptic trope to critique the hubris of human development and its effect on the natural world. Faced with self-extinction, the protagonists of these films are forced, as we are today, to contemplate how their traditional views of nature have brought them to this particular precipice. The article argues that we must move beyond the unsustainable ideology of resourcism, and critically reassess many of the spatial metaphors, constrictive binaries, and false hierarchies that have contributed to the current struggle between the built environment and nature.

> *Postmodernism is what you have when the modernization process is complete and nature is gone for good.*
>
> — Fredric Jameson[1]

As evidenced by recent interest in Alan Weisman's bestseller *The World Without Us* (2007), the History Channel's documentary *Life After People* (2008), and Pixar's summer blockbuster *Wall-e* (2008), many Americans are beginning to imagine the potential of a post-postmodern world — one where nature returns once Western industrial progress has reached its own fatal demise. While these works examine hypothetical scenarios where humankind has vanished from the Earth, other signs have also emerged in the real built environment that suggest a rethinking of the presumed hierarchy between human progress and nature well before modernization is complete and "nature is gone for good."

In fact, over the past few decades, urban reclamation projects have increasingly promoted a "return-of-the-repressed" attitude, in which nature is allowed to recolonize obsolete industrial landscapes. Looked at chronologically, one of the first of these, Seattle's Gas Works Park (completed in 1975 to some controversy), now seems fairly suburban in its reinstatement of nature (**FIG.1**). In contrast, one of the most recent, the Highline in New York City, has pushed the postindustrial, return-of-nature aesthetic much further (**FIGS.2,3**). Well received both publicly and critically, the Highline perhaps provides an apt allegory for our times, rendering nature with a relatively high degree of autonomy while still embracing an icon of the industrial past. It suggests that certain post-postmodern worlds, where nature is again more in control of itself, might not be so terrifying after all, and might actually be quite beautiful.

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FIGURE 1. *Gas Iron Works, Seattle, WA. Photo courtesy of Seattle Parks and Recreation.*

At best, though, these narratives and projects can be seen as registers of a desire for a future, less totalizing relation with the natural world. It is not yet possible to argue that human culture has changed in any truly consequential way. It is the machines, not really mankind, that save nature in *Wall-e*; and it was the highly talented horticulturalist Piet Oudolf, rather than nature, who has so carefully replanted the Highline. Historically, real change in any traditional practice or thought usually only follows a change in collective understanding of a context. At the moment in the United States, it is not clear that the ubiquitous environmental crisis has become of critical enough concern to actually change the way people think about their relationship with nature. Nevertheless, in the relatively recent past, several decisive events, including the nuclear explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, have been context-changing enough to make us

question our presumed superiority over nature and the absolute value of technological progress.

To assess these issues, this article looks at a set of well-known postapocalyptic anime, or feature-length animation films produced in Asia, that directly address this transformed cultural and historical awareness. Many films within this genre interrogate our continuing technological optimism and its effect on future traditions of nature. Yet, unlike American environmental disaster films such as *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004), which portray only imagined environmental catastrophes, many Asian anime narratives start from the presumption that an environmental apocalypse has already occurred. They presuppose that the dawn of the nuclear age has already created a transformed, toxic future, an approach which gives these works a heightened level of intensity and urgency compared to their Hollywood counterparts.

While there are dozens of subgenres under the umbrella of anime, this article looks only at feature-length works that depict dystopian or toxic futures in which the human species must adjust its modes of thought and action to survive. The titles include *Akira*, directed by Katsuhiro Otomo (1988); *Appleseed*, directed by Shinji Aramaki (2004); *Ghost in the Shell*, directed by Mamoru Oshii (1995); *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, directed by Hayao Miyazaki (1984); and *Sky Blue*, directed by Moon-saeng Kim (2005).

When grappling with environmental themes, a sense of loss haunts the characters in these films — as it is intended to haunt viewers as well. On the whole, they discount any cornucopian visions of the future, particularly the notion, as described by eco-theorist Greg Garrard, that "the dynamism of capitalist economies will generate solutions to environmental problems as they arise and that increases in population eventually will produce the wealth needed to pay for environmental improvements. . . ."[2] Whether located in the

FIGURE 2. *The Highline, New York City. Chelsea Grasslands, between West 19th Street and West 20th Street, looking north. Photo by Iwan Baan © 2009.*

FIGURE 3. *The original Highline. Photo by James Shaughnessy, 1953. © Friends of the High Line, 2009.*

Neo-Tokyo of *Akira* or the less specific Ecoban of *Sky Blue*, these narratives uniformly contend that the harm done to future nature has been done by all of us as a species.

Many scholars trace the origin of anime to the comics that American GIs brought to Japan during the post-World War II occupation. This makes anime one of the earliest forms of postmodern, transnational, boundary-erasing cultural production. Likewise, with fairly equal reference to both Western and Eastern values, the works discussed here depict nature's wrath as nondiscriminatory and all-encompassing (although some claim that dogs seem to always be pretty lucky in both Japanese and Hollywood apocalyptic productions).[3] Thus, while this article acknowledges that anime is the product of a specifically Asian context, its argument is intentionally larger, focusing on more "transportable" issues that the West can also contemplate as it confronts its own seemingly doomed, unsustainable future.

The article begins with a brief examination of the historical use of the apocalyptic trope in art and literature. It then discusses three dominant Western traditions of nature: idealizing a pastoral age; seeing nature as the threatening Other; and categorizing nature solely as a resource for progress. The article concludes by arguing that this last tradition, resourcism, in fact underwrites all other traditions of nature. It thus creates a global scenario dependent on continuing undemocratic class division, unrestricted material progress, and unsustainable ecological destruction. Its rethinking will be essential if any substantial resolution of the world's natural and social stresses is to occur.

A USEFUL TROPE: THE APOCALYPTIC IMAGINATION

> *Can our imaginations of apocalypse actually forestall it. . . ?*
> *Even the slimmest of possibilities is enough to justify the*
> *nightmare.*
>
> — Lawrence Buell[4]

An apocalyptic mindset has been central to the formation of every major culture's values regarding nature. For at least three millennia, some portion of the world's population has subscribed to the notion that the world is going to be destroyed either by the wrath of nature, the will of God, or more recently, the activities of humankind. As such, the apocalyptic trope has been employed by both sides of the culture/ecology debate through most of recorded history. Specifically for the West, the dominant social organization has been informed by the synergistic triad of Judeo-Christianity, the scientific Enlightenment, and the ideology of progress. As Paul Shepard wrote in *Man in the Landscape: A Historical View of the Esthetics of Nature*:

> *The Greeks and the Hebrews had invented the linear perspective of time. Their new historical awareness attributed*

> *to time a beginning and end, to the world a creation and a doomsday. As the Christians came to entertain this idea, finite nature was symbolic of a greater universal history. . . . The belief in an immanent apocalypse could scarcely enhance any hope for a harmonious future in nature for mankind . . . the division between sacred and profane was emphatic . . . the landscape was enigmatic, dangerous, animated by demons.[5]*

These binaries have underscored much of the West's historical development and its hegemonic practices with regard to nature.

As a form of counterinsurgency, the apocalyptic imagination has also been employed by most every environmental group throughout an equally long history. As summarized by Garrard, "Scholars dispute its origins, but it seems likely that the distinctive construction of apocalyptic narratives that inflects much environmentalism today began around 1200 BCE, in the thought of the Iranian prophet Zoroaster."[6] In fact, the rhetorical idea of an environmental apocalypse has "provided the green movement with some if its most striking successes, [and] several of the most influential books in the environmentalist canon make extensive use of the trope, from Carson's *Silent Spring* through Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1972) to Al Gore's *Earth in Balance.*"[7] Likewise, in *The Environmental Imagination*, Lawrence Buell wrote that "apocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal."[8] Because of the West's continuing attempt to master nature (as much now to avoid apocalypse as to create it), Buell added, "there is no question of it disappearing anytime soon as plot formula. . . ."[9]

As such, many anime directors use this trope to address some of the most difficult issues confronting the world today, including environmental degradation. Paraphrasing Buell's analysis of the apocalyptic form, their works typically portray several themes: 1) a mythology of betrayed Eden; 2) images of a world without refuge from toxic penetration; 3) the threat of hegemonic oppression by powerful corporations or governments; and 4) the "gothicization" of squalor and pollution as an environmental exposé.[10] The opening of one of the most well-known anime works, *Akira*, for instance, shows Tokyo being destroyed at the start of World War III by a nuclear explosion (**FIG.4**). The film then jumps to 2019, when corruption and anarchy reign over Neo-Tokyo and bike gangs rule its streets. The film tells of an insecure biker teen, Tetsuo, with emerging psychokinetic abilities. Like the mythical Akira (the boy who destroyed Tokyo in the 1988 blast with his own psychokinetic energy), Tetsuo begins an epic struggle against the authorities and the scientists who are trying to control his power. Aided by a set of strange, elderly, psychic-empowered children called the Espers, Tetsuo ultimately destroys Neo-Tokyo after the authorities push him beyond the edge of reason.

FIGURE 4. *The nuclear apocalypse over present-day Tokyo at the beginning of* Akira. *Screen-capture image courtesy of Orion Video (academic use only).*

The apocalyptic trope is also valuable to narrative art because of its proleptical form. It allows the future to be contemplated in the present. For most people, traditions define the past. Yet, as these anime films demonstrate, traditions can also help define the future.

Some suggest that the apocalyptic theme has historically been "used to anticipate and, if possible, forestall actual apocalypse."[11] It remains to be seen whether the recent increase in apocalypse-themed films will alter our course toward environmental self-destruction. But the genre reveals one thing remarkably clearly: with the advent of the nuclear age, a significant shift has occurred in our apocalyptic imagination.

Historically, agency (or blame) for apocalypse was first attributed to the supremacy of nature. Later, it was attributed to the will of God. Now, we imagine apocalypse as a byproduct of our own self-destructive hubris. According to Buell:

> The image of nuclear holocaust helped reactivate apocalyptic thinking precisely by providing a more convincing secular frame of reference for the apocalyptic paradigm than had been available since the so-called Enlightenment started to undermine the credibility of Christian sacred history. The nuclear generation probably does differ from its forebears in its emphasis on annihilative apocalypticism (the "prediction of an imminent end to history controlled by no God at all" . . .), but it is a change of emphasis and not a new conception. The contempt of annihilative apocalypse itself is as old as Lucretius.[12]

Regardless of whether they are made in Hollywood or Tokyo, apocalyptic films place responsibility for the coming calamity on humanity's own, secular shoulders.

BEYOND THE TRADITION OF THE PASTORAL

> *The word "environment" is very anthropocentric as it does not allow nature to be outside of human consideration.*
> — Jhan Hochman[13]

Set in a near dystopic urbanized future, *Ghost in the Shell* tells the story of Major Motoko Kusanagi, a government agent assigned to track down a rogue cyborg called the Puppet Master who is trying to defy the limits of artificial life after gaining self-awareness. The Puppet Master now seeks to experience the two definitive aspects of animal species: to reproduce and to die. Like the Puppet Master, the Major is almost entirely cyborg, with her "ghost" residing in an almost entirely artificial body. The film thus explores the blurred boundaries between nature and technology, identity and uniqueness. Ultimately, we learn the Puppet Master seeks to "merge" his ghost with the Major's — to create a new single entity and terminate his existence. Knowing the merger will eliminate her identity as well, the Major accepts the proposal, convinced that a desire to stay unchanged or become too specialized limits a species' potential, and leads only to its extinction. The climactic confrontation takes place in the atrium of a grand museum, where a huge mural of the "Tree of Species," with bacterium at the bottom and homo sapiens at the top, provides a backdrop to the drama (**FIG.5**). During the conflict prior to the "merging," most of the tree is destroyed by gunfire, with the bullets stopping right under the supreme species, "hominis."

Major Eastern and Western philosophies and religions have always positioned humans *within* nature. Yet in the West since Aristotle, this has consistently been based on an ordering that places the physical elements at the bottom and the more intellectual or knowing entities at the top.[14] This view has made use of a variety of visual metaphors, including the Tree of Life, the Great Chain of Being, and the Scala Naturae. However, as Christopher Manes has written, in each variation, humankind's place is "higher than beasts and a little less than angels."[15]

FIGURE 5. *The Tree of Life, now riddled with bullet holes in* Ghost in the Shell. *Screen-capture image courtesy of Manga Entertainment (academic use only).*

As the *Ghost in the Shell* finale confirms, these mappings, though flawed from a contemporary scientific point of view, remain active as a way to retell the story of what Shepard has called Western culture's "four thousand years of struggle to 'lift' man 'above' nature."[16] While some historical figures, such as Thomas Aquinas, have argued that such a ranking predicates human responsibility for the natural world, most authorities since the Enlightenment have used it to justify an ideology of "resourcism" in which the natural world exists primarily for the service of mankind. According to the Manes: "When the Renaissance inherited the Scala Naturae, . . . a new configuration of thought that would eventually be called humanism converted it from a symbol of human restraint in the face of a perfect order to an emblem of human superiority over the natural world."[17]

The arrival of Darwinism significantly undermined the position of humanity at the top of the Great Chain. Yet by that point, mainly through the now well-established modes of Christianity and early capitalism, these visual metaphors had already become embedded in a larger cultural narrative, allowing the trope to remain in circulation. Though theorists such as Manes have suggested that biologists have been too reticent to articulate the actual relationship between nature and the human species, scientists do generally "recognize that humans are not the 'goal' of evolution any more than tyrannosaurs were during their sojourn on Earth. As far as scientific inquiry can tell, evolution has no goal. . . . The most that can be said is that during the last 350 million years natural selection has shown an inordinate fondness for beetles."[18] Indeed, if fungus, or the lowliest of forms on a humanistic scale, were to disappear, the results would be catastrophic because of their interconnection with life forms throughout the biosphere. On the other hand, if homo sapiens were to go extinct, "the event would go virtually unnoticed by the vast majority of Earth's life forms . . . no lofty language about being the paragon of animals or the torchbearer of evolution can change this ecological fact."[19]

Traditionally, Eastern philosophies have depicted a less hierarchical positioning of human beings in nature. Yet, as a result of Western global dominance during the colonial period, Japan, for one, found it necessary to begin to integrate the realities of Western science into its philosophical understanding of the natural world. One example is the seminal work of natural scientist Kinji Imanishi, *The World of Living Things*. Attempting to provide an alternative reading of Darwinist evolution within the more Eastern construct of "oneness," he started with this poetic analogy:

> *It may seem incredible that the earth, originally detached form what is now the sun, which further nourished it with light and warmth, gradually developed into the ship filled with passengers we now see. . . . Now during the course of the growth and development of the earth itself, part of the earth became the materials for the ship and eventually*

> *took the form of the ship. The remaining parts became the passengers. Thus the ship did not precede the passengers, or the passengers the ship. The ship and the passengers originally differentiated from a single thing. Moreover, they did not differentiate haphazardly. The ship became as ship in order to take passengers and the passengers became passengers in order to board the ship. This is a natural conclusion as we cannot conceive of the ship without passengers, nor the passengers without the ship . . . the world has a structure and a function, which derive from the growth and differentiation from one thing. This single source is the basis of the fundamental relationship between everything, plants and animals, both living and non-living.*[20]

For Imanishi, Darwinian evolution and specification could equally be defined around a notion of *difference*, not superiority; thus, every "thing" is defined not by its own limits, but by its relationship to its context and to other things.[21]

Hayao Miyazaki's anime, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, focuses on human choices when attitudes of resourcism and self-elected domination can no longer be ignored by nature. At its core, it is a tale of conflict between Imanishi's "passengers" and "the ship" — in other words, humans and nature. One thousand years after an apocalyptic event, "The Seven Days of Fire," only a collection of human settlements remain, separated by a toxic jungle filled with huge, potentially aggressive insects. Furthermore, as a result of past wars, the air on most of the planet is unbreathable by humans without respirators. The heroine, the young Princess Nausicaä, lives in a uniquely peace-loving, pastoral village, located in the Valley of the Wind — so named because a wind there keeps the air tolerable for the villagers to breathe without assistance. Nausicaä has great empathy for the nonhuman elements of nature, and she can trespass in the jungle without conflict.

Unlike Nausicaä's village, two other urban settlements, Pejite and Tolmekia, are still at war with each other — and, more importantly, with the jungle. Each is trying to steal from the other the single remaining "God Warrior," a lethal biological weapon used in the ancient war, to burn down the jungle and dominate the resources of the land it occupies. Escaping from kidnappers, who are trying to prevent her from stopping the conflict, Nausicaä discovers why the insects and other nonhuman life forms are so aggressive: they are trying to protect a vast network of tree roots that purify the air and water from further human destruction **(FIG.6)**. In the final conflict between the insects of the forest and the people of the three settlements, Nausicaä is able to placate nature's wrath, fulfilling the prophecy that a young traveler in blue would reunite future human beings with nature.[22]

Miyazaki presents this conflict as a showdown between two manmade forms of development (farmland and city) and the most iconic form of nature — wilderness. At the beginning of the film, Nausicaä's village is shown as being idylli-
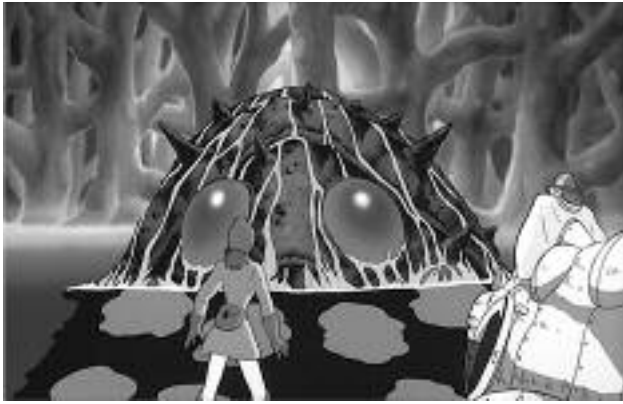
FIGURE 6. *A huge Ohm insect protecting the tree roots below the toxic forest in* Nausicaä. *Screen-capture image courtesy of Ghibli (academic use only).*

cally balanced with its surroundings. Since the villagers wear almost medieval garb, a viewer might think Miyazaki is advocating a turning back of human practices of consumption to a simpler, less destructive time than that represented by the city dwellers. Yet, in an interview about his work and the resolution of the film, he argued that the necessary break in belief systems about our coexistence with nature must go beyond notions of settlement density:

> *The power balance between humans and animals — that was decidedly changed when humans started using gunpowder. Really, though, the biggest reason why mountain animals decreased so much is agriculture. It's human arrogance to say that the country scenery is beautiful. A farm basically takes away the chance to grow from other plants. It's more like barren land. The productivity of wasteland is higher than that of farmland. . . . It's because of the time [we live in today] . . . that I have to even think such things.*[23]

For Miyazaki, depending on dated pastoral ideals is not an option for the future in Japan, a country that is approximately 70 percent covered by mountains, whose land has been significantly damaged by thousands of years of agriculture, and where the population is highly urban.

In fact, many environmentalists cite the pastoral ideal as one of the most problematic concepts with which they must contend. Though often cited as that stage in human evolution when settlement was most in balance with nature, the pastoral, as Garrard has written, "has shown itself to be infinitely malleable for differing political ends and potentially harmful in its tensions and evasions."[24] Raymond Williams noted that the "pastoral has always been characterized by nostalgia"; through it, "we see an 'escalator' taking us back further into a better past."[25] Yet, as a mode of life, the pas-

toral did not endure for so many years because it embodied a true balance between development and nature. Rather, as Shepard has noted, the "struggle to exploit" was merely constrained by the "empirical wisdom of custom and the obstacles presented by Nature itself" — neither of which limit humankind any longer.[26]

In contrast, the wilderness in *Nausicaä* represents nature as a transcendent Other, distinct from the crops and livestock that dominate the pastoral world. And because it provides the clean water and air necessary for all life, its demise as a result of further human conflict would not only bring the end of nature, but of humankind itself. Importantly, the wilderness in *Nausicaä* is not overidealized in its own right; it is portrayed as now and forever toxic, due to several millennia of human conflict and destructive development. In this sense, it echoes Bill McKibben's famous observation that humans have "changed the atmosphere, and thus we are changing the weather. By changing the weather, we make every spot on earth manmade and artificial." By this, "we have deprived nature of its independence, and that is fatal to its meaning. Nature's independence is in it's meaning; without it there is nothing but us."[27]

Yet, regardless of wilderness's compromised independence, both in *Nausicaä* and in our world, its ecological importance still determines our future ability to survive. As the film purports to show, humans must accept that there is still a tipping point, even in such a toxic condition, beyond which we will have gone too far — when nature will return as an avenger.[28] And, as in other narratives such as *Grimm's Fairy Tales* or the 1970s American film *Deliverance*, the forest of Nausicaä becomes an animated character itself, pushed to aggression when humankind tries to conquer it. This moment arrives in the final scenes of the film when the beasts and the insects leave the forest to attack the warring humans.[29] In a classic return-of-the-repressed scenario, a stampeding herd of humongous beast-like Ohms save a baby Ohm kidnapped by a few Tolmekians. This provokes a final conflict between the three human societies and the forest. Metaphorically, Mother Earth has been pushed too far, and must take action to save all life from humans bent on killing everything. When the beasts return to the forest with the baby Ohm at the end of the film, they have not compromised their position. It is the humans who have had to change their ways after the sacrifice of young Nausicaä, killed saving the young Ohm.

The message of *Nausicaä* does not go as far as that of some environmental writers, such as David Rains Wallace, who has written that a future world "purged of humans by human-engineered environmental apocalypse would not be so apocalyptic after all because wilderness in some form would be sure to endure."[30] Rather, the film suggests a future where civilization and nature can be at peace once people come to understand nature's inherent value as the protector of elements such as air and water — which are too

important to be controlled based on humanity's immediate self-interest. This conclusion, if accepted, might move ecological thinking beyond the static pastoral vies implied by many mainstream environmental theories, dislodging the traditional reading of wilderness as an irrationally aggressive Other that must be controlled, or at least contained, to ensure man's survival.[31]

Interestingly, *Nausicaä* is set a thousand years in the future, implying that the first apocalypse was so devastating that human civilization required a thousand years just to reenter a medieval or pastoral period. At that future date, however, the film describes how humans are given a second chance to make the correct choice at a pivotal fork-in-the-road of existence — a second chance to value nature as a larger life-source, not just as a resource (as when civilization emerged from a first agrarian period).

Compared to other contemporary postapocalyptic anime, *Nausicaä* is also a uniquely styled film. Its "look" makes it seem as if it is depicting a medieval past, in contrast to the most other postapocalyptic or futuristic anime, which depict a techno-centric world where humans have either displaced or almost entirely destroyed nature. Yet, even considering the natural world's almost complete destruction in these more dystopic urban films, the presence of past traditions of nature continue — particularly as a hierarchical structure, now extended to "natural" distinctions between humans, androids, minorities and children. Controlled by the same ideological categorizations that positioned the former natural world below the human one on the Scala Naturae, these future worlds correspondingly designate some beings, both human and humanoid, as the "resources" or "property" of hegemonic powers that control wealth and limit personal freedom. The narrative conflict in these more techno-centric films arises when these "resources" are pushed to a point where they must struggle for their own survival, much as in the conflict that forms the basis of *Nausicaä*.

BEYOND THE TRADITION OF NATURE AS THE OTHER

The cyborg will be a key figure in a poetics of responsibility because its irreverence and keen sense of irony are quite incompatible with traditional pastoral, wilderness, and apocalyptic tropes.

— Greg Garrard[32]

For some time, eco-theorists have suggested a direct relationship between attitudes toward nature and toward youth, gender, race and class. Historically, to justify its control, Western culture has viewed certain subgroups of humans as being more "of" nature than others. According to Jhan Hochman: "poverty, femaleness, youth, or rich melanin content become problems primarily through traditional linkage to reified negative nature: living close to nature as a kind

of poverty, nature as a punishing mother goddess or innocent child, youth as wild, or nature as the past or immaturity of culture. . . ."[33] Just as nature is routinely constructed as "raw material," anything associated with nature "gains admittance into culture only or primarily as a material, aesthetic, recreational, or suffering object. People of color/difference, women, the lower classes, and youth, all reduced to labor, gain admittance into culture predominately as means to another's profit and leisure. . . ."[34]

With the introduction of humanoids or androids in future societies, however, the traditional division between humans and nature becomes less definitive. According to Garrard, this may lead to the conclusion that "(i)n the world teetering on the edge of final collapse, the insuperable line between human and animal [will be] undermined in order to bolster the boundary between human and android."[35] In other words, biotech advances may force humans to see themselves in a context larger than that of nature vs. man. Historically, while humankind has been willing to render animals almost human-like, as Hochman has pointed out, we rarely are "willing to think of ourselves as animals."[36] Thus, while biogenetic technology holds the potential of ending nature as we have known it, it ironically also opens the door to finally seeing and accepting our entire species (rather than just those deemed to be primitive) as inherently of nature.

Originally defined by Ernst Haechkel in 1866, the word "ecology" would remain relevant to this new world as "the relationship between biological bodies or organisms and their animate and inanimate environment."[37] The distinctions between living and nonliving things are thus less important than the more primary relationships of things to their contexts (or Imanishi's "ship"). Indeed, in *The World of Living Things*, Imanishi suggested that the roots of words in Asian languages support the profound notion that everything on earth is first a "thing," and only occasionally a "living" thing. Thus, the Japanese *seibutsu* (translated as "living thing") is composed of two ancient Chinese characters: *sei*, meaning "living," and *butsu*, meaning "thing." This indicates that "living things are first of all conceived to exist as things . . . life tends to be left out, and has to be tacked on with difficulty afterwards. This is because this world is first of all understood as a world of things, and this is in fact known as a natural feature of our recognition."[38] The creation of cyborgian hybrid identities in futuristic anime show just how dynamic and nonhierarchical our understanding of ecology and nature will need to be in order to accept the consequences of the future.

In *Ghost in the Shell*, *Appleseed*, *Sky Blue* and *Akira*, youthful characters, females, underclass humans, and cyborgs are all under assault from the same hegemonic forces, typically comprised of some combination of scientific, capitalistic or paternalistic power that has already destroyed nature or the wilderness. And while the youthfulness of the films' heroes might be related to the age of their main audi-

ences, it is also essential in establishing the ideological posi-
tion of the narratives themselves.

Youth at the border of adulthood is typically associated
with a sense of imminent loss. Applying Jacques Lacan's the-
ory of self to the ecology movement, Sueellen Campbell has
argued that we leave infancy "only when we begin to experi-
ence ourselves as separate from everything else, especially
from our mothers' bodies. This happens at the moment we
enter into the network of language, the 'symbolic order' that
will determine what we become."[39] Ecologists, she continued,
"see an experience of lost unity and desire to regain it as cen-
tral to our human nature. . . ."[40] In light of this belief, as chil-
dren we are understood to be in harmony with nature. Yet we
lose that harmony as we gain a sense of self and enter culture
and the network of language. As Campbell then observed:
"Because our culture does not teach us that we are plain citi-
zens of the earth, because we live apart from the natural
world and deny our intimacy with it . . . our desire marks
what we have lost and what we still hope to regain."[41]

Typically, the youth in these films are in a state between
childhood and adulthood. They are no longer truly children;
nor have they gained access to the destructive power or hege-
monic knowledge of adult culture. Their bodies illustrate this
transitional state, being typically a strange hybrid between
ultra-sexual and decidedly innocent. Most cultures believe that
children are, in fact, closer to nature; they can thus hear nature
in ways adults cannot, as does Christopher Robin in the tales
of *Winnie the Pooh*, or as does Nausicaä in Miyazaki's film.

In general, animation is best known for its use of
"neoteny." According to Garrard, this is where "characteris-
tics we instinctively associate with infant humans and ani-
mals," such as large eyes and rounded features, are used to
connote child-like or animal-like characteristics.[42] Yet unlike
the common tendency in American animation to render ani-
mals and young characters as infantile or stupid, Asian
anime typically employs this stylistic metaphor to connote
purity and innocence. It is the vulnerability of these anime
protagonists to both environmental contamination and cul-
tural corruption that defines the emotional arc of the narra-
tive and allows the audience to believe change in traditional
attitudes and actions is possible.

In addition to being youthful, the majority of protagonists
in environmentally dystopic anime are women or female
cyborgs. Though these films tend to fetishize male dominance
and high-tech weaponry, the presence of this technology is
often complex and contradictory, even tragic, when aligned
with these female characters. On the one hand, the technology
continues to symbolize domination, while on the other it can
become the Achilles heal of the main protagonists.[43]

Within the larger genre of anime, female lead characters
are sometimes created for exploitive purposes. But in more
introspective works they can be used to explore central ques-
tions in the narrative. As Miyazaki noted in regard to the
strong, contradictory character of Tatara Ba in his other eco-

logically themed anime, *Princess Mononoke*: "If I made the
boss of Tatara Ba a man, he would be a manager, not a revolu-
tionary. If it's a woman, she becomes a revolutionary, even if
she is doing the same thing."[44] Along with potentially compli-
cating the meaning of hegemonic technologies, these charac-
terizations also allow animators to make quick metaphoric
references to larger traditional attitudes toward nature.

Gender-based ecology arguments tend to begin with the
idea that in Western theology a father-figure sky god was
substituted for an original mother-figure earth goddess. This
was followed by a secondary substitution during the
Enlightenment, when the more bio-centric image of the
world as an interdependent web of pre-Judeo-Christian spiri-
tual practices was replaced by the rational image of the world
as a masculine machine (e.g., as proposed by Bacon,
Descartes, and Newton).[45] As seen in *Ghost in the Shell* (as
well as in its sequel, *Ghost in the Shell 2*, which goes even fur-
ther in debating Western philosophies drawn from Judeo-
Christian history), the choice of a female protagonist helps
explore the "what if" of new technologies — particularly, how
changes and mutations might complicate ideological bound-
aries between civilization and nature. In the *Ghost in the
Shell* series — as in other android-themed films such as the
American film *Blade Runner* (1982) — the female cyborg can
be understood as metaphorically embracing what Brereton
has called "the fractured identity of the post modern world.
In many ways it also symbolizes and articulates the post-gen-
der politics of ecological consciousness, while also serving to
promote a powerful humane expression of eco-responsible
agency."[46] For some theorists, the advent of the cyborg trope
in cinema might force some constricting binaries of the past
to fall away. This is the well-known view of one of most opti-
mistic of techno-focused critics, Donna Haraway: "The
cyborg will not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made
of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust."[47]

It must be said, though (with the exception of both the
more sophisticated stories of *Princess Mononoke*, *Blade Runner*,
and the *Ghost in the Shell* series), that many other contempo-
rary dystopic anime with female protagonists feature narrative
conclusions that only reinforce traditional hierarchies of
nature and an unconditional belief in technological benevo-
lence. One such film is *Appleseed*, which follows Deunan, a
young female protagonist of African-European decent, as she
tries to save the world from destruction. But it is not Deunan
herself who resolves the narrative conflict; rather, it is the
strength of the hyper-masculine technology given to her by
the society's male authorities. On this level, these films
remain consistent with the traditional trope of the damsel in
distress — except that now such a figure is not saved directly
by a specific male authority, but indirectly by the tools of male
culture (**FIG.7**). For the sake of discussion, a direct parallel
can also be drawn from this reinforcement of traditional
views on gender to contemporary attitudes to solving environ-
mental problems primarily through technological means.

FIGURE 7. *The female protagonist, Deunan, within an ESWAT armored suit in* Appleseed. *Screen-capture image courtesy of Geneon (academic use only).*

impact on the environment, they would not need to be so technologically heroic in the end to save it. In truth, the sustainability debate is often more about devising a way to use technology to sustain current destructive lifestyles than to sustain the environment itself. Just as the cyborgs in *Blade Runner* or *Ghost in the Shell* cannot remain autonomous from the technology that created them and are caught in the binaries between technology's benefits and its destructive endgames, nature will also be converted to technology when we use technology to save it. As Louise Westling wrote in "Literature, the Environment and the Question of the Posthuman," post-nature cyborgs might "escape from bodily limitations and environmental constraints," but "a redefinition of our species as beings fused with the technologies and media experiences we have designed as tools seems only further elaboration of the Cartesian mechanistic definition of humans as transcendent."[49] This is not to say that those involved in the built environment should avoid debating the appropriate use of technology in the "arsenal" of ecological cures. But a shift in their fundamental position might be necessary to accept the effect of technological intervention on nature and to more overtly acknowledge what they are truly trying to save.

If one considers the semantics of the common rallying cry "Save the Environment!", one can see a similar attitude emerging — one which promotes the idea that nature, like a woman-in-peril, must be saved by traditional authorities or their technologies. Yet, as current scientific reality suggests, nature would flourish, not perish, without a continued human presence. Thus, the use of technology to try to reverse the damage done by our past position of dominance might be seen, at least, to be logically problematic, and, at most, to be ironic. In fact, nature, like the women protagonists in these films, would not have been put in peril if the tools of mankind had made such destruction possible. Critiquing Haraway's optimism toward technology and cyborgian development, Hochman thus concluded that beliefs in machinery and technology are based on mistaken desire. "It is doubtful that we can be or will be responsible for machines since many of us cede responsibility for even our own and other's bodies partially because of the addiction to and mediation of technology." Even if certain technology is in fact beneficial, in terms of nature, "all tools, even those used by animals, are weapons."[48]

One does not have to be opposed to the use of technology in potential environmental solutions to see how issues of cyborgian identity illustrate the inherent paradoxes of these solutions. It is clear that if humans worked to lessen their

BEYOND THE TRADITION OF RESOURCISM

A way of speaking is, in itself, a way of living in the land. . . . It is not then language per se that ensures the continuity of tradition. Rather, it is the tradition of living in the land that ensures the continuity of language.

— Tim Ingold[50]

In 2005, several Los Angeles-based artists and public organizers created a living art-scape on a 32-acre abandoned rail yard, which they entitled "Not A Cornfield" (FIG.8). In

FIGURE 8. *Lauren Bon, "Not A Cornfield," October 2005: corn, seeds, water, earth, human tending. Photo by Steven Rowell, 2005. Digital Print. © 2005 Not A Cornfield LLC/The Annenberg Foundation.*

this temporary urban reclamation project, the group returned corn, an icon with a millennium's worth of meaning for the region and its various past inhabitants, to a historic site in the city. The group's founder, Lauren Bon, stated that

> [this landscape] redeems a lost fertile ground, transforming what was left from the industrial era into a renewed space for the public. . . . By bringing attention to this site throughout the Not A Cornfield process, we will also bring forth many questions about the nature of urban public space . . . and about the politics of land use and its incumbent inequities.[51]

The initial settlement sites in urban areas are selected based on found natural "resources" vital to future development; those in Los Angeles were no exception. Located within fifty yards of the Los Angeles River, this site, known as the Zanja Madre, or "Mother Ditch," provided the initial water system for the area. But once the downtown became established, this flat basin was claimed by the Southern Pacific Railroad, and became known by locals as The Cornfield. According to Bon, this was "either because corn seeds used to spill off the rail cars and flourish in the area, or because corn used to migrate from the nearby mill just south of the site, or perhaps because of the subsistence crops that rail-riding hobos grew in the immediately adjacent hillside."[52] After the yield from "Not A Cornfield" was harvested in 2007, it was replaced by a temporary corn-related land work, entitled "The Anabolic Monument," representing the continual change inherent in all natural systems (FIG.9).

With its references to preexisting natural conditions, pastoral occupation by indigenous people, industrial contamination, and natural regrowth in the face of continued toxicity, this project provides a useful means to consider the traditions of nature, progress and reclamation discussed above. With its implied references to relocated cultures and national struggles over limited resources, it also helps introduce the final tradition of nature to be examined in this article — the tradition of resourcism and the resultant class and political hierarchies that this tradition tends to produce at both local and global levels.

Confronting class issues within the ecology debate can create as many divisions between ideological camps as it does commonalities. For example, according to Garrard, many "social ecologists and eco-Marxists lament the individualism and pervasive mysticism of deep ecologists, which, they argue, represent a retreat from rational thought and real political engagement." Instead, they argue that "environmental problems can not be clearly divorced from things more usually defined as social problems such as poor housing or lack of clean water. . . ."[53] Yet for these same social ecologists and eco-Marxists, it can be maddening that progressive agencies, which call for the end to human exploitation (Marxists, Leninists, Maoists, etc.) have a environmental record that is equally horrible as that of Western capitalists. Eco-theorist Kate Soper thus suggested in *What is Nature: Culture, Politics and the Non-Human* that one cannot use the political ideology of a particular culture to understand its impact on the environment.

For instance, Soper suggested that categorizing the Enlightenment in only negative terms is to forget that it was also responsible for the notion of inalienable human rights. Likewise, it is a mistake to consider the Romantic return-to-nature movement of Rousseau as solely benevolent. While it inspired "the emancipatory social and political movements of the 1960s and 1970s as well as the environmental movement," its ideals have also been, and continue to be, employed as "a component of all forms of racism, tribalism, and nationalism" — often castigating "'deviations' from social, sexual, and racial norms."[54] To this end, nature needs to be understood as autonomous from human culture. The term "nature" should be used to refer to "everything which is not human

FIGURE 9. *Lauren Bon, "Anabolic Monument": corn, seeds, water, earth, human tending; February 2006–ongoing. Photo by Steven Rowell, 2007. Digital Print. © 2006 Not A Cornfield LLC/The Annenberg Foundation.*

and distinguished from the work of humanity. . . ."[55] This relationship between nature, resourcism, and social justice is central to the themes within a unique Korean work of anime, *Sky Blue* (also known in English as *Wonderful Days*).

Sky Blue is set in 2142. Following a worldwide environmental disaster, an elite group of survivors builds a carbon-fueled city called Ecoban. Yet because of the hundred years of acid rain since the apocalypse, no one in the present generation has ever seen a blue sky. Furthermore, the continued existence of this society depends on a separate class of human "diggers," refugees forced to live outside the hermetic city, who mine the wasteland to feed Ecoban's energy needs (**FIG.10**). A young female resident of Ecoban, Jay, is troubled by this exploitation and its unsustainable social organization. The narrative follows her eventual allegiance with a rebel, Shua, who wants to destroy Ecoban, restore the environment, and free the human slaves.

Though most art forms dealing with environmental issues typically avoid difficult issues of exploitation and class, *Sky Blue* represents nature, and the underclass considered a part of it, as caught between satisfying economic desires and providing for biological needs.[56] While Karl Marx stated in the nineteenth century that every culture sees its land according to its own desires, we today are forced to see something more complicated, viewing land not only as property but also as nature — the literal "ship" that provides our continued survival as a species, not just a society.

Where "Not A Cornfield" references eighteenth- and nineteenth-century agrarian and colonial views of nature (which ultimately displaced indigenous communities and transformed nature into a toxic brownfield), the extreme social divide in *Sky Blue* reflects a new contemporary mapping of ecological injustice. As Western superpowers "export" the production of consumer products to poorer, less developed nations, they also export future blame for the continued ecological destruction needed to produce these products. According to Hochman, in our current globalized economy, there is "too much room to foist our (and we are numbering in the hundreds of millions) ecocidal labor onto others who are available to blame for greater or more direct damage (even when it is our own acts we are more able to change)."[57] In the past, consistent with the ideology of the Scala Naturae, poverty was aligned with nature. In light of the decrease of nature today, poverty has become more aligned with its opposite, pollution. This is attested to by any aerial photograph of Mexico City and its peripheral waste-based communities.

In "Feminist and Postcolonial Perspectives on Ecocriticism," Simone Birgitt Hartmann called this condition "garbage imperialism."[58] The consequences of this global bifurcation will eventually be driven home to the West in ways that transcend environmental issues. For example, a Cable News Network website item recently began "Global warming may test U.S. security. Report finds global warm-
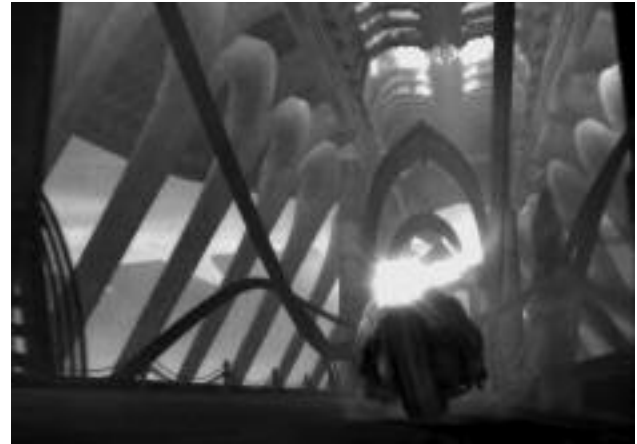
FIGURE 10. *Jay riding into the elite city of Ecoban through the toxic wasteland in* Sky Blue. *Screen-capture image Courtesy of Palisades Tartan (academic use only).*

ing could destabilize 'struggling and poor' countries around the world, prompting mass migrations and creating breeding grounds for terrorists. . . ."[59] As suggested in *Sky Blue*, if Western culture is to survive ecologically or ideologically, it will have to come to see the world as one nature, undivided by the luxuries of global class divisions and past hierarchies of custom, language, or geographic location.

We, the global audience of these anime, are the ancestral citizens of our own future Valley of the Winds, Ecoban, Neutral Cities, and Neo-Tokyo. We are the ancestors in *Sky Blue* who knew the apocalypse was coming. And we know of its potential scope not only from signs of distress in nature itself from the warnings of our own scientific experts. Yet unlike scientific experts of the past who could base their hypotheses on direct empirical evidence, today's scientists can only be second-hand experts on future nature. As Ursula Heise has suggested, today's world involves risks and future situations that no one has experienced first-hand. Relative to the past, authorities today (scientific or otherwise) cannot truly know our future risks, "if knowing means having consciously experienced them."[60] As a result, society tends not to readily accept scientific speculation that challenges past belief and tradition, such as the Scala Naturae, which support the continued ideology of unlimited resourcism.

As such, many eco-theorists and activists fear that too much apocalyptic evocation can have a reverse effect, leading us to do nothing. Thus, in regard to the post-Chernobyl world, Heise found that "the question of how an awareness of environmental deterioration and technological risk can become part of everyday life without leading to apocalyptic despair, reluctant resignation to a new state of normalcy or bored indifference has become an urgent issue for environmentalists and eco-critics."[61] People have lived so long in the shadow of future disaster that they don't live in fear so much

as "dwell in crisis," she continued. "They live with an aware-ness that certain limits in the exploitation of nature have already been exceeded, that past warnings were not heeded, and that slowly risk scenarios surround them on a daily basis."[62] Because, traditionally, humans are driven as much by instinct as thought, Garrard has suggested that the lack of human action toward the signs of a future environmental apocalypse confirm "(Ulrich) Beck's argument that the risk anxiety cannot be relieved or even addressed by 'instinct', the lack of definite threat itself making it all the more pervasive."[63]

Humankind started on the road to destruction because nature seemed like an overwhelming, unexplainable threat to our existence, the ultimate Other.[64] Now it has arrived at a precipice because it has become, in reverse effect, a threat to nature. As examined in both the anime films and the few recent urban reclamation projects mentioned earlier, it is time to rethink working within such extreme binaries. There is no reason to replace the extreme tradition of hierarchy with a new extreme of resignation. We can accept the basic modest truth that "all forms of life modify their context," and then assess our role in managing the inevitable consequences of this modification.[65] According to *Nausicaä* director Miyazaki:

> It's not like we can coexist with nature as long as we live humbly, and we destroy it because we become greedy. When we recognize that even living humbly destroys nature, we don't know what to do. And I think that unless we put ourselves in the place where we don't know what to do and start from there, *we cannot think about environmental issues or issues concerning nature.*[66] (emphasis mine)

We must begin to fundamentally accept the whole of nature as something that has to be connected, something that cannot be further undermined by other divisional ideolo-gies such as individual nation-states, existing class orders, or certain continuing theologically justified hierarchies. We can actually accept McKibben's point that nature is no longer independent, yet still recognize that any further divisions of it will in fact undermine our own future existence.[67] As a species in nature, we can accept a certain level of resourcism, but we can also reconsider extreme or totalizing past ideolo-gies which justified breaking nature's wholeness for our own social and material desires.

If it is true that nature will continue to survive despite the end of human civilization, we do not need to manage nature in order to sustain it; instead, we need to manage our own actions to sustain ourselves in nature. We must also recognize how deep the ideology of resourcism runs and how difficult such an inversion may be. One only needs to con-sider some of the names of U.S. government agencies creat-ed to help with current environmental problems — such as Office of Migratory Bird Management, or the Natural Resources Conservation Service — to see how we have

always highlighted the management of natural resources, not the management of us. Ironically, it is the continual disap-pearance of nature, after a millennium of unbalanced con-sumption, that is forcing us to recognize this wholeness of nature, rather than the predictions of second-hand scientific experts or other cultural authorities. With each species lost due to a changed habitat, extreme drought, the melting of ice sheets, we are finally coming to see the larger connectivity in nature — even if only through the "presence" of nature's increased absence.

The youthful protagonists of the anime films mentioned here are drawn to action and toward change because they could hear this silenced nature before it was destroyed com-pletely. In their liminal state, prior to full adulthood, they were not yet deafened by the common binaries that establish our own apocalyptic traditions.[68] According to Manes, the language of nature has been a language of silence for adults and the adult-like powers in Western culture. Nature has "grown silent in our discourse, shifting from an animistic to a symbolic presence, from a voluble subject to a mute object."[69] He continued:

> To regard nature as alive and articulate has consequences in the realm of social practices. It conditions what passes for knowledge about nature and how institutions put that knowledge to use. Michel Foucault has amply demonstrat-ed that social power operates through a regime of privi-leged speaker, having historical embodiments of priest and kings, authors, intellectuals, and celebrities.[70]

Referencing Heidegger's premise that all language reveals as much as it conceals, Manes has argued that the traditional hermeneutics of the West, developed since the Renaissance, "has created an immense realm of silences, a world of "not saids" called nature, obscured in global claims of eternal truths about human difference, rationality, and transcendence."[71] For Manes, "(i)f the domination of nature with all its social anxi-eties rests upon this void, then we must contemplate not only learning a new ethics, but a new language free from the direc-tionalities of humanism, a language that incorporates a de-cen-tered, postmodern, post-humanist perspective."[72]

Colloquially, we often use the term "nature" — as in a person's human nature — to categorize what cannot be easi-ly articulated, to describe that which is below the surface con-necting that individual to something larger — something that transcends any historically specific ideology or culturally conditioned characteristic.[73] The nature as described narra-tively within the anime discussed here and embodied in the cited reclamation projects is closer to this type of nature, even if it has been forever altered by man's presence over the millenia.[74] While these works might be criticized for not being fully radical enough in their propositions, they do col-lectively provoke a set of questions about future traditions of nature. Most importantly, they offer a glimmer of hope that

humankind is capable at least of imagining them. As Garrard has written, "the real moral and political challenge of ecology may lie in accepting that the world is not about to end, that human beings are likely to survive even if Western-style civilization does not. Only if we image that the planet has a future, after all, are we likely to take responsibility for it."[75]

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16. Shepard, *Man in the Landscape*, p.237.

17. Manes, "Nature and Silence," p.21.

18. Ibid., p.22.

19. Ibid., p.24. See also C.K. Yoon, "Loyal to Its Roots," *New York Times*, June 10, 2008, p.D1, for an interesting article about discoveries in the area of intraplant communication.

20. Kinji Imanishi, *A Japanese View of Nature: The World of Living Things*, P.J. Asquith, H. Kawakatsu, S. Yagi, and H. Takasaki, trans. (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), p.2.

21. This notion of "oneness" as a counter-ideal to hierarchy could be related to the contemporary blurring between architecture and landscape in the work of FOA, Hadid, and others. Yet, as Hochman and others discuss, there are real dangers for nature in any practice of mimicry — as it embeds nature further within the construct of culture rather than giving it autonomy.

22. See also the anime feature *Origin of the Past*, directed by Keiichi Sugiyama (2006), for an alternative noncyberpunk postapocalyptic anime dealing directly with nature/forest as "other."

23. See "An Interview with Hayao Miyazaki," Mononoke-hime Theater Program, July 1997, http://www.nausicaa.net/miyazaki/interviews/m_on_mh.html (accessed July 2008). About the pastoral age and rapid transformations, see also L. White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," in Goftfelty and Fromm, eds., *The Ecocriticism Reader*, p.8.

24. Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, p.33.

25. Ibid., p.37. Many connections can be made to seemingly progressive impulses to return to the pastoral in contemporary urban landscape practices. See Farmlab, http://farmlab.org.

26. Shepard, *Man in the Landscape*, p.236.

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29. For an interesting discussion on the wilderness trope in the film *Deliverance*, see Hochman's "The Forest as Primarily Evil," in *Green Cultural Studies*, pp.71–92.

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31. See the discussion of the limits of conservation as an idea in Shepard, *Man in the Landscape*, p.237.

32. Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, p.146.

33. Hochman, *Green Cultural Studies*, p.7.

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40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, p.142.

43. Hochman, *Green Cultural Studies*, pp.177–78.

44. See "An Interview with Hayao Miyazaki," Mononoke-hime Theater Program.

45. Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, pp.61–62. Shepard, *Man in the Landscape*, p.227, also discusses human technology as a masculine desire for procreation, via Bruno Bettelheim. See also P. Brereton, *Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2005),

p.202, for a discussion of *Terminator 2* and the role of motherhood.

46. Brereton, *Hollywood Utopia*, p.185.

47. As cited in Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, p.146.

48. Hochman, *Green Cultural Studies*, p.185.

49. L. Westling, "Literature, the Environment and The Question of the Posthuman," in Gersdorf and Mayer, eds., *Nature in Literary and Cultural Studies*, p. 29.

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56. See also the anime feature *Metropolis*, directed by Rintaro (2001), for an alternative that explores the future world of techno-apartheid rather than human apartheid.

57. Hochman, *Green Cultural Studies*, p.181.

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63. Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, p.13.

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65. See White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," p.4. Here she describes a paradoxical conversation with A.L. Huxley about the loss of wild rabbits in England due to purposeful introduction of myxomatosis, to stop them from destroying crops, "when the rabbit itself had been brought in as a domestic animal to England in 1176, . . . to improve the protein diet of the peasantry."

66. See "An Interview with Hayao Miyazaki," Mononoke-hime Theater Program, July 1997.

67. See *The Environmental Imagination*, p.294. Buell discusses the "two modes of environmental imagination: a bioregionalist commitment, which looks to "the solution," if any there be, at the level of community; and a globalist commitment, which focuses on pervasive environmental systems or attitudes rather than regional variants," drawing conclusions about the level of optimism each mode can maintain.

68. Interestingly, in contrast to American apocalyptic films, in which a middle-class male is often thrust into saving the world, the main heroes in Asian anime often have an implied connection to traditional power.

Thus, the heroine of *Nausicaä* is the princess of her village, and the heroine of *Appleseed* is the daughter of the country's most important scientists, etc. For an interesting discussion on the tendency for personal abdication of responsibility for environmental destruction to authority in Japanese culture, see the interview with Miyazaki discussing his anime *Princess Mononoke* (1997) in Mononoke-hime Theater Program, July 1997. Also see Imanishi, *A Japanese View of Nature*, p.xxxiii; and J. Martinse, "Where Are China's Disaster Movies?" *Danwei*: Chinese Media, August 31, 2007. http://www.danwei.org/film/where_are_chinas_disaster_movi.php (accessed July 2008)

69. Manes, "Nature and Silence," p.16.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid., p.17

72. Ibid. See also L. Westling, "Literature, the Environment and the Posthuman," p.39, where she discusses Merlau-Ponty's desire at the time of his death to "restore the awareness of the wild Being of the world" and its "voices of silence."

73. See Shepard, *Man in the Landscape*, pp.88–89. Also see White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," p.10, where she discusses the role of animism and genius loci in antiquity.

74. See Hochman, *Green Cultural Studies*, p.3, in which he mentions the relationship between nature as a prop and the concept of property.

75. Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, p.107. See also p.89, where he recalls: "The coincidence of radical anthropocentrism and millennial zeal is epitomized by Ronald Reagan's first Secretary of the Interior, James Watt, who argued against environmental protection on the grounds that God would soon destroy the old earth."

Stealth Gentrification: Camouflage and Commerce on the Lower East Side

LARA BELKIND

This article describes current adaptations of the traditional environment of New York's Lower East Side. It examines how global factors such as expanding "content" industries, market differentiation, and the Internet have reinforced perceptions of the area as real and authentic while opening it to dramatic change. Specifically, the article considers a recent trend of commercial camouflage — hidden shops, restaurants and clubs that "re-present" tradition by meticulously preserving defunct facades, signage, and other physical traces of the neighborhood's working-class and immigrant past. Urban camouflage, in various guises, has played a role in the transformation of the Lower East Side since the late 1970s, and has been employed by a succession of actors, from squatters to global retailers. As a cultural strategy, it has been inherent to the economic restructuring of the area, helping to overcome barriers to redevelopment that have persisted for more than five decades.

In 1995 I visited a friend who had just rented a studio apartment on Manhattan's Lower East Side — an area strongly associated with some of the city's main immigrant communities: European Jews, Italians, and more recently, Asians and Hispanics. The apartment was on the ground floor, in a derelict-looking converted storefront on Elizabeth Street, near the flophouses of the Bowery. Adjacent storefronts appeared vacant or defensively sealed, but we crossed the street to a restaurant that, in typical New York fashion, appeared to have no name. Its awning and facade instead advertised a previous, long-departed tenant — the brittle plastic letters on the marquis reading simply "M & R." (**FIG.1**) As it turned out, the restaurant was known as Marion's, and it was an offshoot of a fashionable, yet funky establishment a few blocks north. In later years, it would mostly be known as the M & R bar. By the late 1990s, it would also be encircled by the thriving shops of an emerging district, dubbed NoLIta (or North Little Italy) by merchants and real estate agents. By then, however, my friend had moved on to a more affordable apartment

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in Brooklyn. Finally, in 2005, the M & R bar was gutted and replaced with a sleek, minimalist restaurant named Plate.

This story of transformation has become familiar on the Lower East Side, where hip new shops, clubs and eateries have meticulously preserved the facades, and even the interiors, of the neighborhood's working-class and immigrant past. At the Arlene Grocery, for example, bands play in a former *bodega*, or neighborhood convenience store. Yet, down the street is a still-functioning *bodega*, with identical décor. Occasionally, more than décor has been preserved. At the Beauty Bar, patrons can sip cocktails seated in the hair dryers of a recently transformed beauty parlor, while the salon's former owner and manicurist — in her eighties — paints their fingernails. Other reclaimed spaces include a dress shop, a pharmacy, a massage parlor, a piano store, and a shop for religious articles.

Recycled storefronts are just one manifestation of the stealth aesthetics and strategies of camouflage that have helped transform the Lower East Side over the last several decades. Such tactics have been deployed by a diverse succession of actors — from squatters and artists, to local entrepreneurs and hipsters, to real estate investors and brand-name retailers. Each has adapted the area's found terrain of old buildings and shops for their purposes, or sought to re-create the aesthetics of this environment from scratch. In the early 1980s, for instance, squatters and artists formed collectives concealed from authorities within a landscape of abandoned buildings. They were followed by middle-class "pioneers" who sought home-ownership opportunities and a bohemian atmosphere in its crumbling tenements and warehouses. In the 1990s, local entrepreneurs claimed the neighborhood's defunct storefronts as sites for hidden bars, theaters and restaurants. More recently, larger commercial entities have moved in, borrowing the area's image and mythology to sell a range of goods and experiences. But whether stealthy occupation has been an expression of coun-

terculture, of solidarity with working-class activism and ethnic diversity, or of social exclusivity and the themed celebration of salvaged material culture, it has been translated by the market into real estate value. This new value has sharpened the struggle for space between new and existing resident groups and land uses.

This article examines stealth practices and their relationship to the transformation of the Lower East Side from the 1980s to the present. It argues that, while general urban restructuring and city policy have been important contributors to this process, cultural phenomena have been most responsible for opening the area to dramatic transformation — even while enhancing perceptions of neighborhood tradition and authenticity. The result is a pattern of gentrification slightly different from that in other Manhattan neighborhoods. The increasingly sophisticated production of information and culture, targeted to specialized consumers, has now made it possible to sell local histories and urban "edge" in a global market — with less mediation by art dealers, and without "good bone structure" (the intrinsic assets such as spacious loft buildings and good public-transit access that were key to the upscaling of other nearby neighborhoods such as SoHo, TriBeCa, and the East Village).

On the Lower East Side, stealth aesthetics and camouflage have evolved and contributed to gentrification by generating value in at least three ways: first, as an expression of bohemian cultural identity; second, as content for cultural consumption and entertainment; and third, as a market-differentiation strategy by global commercial entities.[1] Compared to the experience of other neighborhoods, commerce and entertainment have also been more significant as catalysts for gentrification than art production. One reason is that the growth of New York's information and cultural-production industries has eroded older boundaries between art and commerce. This is well-illustrated on the Lower East Side by the rise of the artist-entrepreneur and by the transition of urban camouflage from an expression of counterculture to a tool for niche marketing.

The geographic focus of this study is the area south of Houston Street and east of the Bowery (**FIG.2**). Areas to the north and west, such as the East Village and NoLIta, were once included in the designation "Lower East Side," but, as a byproduct of earlier periods of gentrification, they were carved away and renamed. Unlike those areas, however, the remaining portion of the Lower East Side will likely keep its designation, because the name now connotes authenticity and has been used to create brand identity for new developments and businesses.[2]

This analysis also roughly delineates three periods of stealth phenomena as they relate to the neighborhood's transformation: 1980 to 1994, 1995 to 2002, and 2003 to 2005. 1980 is chosen as a starting point because in that year it became clear that real estate values were once again rising in the area, after a fifty-year decline that culminated in the dra-

FIGURE 2. *Manhattan's Lower East side and surrounding neighborhoods.*

matic disinvestment of the 1970s. 1995 is chosen as the next watershed year because it marked the end of a national recession and the beginning of a cultural trend that brought new entertainment and commercial uses to the area. 2003 is a final temporal divide, marking a tapering off of new locally based "camouflage" businesses and the appearance of commercial ventures and development proposals by outside investors. The progressive shortening of these intervals suggests that the pace of change, at first slow and harder to perceive, has become more rapid and disorienting. This is particularly the case at present, as successful businesses close and entire blocks are demolished to make way for new developments serving higher-income residents.

THEORIES OF GENTRIFICATION IN NEW YORK CITY

A number of scholars have addressed the processes of gentrification that, since the 1950s, have dramatically altered downtown Manhattan neighborhoods such as SoHo, TriBeCa, the East Village, and the Lower East Side. The range of perspectives includes urban ecology, political economy, close analysis of public policy and private investment behavior, and the ethnography of population overlap.

Writing in the 1980s, both James Hudson and Sharon Zukin examined the widespread conversion of manufacturing lofts to residential use in SoHo and TriBeCa. Hudson

applied a framework of human ecology and the invasion-succession sequence outlined by the Chicago School of Urban Sociology to describe the occupation of vacant industrial lofts by artists in the 1950s.[3] He recounted the initial opportunism of these artists, who rented small-floor-area lofts for which landlords were having difficulty finding commercial tenants. The artists were followed by galleries, which were in turn followed by restaurants, shops, and tourists — which displaced the artists. Hudson's perspective was of an environment, "in which social systems operate," that was "neither static nor deterministic, but rather a changing set of limiting conditions to which a population adapts."[4]

Zukin presented a less environmental and more political view of the gentrification of old manufacturing districts. She described loft conversions as involving a larger contest between social groups for urban space and control of the city's political-economic future. She theorized the emergence of an "artistic mode of production (AMP)," a subtle form of redevelopment that emerged following resistance to the more brutal practices of demolition and displacement supported in the 1950s and 1960s by urban-renewal agencies and private real estate speculators. In the AMP scenario, city rezoning policies and the real estate sector support artists' permanent occupation of terrain formerly dedicated to the production economy as a way to reformulate it as a zone for higher-value residences and a new service economy.[5]

Other authors have focused on the gentrification of New York's working-class residential zones, primarily the East Village area of the Lower East Side. William Sites, in 2003, argued that the public sector had been overlooked as a major actor in this urban transformation. He cited policy decisions and incentives which spurred private-sector redevelopment, at the same time that city government was passing up opportunities to stabilize existing communities through the directed use of publicly held properties and a more rational land-clearance strategy.[6] Janet Abu-Lughod, writing in the early 1990s, also analyzed the political-economic shifts and social polarization that framed the ongoing gentrification of Lower Manhattan. Her ethnographic work followed the transformation of neighborhoods such as the East Village from cohesive cultural enclaves to spaces where diverse groups live parallel lives with competing objectives.[7]

In the 1990s, Neil Smith's work also carefully charted patterns of private-sector disinvestment and reinvestment in the East Village. Demonstrating a link between the two (one traces the path of the other), he argued that dramatic devaluation and abandonment were preconditions for urban redevelopment.[8] Finally, Christopher Mele, writing in the late 1990s, closely examined the nature and behavior of private real estate investors and their impacts on the urban environment. He compared the subtle, longer-term effects of independent property "flippers" to the more dramatic urban change brought on by larger developers with institutional backing.[9] Mele also studied the role that neighborhood images and public dis-

courses played in promoting disinvestment or redevelopment in the East Village throughout the twentieth century.[10]

My approach here is related to Mele's. I argue that camouflage strategies of spatial occupation on the Lower East Side stem from targeted cultural messages that bohemian communities and entrepreneurs communicate among themselves or to the market. My interest is how the value created by these messages — as leveraged by the actions of the public sector, private real estate investors, and larger commercial entities — creates the basis for neighborhood transformation. Under new conditions of market differentiation related to larger shifts in patterns of production and consumption, such cultural messages have overcome more than fifty years of continuous decline and neighborhood resistance to upscaling and urban renewal. My interest also lies in better understanding how value can now make an almost instantaneous jump from culture to commerce, and how commerce on the Lower East Side has become a primary producer of culture.

Taking the opportunity to push deeper from Mele's hypothesis (which is overarching and covers a century of change), my approach is also more ethnographic. Focusing on a specific precinct and time period, I have sought to identify the immediate, local participants and mechanisms of stealth gentrification.

INVISIBLE STORIES, 1980–1994

Known for its history of immigration, social ferment, and bohemian culture, by the 1970s, the Lower East Side was in rough shape. Both its population and building stock had been in steady decline for a half century, ever since the Immigration Act of 1924 curtailed the influx of Eastern European Jews, Italians, and others who flooded into New York during the peak period of immigration from 1880 to 1924. Although a new wave of Puerto Rican immigrants arrived in the 1950s, recruited to work in New York's garment industry, they were soon caught in a cycle of structural poverty, as the jobs they had been promised were transferred overseas.

As a neighborhood, the Lower East Side and its residents also suffered severely from structural challenges that had faced New York City as a whole since the 1960s. Among these were middle-class suburbanization and the loss of manufacturing industries. This cut into metropolitan tax revenues and pushed unemployment ever higher. Then, in 1973, several events combined to push the city even deeper into crisis: a national recession, a sharp rise in the price of oil, and a drop in real estate values. City efforts to raise funds quickly by shortening the grace period for paying delinquent property taxes backfired, provoking an epidemic of property abandonment and arson. The city suddenly found itself in possession of nearly eight thousand abandoned (*in rem*) properties, with approximately five hundred located on the Lower East Side.[11]

In response, New York implemented fiscal austerity measures and an economic-growth strategy that focused on service industries and the white-collar professional class, while infamous "planned shrinkage" policies cut back services to depopulated, low-income neighborhoods. And although the city's economy began to recover at the end of the 1970s, such "dual city" policies continued. Among the long-term impacts was an increased polarization between high-wage service workers and an expanding number of very low-wage, unskilled workers who were forced to compete for space in increasingly run-down areas.

Despite its declining fortunes through the 1950s, 60s and 70s, the Lower East Side remained a home to Jewish and Puerto Rican institutions, cultural traditions, and political activism. Its bohemian tradition had also become firmly established, first with the beatnik, or "beat," underground of the 1950s, and a decade later with the hippie counterculture. Then, in 1980, a historic turning point arrived. After fifty years of nearly continuous decline, property values on the Lower East Side began to rise. One cause was intense real estate speculation in SoHo and the East Village, which pushed artists, squatters, and middle-class "pioneers" to seek cheaper space on its nearby blocks. Stealth aesthetics emerged almost immediately as an expression of this new bohemian movement, signifying authenticity, membership in the downtown avant-garde, and a condition of being "underground," or beyond the realm of middle-class consumerism. This signification contained an inherent contradiction, however, because many of these new residents arrived with very middle-class objectives. In particular, they were seeking to buy property or to create small businesses — opportunities they were finding increasingly out of reach in other Manhattan neighborhoods.

The relationship between this first wave of middle-class pioneers and the area's existing low-income community was complex and contradictory. On one hand, artist-activists were successful in publicizing the hardships imposed on older residents by the city's pro-growth policies and the practices of private landlords. On the other, the new Lower East Side scene attracted young, middle-class residents who themselves became the cause of property speculation and rent hikes. Nonetheless, significant barriers remained at this time in the Lower East Side to the dream among developers (realized in other neighborhoods nearby) of remaking such downtown areas into havens for white-collar workers. Among these were its culture of opposition, the perceived marginality of its ethnic communities, an ongoing drug trade, and gang activities. Realization of this vision would need to wait for a process of market differentiation that would only appear in the next decade.

Many new arrivals to the Lower East Side in the early 1980s were artists. Some purchased buildings at low cost, which they fixed up themselves, and a few started small businesses. They joined a growing community of squatters and artists' collectives, active in the area since the late 1970s.

From the beginning, stealth aesthetics were a trademark of this population. The squatters had occupied abandoned buildings transferred to city ownership during the fiscal crisis. For them, stealth was a means of survival that required maintaining dilapidated facades and blacking out windows to avoid detection by the authorities. But to newer arrivals, such aesthetics also expressed a spirit of adventure. They considered themselves pioneers, and urban fabric that had "gone to seed" seemed a transliteration of the idea of wilderness. Making a home in found terrain expressed toughness and creativity.

Squatters and community gardeners had been tolerated and even institutionalized by city agencies in the 1970s, when they were regarded as a counterweight to drug trafficking and other problems endemic to the city's depopulated and abandoned areas. But as the real estate market rebounded in the 1980s, a pro-growth city administration dismantled urban-homesteading programs and placed a moratorium on the creation of new community gardens on city-owned vacant lots.[12] As the city looked to privatize its portfolio of *in rem* properties to collect revenue and promote development, squatters also came under siege.

Some squatters were influential organizers for the community as a whole. The artists' collective ABC No Rio, for example, broke into a vacant city-owned building in 1980 and installed an exhibition entitled "The Real Estate Show," which drew attention to the evictions, harassment, and other challenges faced by neighborhood residents. Its intent and impact were later described by one of its organizers:

> *The housing stock in this traditional immigrant neighborhood had greatly deteriorated, the result of bank redlining and landlord disinvestment, epidemic arson and abandonment. But at the same time a new group of real estate speculators were moving on the neighborhood, abetted by the city government's planning and policy, setting the stage for a new wave of gentrification. The "Real Estate Show" was organized in response to the harsh economic realities facing tenants in New York. . . .*
>
> *The "Real Estate Show" was the most publicized group exhibition of this period. A street corner press conference outside the padlocked show drew reporters from three newspapers and two magazines as well as the visiting German artist Joseph Beuys. The city felt compelled to negotiate with a group of artists who appeared to represent a political force.[13]*

After the show, ABC No Rio established an arts and community-service center in another abandoned building nearby. The group's name was taken from a worn sign across the street. It had once read "Abogado Con Notario Publico," or "lawyer and notary public," but only the letters "Ab C No rio" remained.[14] This wry adoption of ethnic working-class identity as well as an urban found object was typical of the aesthetic sensibility of artists and pioneers of the period.

Another figure who set a countercultural tone for the neighborhood was Adam Purple, an artist who unwittingly became a squatter when his landlord abandoned the building in which he was living in the late 1970s. As adjacent tenements were likewise abandoned by their owners and then demolished, he sorted their brick rubble and reused it on site to create The Garden of Eden, one of New York's largest and most elaborate community gardens. Adam Purple remained in his building without heat, electricity or running water for eighteen years, often subsisting on vegetables from the garden and $2,000 per year earned recycling found materials. An urban Thoreau and prominent neighborhood personality, he was known for dressing in purple from head to toe. His garden was bulldozed by the city in 1986, despite demonstrations and legal action taken by community residents.[15]

Recycling and foregrounding the discarded remains of an urban environment in ruin had been central to the aesthetics of New York punk culture and art production in the late 1970s. It was carried on by the East Village art scene of the early 1980s, and was central to exhibits such as the "New York/New Wave" show at P.S. 1 in 1981, which featured graffiti and junk sculpture.[16] Several of the artists who converted spaces on the Lower East Side at this time were active in these circles.[17]

The found terrain of the neighborhood emblemized the political attitude of this new group. Many admired its legacy of working-class activism and its ethnic diversity. Influenced by conceptual artists of the 1960s, including Claes Oldenburg, who had created happenings in storefront installations on the Lower East Side, they aimed to produce art outside the realm of elite galleries and the mainstream commercialism of SoHo and even the East Village.[18] The vacant storefronts and immigrant community they found below Houston Street facilitated this sense of being an "outsider." In particular, the neighborhood provided authenticity, or distance from the mass culture and mediated experience of other Manhattan districts.

Clayton Patterson, an artist who, in 1983, bought a small storefront building that once housed a garment workshop, shared this opinion:

> *Being socialized, uniformity. . . . The good thing about the drugs was that they kept that attitude out: the middle and upper middle classes and shi—y values. This was a [working-class, ethnic] community. Though it was less safe, it was a trade-off. . . . [Today,] there is no inspiration; it's no longer possible in this neighborhood, or in New York, to be an outsider. Art comes from the outside.[19]*

Patterson's storefront is his home and studio. He had been renting nearby, on the Bowery and on Broome Street, when he decided the neighborhood offered the opportunity to own his own space. But, instead of renovating, he left the building he bought much as he had found it, eventually only replacing windows when they leaked. He also hired a sign

FIGURE 3. *Clayton Patterson home and studio*

painter who had lived in the neighborhood for thirty years to stencil his front display window, using the same neat gold lettering that might have identified a law office in the 1940s, "Clayton Gallery & Outlaw Art Museum." Today, a padlocked security grill crisscrosses his storefront, making it feel closed and forlorn, and the studio is hardly noticeable within the bleak frontage of the rest of the block. On his front door is the familiar tag of a local graffiti artist, the white spray-paint outline of an octopus. **(FIG.3)**

On different terms, the found landscape of the Lower East Side also facilitated a sense of being an "insider." The fact that new artists, residents and businesses were camou-flaged behind old facades and storefronts meant that simply knowing their locations gave one membership in a small, adventurous, progressive community. And not only did the new arrivals belong to a tight group of pioneers, but preserving the appearance of their spaces helped them feel they were blending in with an existing low-income ethnic community.

When asked why they maintained facades as they had found them, many artist-owners simply reply that they liked them, and that they liked the character of the neighborhood. But several also emphasized that they "know everyone, all the families."[20] Maggie McDermott is a dancer, rock musician, and seamstress who moved to the area in 1981. She had a sewing studio in her apartment until she opened a storefront in 1998. "It looks like a punk rock hippie-gear fetish blender exploded in here," she said, describing her creations. But she added:

> I love my neighborhood, there's a closeness and old-school feel here. . . . [N]ew merchants, they blend right in. Everyone knows everyone, it's lovely. There's a synagogue across the street, and I'm making the dresses for the Rabbi's daughters. . . . I'm making a dress for the Rabbi's

wife, because they wanted to keep it in the neighborhood. It hasn't changed that much yet.[21]

Yet, despite such expressions of solidarity with the local working-class, and despite positioning themselves as activists or bohemian outsiders, the motivations of many artists who moved to the Lower East Side were essentially middle class. By contrast, the very opportunities that attracted them to the area, to own property or start a small enterprise, were beyond the reach of most of their neighbors. Indeed, the concept of "pioneering" in a residential community, even a battered one, inherently separated new residents from existing ones.

As a result, although the activism of ABC No Rio and others helped publicize the plight of the existing low-income population, neighborhood organizations were largely ambiva-lent about the influx of artists. In 1982, they vehemently opposed a proposal by the Koch administration to set aside city-owned property for moderate-income artist housing, call-ing it a strategy to promote gentrification.[22]

In an attempt to bolster the neighborhood against destabi-lization and displacement, in the 1980s, local organizations also tried to halt auctions of the city's *in rem* properties to private developers. And fearing that extensive privatization of city-owned sites would erode any opportunity to ensure affordable housing on the Lower East Side in the long term, community groups organized mass demonstrations on the steps of City Hall in 1983.[23]

Another factor which increased the neighborhood's vul-nerability to gentrification was the city's crackdown on the drug trade and the increased policing of public space. From 1984 to 1986, the New York City Police mounted "Operation Pressure Point," an intensive campaign to break up the con-centrated drug market on the Lower East Side.[24]

Given these larger pressures and policies, the gentrifica-tion of the area was perhaps inevitable. But, as had been the case with earlier downtown bohemias (Greenwich Village in the 1920s, and the East Village from the 1950s to the 1980s), it was the Lower East Side's avant-garde atmosphere in the 1980s that set the stage first for place consumption, then for broader gentrification in the 1990s.

Max Fish, a bar which became the first hangout for a growing community of artists in the area, illustrates a middle ground, or point of transition, between these two worlds. It was opened in 1989 by Ulli Rimkus, a performance artist with ties to ABC No Rio and a number of prominent New York artists. The space had once been "Max Fisch," a store selling religious articles, but it was closed when Rimkus found it with many of the articles still inside. She did little in the way of renovations. She left "Max Fisch" stenciled on the glass above the door, and invited local artists to install work there. She also created an adjoining cafe with a back room for screening experimental films. Both establishments are informal and inexpensive **(FIG.4)**.[25]

Max Fish quickly became a destination for consumers of the downtown scene. It also became the cornerstone of a

night-time entertainment district that emerged on its Ludlow Street block in the mid-1990s. And it made Ulli Rimkus one of the first of a set of successful local artist-entrepreneurs.

Although the bohemian community on the Lower East Side in the 1980s shared many characteristics with earlier downtown bohemias, it differed in important respects. The bohemians of the 1920s, the beats of the 1950s, and the hippies of the 1960s all sought to make a home in an "authentic" working-class community outside the dominant culture. Each of these avant-garde subcultures had a different effect on local real estate values and demographics, however. The beat "underground," for example, had little immediate impact because the beats were relatively few in number and were primarily focused on art production in literature, music and theater. The hippies, on the other hand, were more influential, and established a large public presence as they sought to transform the East Village into a zone of counterculture. The hippie scene was also more commercial, attracting lifestyle consumers and tourists from outside the neighborhood. Yet, the hippies did not come to the East Village to buy property or start businesses, and most had not been displaced from other areas by rising rents.

In contrast, many of the bohemians who arrived on the Lower East Side in the 1980s adopted countercultural elements as a commercial strategy. Stealth tactics had first emerged entirely outside the commercial realm, in such "decommodified" spaces as abandoned buildings, defunct storefronts, and vacant lots. But art that borrowed the found qualities of these spaces quickly evolved into a trademark aesthetic that was used to attract middle-class consumers. Distinctions between art and commerce were inevitably less clear in a community where many had relocated not just to be outside the mainstream, but because other bohemias had become too expensive.

HIP OPERATIONS, 1995–2002

In the economic recovery following the recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Lower East Side underwent significant changes in land use and demographics.

Performance spaces and bars proliferated, while young, bohemian middle-class renters increasingly displaced working-class families. Such changes were ushered in by the growth of information and culture-based industries in New York and a city administration focused on land privatization and the policing of public space. As the neighborhood gradually became safer, new businesses and realtors also marketed "difference" to urban culture workers, who gained social capital for living and recreating in a "fringe" area.[26] Although the neighborhood's low-income community included strong local organizations with active political representation, they were largely unable to stem the tide of change brought on by privatization, a strong economy, and the marketing of marginality.

During this period, the stealth aesthetics and camouflage strategies that had been characteristic of counterculture and dissent — largely the purview of squatters and downtown artists — were adopted by a growing number of local artist-entrepreneurs who blurred boundaries between art, resistance and commerce. Stealth was also adopted by the area's new entertainment venues, and the Lower East Side became an incubator of content for the city's growing media, fashion, culture and entertainment sectors. Stealth was integral to the way these local businesses drew clientele, and it created cachet for Lower East Side real estate.

"Black Monday," the abrupt stock market downturn of 1987, marked a shift away from the dominance of mainstream corporate values in New York City. When the economy revived in the mid-1990s, it brought a boom culture of dot-com companies, small entrepreneurs, and a vast expansion of content industries. City government and business organizations helped facilitate this shift, emphasizing "creative-class" development strategies and providing incentives to high-tech firms.[27]

As a global center of cultural production, New York experienced a surge of employment in information, entertainment, media, and culture-based industries. This intensified competition for space in the 1990s, but also created opportunities for entrepreneurial artists. In addition, it helped transform the Lower East Side from a principally resi-

dential neighborhood into a space of intensive entertainment and cultural consumption.

The rise of content industries ushered in a new era of hyperconsumerism. In this milieu, bohemian concepts of the "avant-garde," "underground," and even "authenticity" were increasingly considered lifestyle options indicative of social identity, rather than political choices. In addition, with the declining importance of large-scale industrial production, cultural intermediaries, often members of urban subcultures, became essential to the search for new niche markets and marketable differences. This process depended on continuous diversification and the discovery of new source material. It also meant that cultures once thought to be peripheral — including that of the ghetto and the urban disenfranchised — could be appropriated within the culture industry as sources of content. New York's ample pool of creative talent was tapped to uncover this new material, and the bars, cafes and restaurants of bohemian neighborhoods, such as the Lower East Side, became its production zones.[28]

Meanwhile, a booming economy meant greater competition for space across the entire city, and a trend to renovate or replace older housing with new structures for the luxury market further constricted middle-class residential opportunities. On the one hand, this increased the flow of residential "pioneers" into Manhattan's low-rent neighborhoods, making it even more difficult for artists and low-income service workers to afford to live there. On the other, the expansion of advertising, media, Web design, entertainment, and culture-based activities created opportunities for entrepreneurial artists. Interpreting and selling cultural trends became a core activity of many new firms. And artists already installed on the Lower East Side sought ways to engage this activity by starting small businesses to profit from the increased flow of disposable income into entertainment and the consumption of atmosphere. In the years that followed, many opened hip restaurants, bars, and small boutiques that catered to an expanding population of youthful residents.

For the owners of these businesses, recycling an existing storefront was generally cheaper than a full renovation; but it was, more importantly, an expression of cultural identity. Most of the new Lower East Side entrepreneurs saw themselves as operating outside mainstream corporate culture, and preserving the built environment was a way to identify themselves as locals. Nonetheless, they consciously engaged in "new-economy" activities, creating and selling trends of cultural consumption, content and hipness.[29]

Denise Carbonell is one such entrepreneur. A pioneer who arrived in the 1980s, she had been a textile designer with her own midtown clothing-production firm. However, she closed that business in the 1980s to become a full-time artist. She bought a corner building with several units and a storefront, and today she lives in one of the units and rents the others. Originally, she used the storefront as her studio, but in the mid-1990s she transformed it into a retail space to sell her work: retro-futurist clothing, textiles, jewelry and

FIGURE 5. *Denise Carbonell shop: exterior and interior.*

mobiles. The store had once been a men's clothing store, Louis Zuflacht, which closed in 1964. Making few renovations, Carbonell has been careful to maintain the exterior, occasionally reinforcing unstable portions of the facade and the "Louis Zuflacht" sign while being meticulous not to change its worn appearance. Still, she decided, for instance, to retain its storefront windows, which were covered with a film, yellow with age. Today, no sign indicates her business; one becomes aware of it only as a glimpse through the open door. She feels her design decisions have helped maintain connections to the neighborhood's past (**FIG.5**).[30]

Carbonell's store illustrates the fine line in stealth aesthetics between preservation and theming. In fact, she was criticized in an article in the Leisure section of the *New York Times* for her lack of a more themed approach:

> The backdrop for [the] cultural mix [on the Lower East Side] remains generally shabby, with tenements overshadowing the re-dos, some of which deliberately retain rundown exteriors to save money or preserve the area's character. . . . A case in point is Denise Carbonell's shop; . . . it's cheerful by day but dismal at night when the security

gates are locked and the only sign reads "Louis Zuflacht," a ghostly bygone haberdasher. Most depressing are the graffi-ti-splashed corrugated metal shutters that hide bars and restaurants by day and shops at night.[31]

Unlike this *Times* reporter, many young bohemians in the neighborhood seem attracted by the edgy allure of "graffi-ti-splashed" shutters. And Carbonell's aesthetic was, by intention, close to that of the squatters and artists of the 1970s and 1980s: it foregrounds the found object and the urban ruin, and is more subtle than most retail concepts, negotiating between art and commerce.

Joe Manuse is another local merchant. A painter and printmaker who formerly worked in graphic production, he lives around the corner from the low-key, inexpensive cafe he runs with his brother. The pair opened the cafe in 1997, in a well-worn storefront with no sign. Instead, a single scrawl of graffiti on the security grill reads "Lotus Club," the café's name. Across the street is the "Poor People in Action of the Lower East Side" community garden, whose members hold their meetings at the Lotus Club. Here, camouflage was employed to attract middle-class hipsters, but it also created a space without overt class associations.[32]

In contrast, Mary Beth Nelson, another artist turned entrepreneur, has been more direct in courting an upscale clientele. She moved to the neighborhood in the early 1980s after attending art school and renting an apartment in Greenwich Village. Together with a group of friends from school, she bought a building, which they renovated bit-by-bit, not unlike a squatter's collective. She got the idea from an artist friend who had done the same. Later, she started a business as a graphic designer.

In 1999, she and several partners, all from the neighborhood, opened a gourmet restaurant, 71 Clinton Fresh Food. One of her partners, the chef's father, had lived for a decade in the building where they opened the restaurant, and Nelson designed the restaurant's facade and interior.

Originally intended as a neighborhood destination to improve dining options for a growing middle-class community, it quickly became a destination for outsiders. With her partners, Nelson then opened two more restaurants on Clinton Street: aKa in 2001, and Alias in 2002. Both are aptly named because they preserve the facades of their previous occupants, a ladies' dress shop and a Puerto Rican diner. Ironically, Alias had already been the name of the Puerto Rican diner. Originally, it had been "Elias Restaurant," but the prior owner had replaced the "E" with an "A" (FIG.6).

Nelson made minimal changes to these facades, too — and not just because it was cheaper to do so. In fact, not altering them probably decreased her revenue, because the older storefronts encroach on interior square footage and seating capacity. This is particularly the case at aKa. Formerly Kupersmith's, a ladies' wear outlet, it maintains the old recessed entry where the name "Kupersmith's" is still embedded in the exterior terrazzo paving. Nelson explained the design was based on a "recycling aesthetic — of grafting onto and transforming." Her intent was to identify the restaurant with the existing character of the neighborhood and create a spot for locals. Besides, she said, camouflage is the "ultimate New York insider" design strategy.[33] Indeed, New York has a long history of downtown establishments that have promoted exclusivity and secretiveness — from the "member's only" clubs once operated by the Jewish and Italian mafias to more recent bars and restaurants that conceal their identities to appeal to an insider clientele or create mystique.

The group's three restaurants have also sparked the formation of a restaurant row on Clinton Street. In the last several years the street has come to be lined with sleek, upscale establishments. And, as a catalyst for high-end urban renewal, these Clinton Street restaurants have now attracted developers of luxury residential properties and boutique hotels to the area.

Entrepreneurs like Nelson seem ambivalent about neighborhood change; they see it as a constant condition in

FIGURE 6. *Alias restaurant in a recycled diner. A real Puerto Rican diner.*

New York City. Although conscious of her role in the gentri-
fication process, Nelson explained there is an "effort in the
neighborhood not to have a line between communities." She
added that a larger restaurant which opened recently seemed
"like a spaceship from outside the neighborhood. I wish
things would freeze — it's sad to see families leave, and I'd
rather see small businesses than chains. On the other hand,
it's safer. We used to get mugged and robbed."[34]

The expanding economy of the 1990s also shaped the
Lower East Side not simply as a place to consume the prod-
ucts and services of new entrepreneurs, but as a cultural
space which could be consumed for its atmosphere. The
sense of the neighborhood as a cultural destination was
greatly assisted by a cluster of fringe storefront theaters and
music venues that added to a layered experience of working-
class authenticity, counterculture, and urban edge — and by
a proliferation of bars, the ultimate purveyors of ambiance.

In particular, Ludlow Street became a center for experi-
mental performance and music venues. One of the first the-
aters there, Todo Con Nada, opened in a storefront in 1988.
It was, in fact, conceived and subsidized by the building's
owners, local developers who hoped a cultural use would add
value to the block. In addition to giving potential tenants
and investors the impression that the theaters were bringing
the neighborhood "up," the venues provided middle-class
patrons with a frisson of being brought "down," or at least
"out," on a countercultural, urban fringe.

> "When we first opened in 1993," said Surf Reality theater
> founder Robert Prichard, "there was a brothel in our base-
> ment and the space now occupied by the Bluestockings
> Bookstore was a crack deli. The building also featured a
> pawn shop. It's like we were a downtown mall for out-
> laws. Theoretically, one could boost some goods, redeem
> them for cash at the pawnshop, cop a little blow at the
> deli, grab a 'date' from the basement, and then come
> upstairs to see a show."[35]

Both "up" and "down" sensations could thus be marketed to
create image and value. And by 1999, about a dozen store-
front theaters were clustered in the area, including Collective
Unconscious, an artist's collective operating as an incubator
for experimental performance. But by 2004, all of these had
closed, displaced as their buildings were sold for redevelop-
ment.[36] The developers' gamble with entertainment and cul-
ture as a real estate strategy had paid off (FIG.7).

A rash of music clubs opened in the mid-1990s as
well. Some had been forced out of the East Village by high
rents; others developed in synergy with the nearby music
scene on the Bowery. The Bowery had long been the loca-
tion of CBGB, a core venue in the 1970s punk and glam
scenes. However, in the late 1990s, new Lower East Side
clubs, such as Luna Lounge and Arlene Grocery (opened in
1995 and 1996, respectively), helped launch the careers of

FIGURE 7. *Collective Unconscious theater collective and the graffiti
response to its displacement.*

successful new musicians like Elliott Smith and the Strokes.
Casual and cheap, these venues were staffed and frequented
by a regular crowd of musicians. Luna Lounge had its own
record label, and Arlene Grocery featured a monthly "punk-
rock karaoke" night, well attended by CBGB-era musicians.[37]
These venues supplied an experience of authentic fringe
culture that for many was the principal attraction of the
Lower East Side.

Stealth aesthetics were a key part of this experience.
Luna Lounge, for example, preserved the industrial frontage
of a defunct Chinese herb warehouse — with no signage,
just a large, dark glass window.[38] Arlene Grocery adopted the
name and hand-painted sign of the *bodega* it replaced, and at
first might be confused with another *bodega* down the street
with a sign by the same artist (FIG.8).

Like the independent theaters, these music venues rep-
resented an interim step in the gentrification process.
Several have now closed, or are facing closure due to spiking
rents. Luna Lounge closed in March 2005, to make way for
new condominiums. CBGB and Tonic have also closed.[39]
Unlike the restaurants on Clinton Street, which attracted lux-
ury residential development, these music venues often con-
flicted with residences because of noise issues. Most

FIGURE 8. *Arlene Grocery in a recycled* bodega. *A real* bodega.

occupied single-story structures that have since become prime targets for higher-density redevelopment.

In addition to performance spaces, in the mid-1990s, the Lower East Side experienced a proliferation of bars. This also created conflict with the existing residents, and drove the Community Board to recommend a moratorium on new liquor licenses.[40] Whereas a decade earlier, working-class residents feared gentrification but shared a desire for quality-of-life improvements with the new middle-class pioneers, in this second wave of stealth development they now faced the prospect of being overrun by bars and entertainment venues. Not only were long-time residents being displaced by rent hikes, but some were now being driven out by noise and nuisance.[41]

Nonetheless, bars were some of the most creative businesses employing camouflage to create image and mystique. For example, in the mid-1990s, one owner opened two theme bars, one which recycled a recently defunct beauty shop, and the other a pharmacy. Named Beauty Bar and Barmacy, they are high-kitsch celebrations of a not-so-distant working-class past. At Beauty Bar, a rockabilly subculture hangs out under the hair dryers while the former owner, in her late eighties, gives happy-hour manicures. Deb Parker, the bar's proprietor, has dubbed her approach to the Lower East Side's built environment "hysterical preservation" **(FIG.9)**.[42]

Camouflage could also be used to heighten exclusivity. The Milk & Honey bar is located behind a dilapidated facade disguised as a clothing alteration shop, and it seats only a dozen people. Its address and phone number are kept unlisted, so potential patrons must first obtain these from friends. Protocol is to phone when in the neighborhood to request a spot. When space becomes available, the bar phones back with its address and directions. "The service I'm offering is an idiot-free environment safe from celebrity sycophants and frat boys," explained its owner. "Unfortunately, hiding my bar was the only way I could think of to do it these days."[43] This approach is also a means of preserving business longevity; a

bar can quickly lose its following if it is deemed to have been discovered by the wrong crowd (i.e., a suburban "b & t," or "bridge and tunnel," demographic).

Finally, other establishments frame the illicit or voyeuristic. This is the case of Happy Ending, a bar which opened in a Chinese massage parlor shut down by the police. Happy Ending was a euphemism for the "total-release" massage reportedly delivered on the premises, and the bar maintains the awning and frontage of its former occupant, imprinted with Chinese characters. Nothing at all is visible from the street which might reveal its new use. Meanwhile, inside the front door, perched on the reception counter, a video monitor plays a surveillance tape found when the new owners took over the space, which shows the coming and goings of former Johns. Bar patrons proceed downstairs to the old steam and massage rooms to hang out, while a DJ spins grooves **(FIG.10)**.

Happy Ending also illustrates the subtle visual language of insider hip. According to the manager, from time to time

FIGURE 9. *Beauty Bar.*

a group of middle-aged Chinese men will come through the front door and seem puzzled. Yet they appear to be the only ones. Though "invisible" to an uninitiated neighborhood resident, the bar is highly visible among global trend-setters. It has an elaborate website and is recommended on a number of Internet culture sites and weblogs. This is its description on Superfuture.com, a site with listings for New York, Tokyo, Sydney, and Shanghai that describes itself as "urban cartography for global shopping experts":

> converted massage parlour and hot lower east night spot . . .
> best on tuesdays and fridays. [hard line hipsters]. total
> wild shenanigans down here. gets shut down by the cops
> at least once a month which is always a good sign.[44]

Happy Ending's strategies of camouflage, voyeurism, and urban edge work in several ways. First, they provide a folklore likely to be spread by word of mouth and picked up by diverse media. Its owner, Oliver Pihlar, described it this way: "In New York, there is so much competition that a bar can have a great location, great food, and great atmosphere and will invariably fail. It needs something else to make it stand out — a good story."[45] Second, Happy Ending can be invisible from the street because it depends on nontraditional forms of advertising. The expansion of information technology and communications — and the number of New Yorkers employed in these sectors — has given rise to powerful new methods of attracting clientele. In particular, "viral marketing" — word of mouth transmitted via Internet, email, cell phones, and pagers — can now be highly efficient. Unlike traditional forms of advertising, it contains an implied endorsement because it is conveyed through personal contacts.[46] Using such intimate networks, a business like Happy Ending can reach a specific consumer group and attract an "in-crowd" that enhances its reputation.

Viral marketing has now become widespread as a way to publicize events in New York. A free concert by a popular indie performer was recently held for which no public announcement was made; nonetheless, through electronic word of mouth, all entry passes were claimed within twenty minutes. Similarly, one local musician no longer advertises her perfor-

mances in advance, but simply sends out text messages that say, "I'm doing a show at club x *right now*. Come see me."[47]

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> *As the culture industry reaches deep into the urban milieus*
> *of street corners, alleyways, basement bars and clubs to*
> *appropriate content to merchandise to consumers across the*
> *globe, it presents new opportunities for the urban redevelop-*
> *ment of neighborhoods where such forms originate.*
> — Christopher Mele[48]

As the examples in the last section illustrate, in the 1990s, the Lower East Side became a key source of "content" for new networks of communication. It also became influential in shaping patterns of cultural production and spatial consumption. In physical terms, this translated into new value for local commercial and real estate ventures and further gentrification.

City policies during this period reinforced these trends. The priorities of the Giuliani administration were to make New York attractive to mainstream commerce, entertainment and tourism. This meant lowering crime and restricting the uses of public space.

To many residents of the Lower East Side, however, these policies seemed primarily aimed at restricting the activities of the poor. Although they were happy with the increased pressure on the drug trade, they were concerned about the potential for rapid gentrification. In addition, the attempt to establishing a more ordered public realm also limited informal uses of public space, such as street vending and hanging out, which had long been part of neighborhood culture.

Countercultural activities that were inclusive of both middle-class bohemians and the local working class also came under attack. This was especially true with the sale and demolition of community gardens. In 1999, after the destruction of a number of well-loved gardens, the Giuliani administration announced the scheduled auction of 112 more. Responding to critics in a weekly radio address, the mayor stated, "This is a free-market economy. The era of communism is over."[49]

Such policies increasingly pushed bohemian culture indoors, isolating it from it host ethnic community. And with private clubs and bars becoming the principal sites of cultural experimentation, bohemian culture, by default, became more commercial, controlled and packaged as a lifestyle for culture-industry workers.

Community organizations and Lower East Side City Council member Margarita Lopez did make minor headway at the end of the 1990s in stemming the area's gentrification. They persuaded the city to allocate some publicly held sites for nonprofit housing and social services. State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer also sued the city to prevent further garden auctions. Nonetheless, the administration's determination to sell the vast majority of city-owned properties to private developers undermined residents' efforts to secure a long-term stock of affordable housing. This destabilized the low-income community and drove real estate values even higher.

Currently, in the most recent phase of the Lower East Side's transformation, larger commercial players have entered the scene. Two new trends typify new transformation. On one hand, larger retail and entertainment ventures have begun to appropriate and reconfigure the stealth strategies that were once the trademark of neighborhood bohemians and local entrepreneurs, and they have begun to "theme" the neighborhood's heritage of working-class activism and ethnic diversity to promote their products. On the other, previously hidden processes of capital accumulation have now become overt in the form of luxury condominiums, boutique hotels, and sleek, high-end restaurants. These new narratives have added to the play of visibility and invisibility that still dominates the experience of the neighborhood.

Market differentiation is behind the first trend. Larger commercial entities have chosen to locate on the Lower East Side and adopt its imagery in order to reach downtown niche consumers. But their presence has driven up local retail rents, threatening to displace the small businesses they emulated.

Recent retail trends now aim to create "member's-only" exclusivity, to inexpensively reach new urban niche markets, and to create media buzz. They frequently depend on viral marketing — email lists and word of mouth — rather than conventional advertising.[50]

One new-generation stealth retailer on the Lower East Side, Alife, has partnered with multinational companies such as Levi's and Nike to reach a young urban niche market. Alife is referred to as a "hipster think tank" and specializes in the sale of limited-edition sneakers, such as those commissioned from a graffiti artist by Nike. Tucked into the center of a rough block, the store is only just visible from the sidewalk if one peers through a locked glass door and down a corridor. The interior appears elegant from the street, but the store is almost impossible to find or enter. If you get the staff's attention, they will eventually buzz you in. Even the website requires a member ID. Alife communicates to cus-

tomers through an email list of insiders and through urban culture websites such as Superfuture.com.[51]

In addition to this practice of "massclusivity," Alife has branched into "guerrilla retail," collaborating with Levi's on a store designed to remain open for only one month and be advertised exclusively by word of mouth. This concept was initiated by a high-end retailer, Vacant, which has succeeded by opening improvised shops in empty storefronts on the fringes of gentrifying areas of global cities. Comme des Garcons has followed suit, positioning the idea as a 1960s-era art "happening."[52] Ironically, the intention of storefront happenings, such as those at Claes Oldenburg's 1961 "The Store," was to remove art from the realm of commercialism and place it in relation to the city.[53] By contrast, the Comme des Garcons iteration recontextualizes the city as a thematic concept for retail.

Another indication that larger investment entities have arrived is the replacement of built-environment preservation with its re-creation. One example is Schiller's Liquor Bar, a new restaurant opened by the owner of Balthazar and Pastis, upscale theme restaurants in SoHo and the Meatpacking district. Originally a theater set-designer, the owner, Keith McNally, designed Schiller's as the re-enactment of a typical Lower East Side blue-collar eatery, calling it a "low-life bar and restaurant."[54] Its unassuming white tile, copper plumbing, and industrial glass recall a neighborhood restaurant from the 1930s.

Such theming of place is a growing local phenomenon. The renaming of Allen Street in 2004 as the "Avenue of the Immigrants," as well as the 2003 dedication of "Joey Ramone Place" on the Bowery in front of the former site of the CBGB music club are telling signs that immigrants and punk rockers may not be visible on the rapidly gentrifying Lower East Side much longer.[55]

Also characteristic of a new era is the expansion of the role of artist-entrepreneur to artist-CEO. Two prominent cultural personae who have recently adopted the cultural identity of the neighborhood are Dov Charney, the CEO of LA-based, "sweatshop-free," American Apparel, a t-shirt and jean clothing chain, and Moby, a globally successful pop musician and political activist. Both have apartments in the area and have recently opened local retail stores. Moby's shop, TeaNY, sells vegan food and tea, while the Lower East Side branch of American Apparel calls itself a "gallery" and displays photographs Charney himself has taken of a variety of working-class neighborhoods and of Hispanic factory employees modeling clothing. The store has a pro-labor statement carefully stenciled on its minimalist picture window (**FIG. 11**). It reads:

> *We are committed to making clothing of the highest quality while pioneering industry standards of social responsibility in the workplace. Our goal is that everyone touched by the business process has a positive experience.[56]*

Making direct reference to the Lower East Side's history as a center of garment production and the labor movement, as well as the local Hispanic population once employed in the garment industry, American Apparel utilizes the neighborhood as a brand. Meanwhile, the chain's presence has driven up local rents, suggesting that small area businesses "touched by the business process" (to quote the current euphemism) may not currently be having a positive experience. These are the sentiments of one local *bodega* owner:

> *I've been living here about 21 years, in this building. That's why we started the business here. . . . I plan to stay here but rent is crazy now. . . . The worst, this is what happens right now with the rent. Everybody's scared, because this is going to chase them out.*[57]

Not only does Charney's approach further conflate modes of political activism, art and commerce, but the company might be said to practice a politics of "thinking locally but acting globally." While American Apparel has created a domestic manufacturing model for its operations which avoids overseas outsourcing, it is potentially displacing local businesses from the very community it has adopted for its working-class identity.

The second trend ongoing in the neighborhood in the most recent phase of its restructuring is a sudden rash of new luxury development. This has begun to reveal another stealthy process that has been ongoing for some time: the accumulation of real estate value, incrementally generated by the developments of bohemians, small entrepreneurs, and larger

commercial entities since the 1980s. The new value has been bolstered by public policies and by property flipping, which gradually changes an area's base economics.

Change of this nature is not easily visible in a built environment of tenements, vacant lots, and low-rise industrial sheds. But successive sales build real estate value with small profit margins, often without disrupting a building's physical condition or tenancy, until values reach a threshold where further profit can only come through major construction or renovation.[58] This threshold is currently becoming visible on the Lower East Side, encouraged by the sales of major publicly owned urban renewal sites to private developers for the construction of luxury condominiums and an upscale Whole Foods grocery.[59]

Unexpectedly, the high-end urban renewal envisioned by the real estate sector since the 1920s is being achieved as an internal neighborhood process, rather than one imposed by such powerful agents of government intervention as Nelson Rockefeller or Robert Moses. Local artists, entrepreneurs, and small speculators have gradually generated value and an opening for outside investors to profit from the creation of a new residential district for the professional class. This opening has been widened by successive pro-growth city administrations and sustained by the expansion of service and culture industries. In the end, stealth aesthetics and camouflage strategies have not simply concealed a world of bohemians and artists, but an underlying increase in real estate value.

HYBRID ALTERNATIVES

Working-class residential districts such as the Lower East Side present significant barriers to upscaling. Poor-quality housing stock, small lots, and the large number of individual building owners make both conversions and the assembling of parcels for new luxury developments a challenge. Furthermore, existing communities with strong local organizations and political representation are frequently well positioned to oppose or make demands of new development. For this reason, the mechanisms that have increased market value on the Lower East Side have taken a powerfully subtle guise. Cultural images and mythology and new forms of commerce and entertainment have helped create demand for low-quality, inaccessible tenement built fabric with seemingly little intrinsic value. This demand has, in turn, created an opening for larger, more dramatic urban development.

The notion of tradition has been central to the development of such images and mythology. In the earlier stages of this transformation, tradition provided a cultural identity of outsiderness to middle-class urban pioneers. Later, the re-presentation of tradition and authenticity supplied an identity of insiderness to hip consumers, both locally and globally through websites and other forms of electronic networking. Lastly, local tradition has provided brand identity for larger forms of global niche retail and entertainment.

Yet it is interesting to notice hybrid identities emerging in the course of this process — a fetish-wear seamstress who makes dresses for a neighboring Rabbi's daughters, for example. In addition, several hybrid strategies have emerged which hedge against displacement but are not so far from the stealth phenomena they resist. Perhaps these approximate a kind of third space or "third place" being negotiated by the Lower East Side's new arrivals — a space between appropriated and found tradition.[60]

In this regard, the emergence of sophisticated information technology and of a large pool of users in New York has both facilitated viral marketing campaigns and created the potential for viral activism and knowledge production. One example is the concentration of bloggers on the Lower East Side who document the neighborhood's transformation. Locals email "tips" to blogs spread the word about the progress of proposed new developments. This information pool helps residents better understand forces of change at work in their neighborhood. And it makes perceptible flows of capital in the landscape that may not yet be obvious.[61]

Another goal of stealth gentrifiers that has become a priority for activists is property ownership. ABC No Rio recently negotiated to purchase its community-service and arts facility from the city, allowing it to retain a foothold for countercultural activism in the neighborhood. Community-garden activists have also received assistance from the state attorney general's office to preserve a number of neighborhood green spaces.[62]

Lastly, one local arts group has helped preserve traditional ethnic uses by finding an expanded role for them, as the area has been transformed into a destination for tourism, entertainment, and culture. The Artists Alliance now manages a gallery called The Matzo Files in the still-active Streit's matzo factory. Streit's is the oldest family-operated matzo bakery in the United States. The Matzo Files gallery is, appropriately, a set of artworks in flat files (**FIG.12**).[63]

FIGURE 12. *The Matzo Files gallery in Streit's matzo factory.*

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On Change and Adaptation: Rural Inhabitation during the Romanian Post-Socialist Transition

ANDREI SERBESCU

This article examines the Romanian rural environment after twenty years of never-ending transition toward the promised land of capitalism. Since the end of the dictatorial regime that lasted nearly half a century, changes in rural building have challenged the condition of Romania's traditions. New social phenomena like migration and tourism now overlap a confused, ambiguous search for greater comfort and the desire for social exposure. The article suggests that the apparently malformed visions of the new vernacular are just one of many intermediate phases that a tradition goes through in times of transition. Adapting and improvising have always best defined the spontaneous Romanian rural spirit.

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Without being seized by a fascination (or obsession) with "ends," as discussed by Nezar AlSayyad in his essay "The End of Tradition, or the Tradition of Endings?" it is important to acknowledge that Romanian rural society is presently in an extremely delicate situation.[1] In a relatively short span of time, the post-socialist transition has brought a brutal series of alterations to a way of life that the former totalitarian regime would have preferred to have abolished.[2] This social and moral transfiguration — a "disfigurement" in many meanings of the term — has obviously involved the building process. Indeed, this process is nothing but the reflection of a rural way of life that is still deprived of socioeconomic catalysts, or that has, at best, been recatalyzed. The consequence is that much new vernacular building in rural areas seems disoriented, ambiguous, and even grotesque, a degradation of what has previously been considered "authentic" in the "traditional" environment.[3] This article argues that, although the vernacular may not "look" like it used to, what matters is its potential for reinventing itself and its capacity for inheriting and spreading a certain meaning of and connection to place.

Being indissolubly linked to inhabitation and to new constraints or freedoms, the new vernacular reflects the reality of a present way of life that is undoubtedly different from the former one. In this manner, it participates in the active redefinition of modernity. As Bernd Hüppauf has noticed, the triumph of modernity does not necessarily mean the end of the vernacular:

> *. . . the assumption that the triumph of the modern invariably spells the death of the vernacular, although widespread, is difficult to sustain. Rediscovered and raised to the level of the theoretical reflection, it [the vernacular] is gaining a surprising significance and the potential to contribute to the ongoing reconstitution of images of modernity and modernism.*[4]

The study of tradition and vernacular architecture in Romania is a relatively undeveloped field with little recent fieldwork. Especially considering the uncertain future of many valuable vernacular ensembles and buildings, any work in this field is useful and opportune — whether it engages the traditional environment from a historical, sociological, geographical or architectural perspective. In this article, however, I suggest that another perspective is also necessary. In addition to historical studies that sound a legitimate alarm over the deterioration of old vernacular buildings, it is absolutely necessary to become immersed in close analysis of the omnipresent phenomenon of change. Incisive and lucid studies like Marcel Vellinga's "Engaging the Future" and Dell Upton's "Tradition of Change" have called for approaches "that explicitly focus on the dynamic nature of vernacular traditions," and that examine "points of contact and transformation — in the market, at the edge, in the new and the decaying."[5] It is in this spirit that I venture a reading of a possible new trajectory for tradition in rural Romania. Moreover, I suggest that the study of vernacular architecture is not only more interesting, but all the more necessary, when a particular tradition is invaded by confusion. It is especially at such times that a critical look can reveal the ongoing reformulation of tradition, and as Vellinga pointed out, "pave the way for a more action-oriented approach that perceives the vernacular as a source of architectural knowledge."[6]

In a recent study, T.O. Gheorghiu argued that all that had been won in "the sphere of the collective mentality" has been lost in contemporary Romanian rural communities, which are now characterized by general confusion and "a strange way of relating to modernity."[7] Gheorghiu's conclusion is that the present situation is so serious that "it does not allow the liberalisation of the constructive process and it imposes other ways of preserving tradition, aiming at people's prosperity, inclusively." As long as tradition is no longer a feature of these communities, Gheorghiu believes, it should be looked for somewhere else: in "the old urbanistic and architectural organizations," where tradition can be

"detected and protected from the exterior, in parallel with the local behavioural reformation." Only after restoring this link, "the bridge," can the constructive process "become free again."[8]

Unlike most European countries, Romania still has, especially in its rural areas, a great number of extremely valuable old buildings. This genuine heritage — physically degraded, perishable, and exposed — includes rural habitations, houses and annexes that still define the built landscape of many regions in the country. This is a heritage with an inestimable historic, ethnographic and documentary value, which can deteriorate or be lost to redevelopment seemingly overnight. No doubt, this heritage must be reconsidered, reassessed and protected. And much can be learned in this respect from the Western world's mistakes — which Romanians seem keen on copying, even when they know they are wrong.[9] But this article does not refer to that kind of endangered heritage, which can be saved only by museification. It considers another aspect (the most important, in my opinion) of rural inhabitation and contemporary vernacular architecture. This is a groping for new forms of expression in a moment without any criteria — the articulation of new sounds in a language which is learned on the run. The article thus detaches itself from discourses like that of Gheorghiu (which possibly remain valid in connection with those traditional buildings that should be preserved in their original form, as monuments). It rather questions present contrasts — the lack of continuity with the past and an apparent fall into an abyss of ugliness — where aesthetic analysis is less significant. To do so involves estimating the validity of old models of inhabitation in a topsy-turvy world, and observing the reactions of a modern vernacular which is using new forms of expression. More than preservation, therefore, this article is interested in adaptation, search, experiment and collage.

Many observations and conclusions on these topics are undoubtedly valid across rural and urban contexts, because they are the reflection of a social reality that leaves its mark on all types of buildings. But this study deals only with the process of rural inhabitation and vernacular architecture because of the important role rurality has played in Romanian culture and in the meaning of Romanian "traditional space."[10] However, this study does not intend to follow the evolution in time of a certain type of house or the transformation of a specific geographical area. Instead, it tries to explain the nature, symptoms, and general manifestations of the transformation of inhabitation and rural vernacular architecture during the post-socialist transition by correlating socioeconomic data (statistics, prognoses) with field research and case studies.

Such a pluridisciplinary approach is absolutely necessary because the evolution of local economic processes and the appearance of social phenomena such as migration and tourism (which were not widely present in rural areas before the 1990s) has upset the pre-capitalist order of traditional

space and drastically altered the forms of vernacular architecture. The consequences of these new social phenomena are visible almost everywhere, and have caused many conflicts. Their manifestations have ranged from depopulation to an aggressive and unsustainable development, from an inappropriate spatial configuration to poor physical condition (lack of equipment, energy inefficiency, etc.). Indeed, many rural dwellings are presently incompatible with minimal requirements for comfort at the beginning of the twenty-first century — even in a relatively underdeveloped environment such as rural Romania.

Finally, by no means can the notions of modern and vernacular be appreciated in a country of the former Communist bloc without understanding the connection between their recent evolution and the intentions and programs of their former totalitarian regimes.[11] That is why, to correctly situate the discussion of post-socialist transition in Romania, I shall first describe inhabitation and rural vernacular architecture in the socioeconomic and cultural context preceding the wave of change which shook up Europe in 1989.

TOWARD THE ERADICATION OF RURALITY: SYSTEMATIZATION AND COLLECTIVIZATION DURING THE GOLDEN EPOCH

Until very recently, Romanian society was predominantly rural. Indeed, the country's urban population did not exceed its rural population until 1981.[12] Because of the extremely slow transition of its population from a rural to an urban condition, the Romanian case can be considered an exception among the countries of the former Eastern Europe.[13] Furthermore, the sudden impact of a brutal Communist regime on Romania's rural communities (and upon its peasantry — a recently established social class at the time the Communists took over) was profound.

Historically, aspects of a capitalist economy had begun to appear in Romania in the nineteenth century. But the process of separation from the previous feudal economic order was long and difficult. A legal framework for the liberation and emancipation of the peasants first appeared in the southern provinces of Romania in 1864. But because it was not accompanied by a social framework, the "becoming" of this social class lasted for many decades, until 1946, when the last effort at agrarian reform took place.[14] The problem was that each time agrarian reforms occurred, they were only partial, and did not create radical change in rural social structure. Thus, powerful landowners were able to retain large properties even after the 1923 agrarian reform. And because peasants received only small plots of land, they were frequently pauperized, and in many cases had no choice but to sell their land.[15]

In the countries of the former Communist bloc, World War II was followed by agricultural collectivization, the conse-

quence of a political ideology which sought to create a "new society" by destroying economic, social and cultural connections considered too traditionalist. And in Romania the assault upon rural life was made worse after 1974 by the association of collectivization with the Ceausescu regime's sinister project of systematization.[16] Both aimed to dislocate peasants, psychologically and physically, from their customs and their villages. Their reach was comprehensive. Gheorghiu has even described how pejorative connotations were introduced to dictionary definitions of "tradition" and "traditionalism" for purely political-doctrinarian reasons.[17] Collectivization interrupted private land relations, instituting agricultural associations as the primary form of farm production. As a result, by 1989, the Romanian socialist state had come to own 90.7 percent of the country's arable land.[18]

Communist management aimed at transforming Romania into an urbanized and highly industrialized society. In this system, the village was to become an annex for the town (a potential source of workers and raw materials). And — in addition to being forced off the land by collectivization, systematization and industrialization —many peasants left their villages because the rural education system was neglected and the role of the Church was undermined.[19]

The Communist regime succeeded in bringing deep changes and discontinuities to Romanian society, both in urban and rural areas. Its tactics were varied: intense urbanization; annexation of villages to towns, or their compulsory transformation into "towns"; annulment of property rights and collectivization; forced changes to local economies and administrations; demolition of private houses and the construction of blocks of flats (followed by the forced relocation of the population to the flats); and industrialization and the concentration of the workforce near industrial sites. All these actions had a huge impact on the rural environment and its inhabitants. In an unnatural, forced way, they changed rural ways of life and rural customs, and led to economic stagnation in most rural zones, where people built few new buildings (**FIG.1**).

The Communist regime also brought deep alterations of social structure and individual motivation, unsettling almost any system of values based on common sense. In many cases, changes at the individual level — as in each person's ways of living, thinking, and relating to others — had an even more negative effect on the traditional environment than larger-scale economic or social change.

Nevertheless, as Violette Rey noticed, "during the whole 20th century Romania has lived under the sign of repeated transitions."[20] The most recent appeared following the fall of the Communist dictatorship. The arrival of this new period of change in the 1990s, she added, was initially referred to as the post-socialist transition, "with its simplistic connotation of 'return' to a 'normal' model of evolution."[21] Yet, as it has turned out, in the entire region isolated behind the Iron Curtain until 1989, "the post-socialist transition has been the

FIGURE 1. *Block of Communist-era flats in the village of Berzasca, Caras-Severin, 2008.*

synonym of a systemic break, a break which decomposed the bases of the previous system, and which had to allow the initiation of a new construction, by the appearance of new types of behaviour."[22]

As a result, today's Romania is no longer involved in the great project of totalitarian modernization. Nevertheless, mutations go on, as the country is confronted with the open patterns of development dictated by a growing market and an open relationship to Western cultures and societies.

HERITAGE AND CULTURAL VALUE VS. COMFORT AND NEED

The end of socialism exposed Romania to a process of having to "learn" democracy. In the 1990s the country went through various political changes, experiencing profound transformations as a result of major legal decisions, radical economic reforms, and new social phenomena.[23]

As part of this process, it was inevitable that the process of inhabitation would be directly and severely affected. The unsettling of the rules of everyday life, the gradual passage to a market economy, the liberalization of the workforce, and the implicit increase in personal mobility have all modified the requirements for habitations. Traditional rural houses are now seen as too old, too small, or too uncomfortable for a new society of consumption.

As the size of new houses has increased fabulously — not only because this was necessary, but because of a need for representation and social exposure (I shall return to this later) — so has the necessity of adapting the house to new local occupations and to allow an increased degree of comfort. But where new wealth now makes the restoration or extension of existing buildings, or the erection of new ones, affordable, an "outsider" will usually immediately notice a

lack of awareness of the value of local cultural heritage in the production of details, structures and building ensembles **(FIG.2)**. Therefore, recent construction has for the most part been regarded as uninspired or destructive.

For example, Gheorghiu identified the following characteristics of the "destructive interventions upon traditional inhabitation: the demolition of the old house and the building of a new one, the demolition of the annexes, 'the modernisation' of some parts of the building, the installation of inappropriate equipment" or, in many cases, the combination of these operations.[24] The consequence is that

> *. . . the new houses are much more fragile in front of water, wind, cold or heat, implicitly they (uselessly) consume more energy, they have oversized spaces, which are overwhelmingly useless, they are inappropriately oriented (to the sun and to the vicinity) and they do not offer an intimate and protected family environment. If we add ugliness and stridency, we have a complete picture of "the quality" of the new rural architecture.[25]*

Such remarks need more explanation. Obviously, work on existing buildings is completed without specialized technical experience in the modification of traditional structures. But there are several reasons for this. Sometimes old, "traditional" technologies are obsolete, or the materials necessary for those technologies are difficult to find. Alternatively, if both technology and material are available, the cost of using them exceeds the cost of more commonplace, modern solutions, which are now widely available, and which most people can afford. For example, some village mayors have protested the recently approved urban and architectural regulations for the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation area.[26] The regulations seek to protect the specificity of the delta region as a place through such measures as a requirement that houses be roofed only with reed thatch or ceramic tiles.[27] But the mayors claim it will be impossible for them to

FIGURE 2. *Erecting a new house in a village from Oltenia, 2007.*

FIGURE 3. *The use of reed thatch vs. corrugated metal sheets as a roofing material in the village of Murighiol, Tulcea, 2006.*

FIGURE 4. *Polystyrene insulation used to blanket the walls of a beautifully decorated old house in a village from Sibiu, 2007.*

impose such a measure as long as corrugated metal sheets are cheaper. Although these reactions often hide other interests, it is true that in the Danube delta (the reed land) reed is no longer a cheap material.[28] Harvesting it is extremely hard work, and before 1989 it was done, on an industrial scale, by political prisoners in the work camps on the Chilia arm. Now, because of reed harvesting and processing technology, it costs, indeed, more than corrugated metal **(FIG.3)**.

Therefore, the appropriate technical solutions, which are "correct" if one's goal is only the preservation of traditional buildings, are no longer "vernacular," except in the remotest areas. In the other areas, they have become the preoccupation of specialists. Although it is not at all *natural* at first sight, the association between new technologies and old houses is, however, the spontaneous and pragmatic manifestation of need.

I do not mean to suggest here that the present evolution is the only normal and possible one. For example, the solution (which is recurrent in most of Romania) of covering walls with expanded polystyrene, to improve thermal performance, is hard to accept — especially when existing walls have frameworks and decorations specific to the architecture of the area **(FIG.4)**. The replacement of the wood shingles covering and protecting the walls of the houses in Bucovina's forested mountain area by a product with a similar form, but made of PVC, is also not easy to accept. But capitalism and the consumption market play their part here as well: the renewal of old walls using wood shingles requires attentive manual work and considerable time, making it expensive. Moreover, people know that wood degrades in time and needs to be taken care of, while they believe that plastic will not (although there is not enough information about the resistance of plastic in the long term).

As time passes, original building technologies, which had been developed locally, are being replaced by imported systems. But, being the most accessible solution in the absence

of some effective local alternative, these imported technologies are implicitly those which should *normally* be used by people. It may be true, as Gheorghiu has claimed, that "during the last ten years, carelessness and the infernal bombardment of advertising begin to be the causes which, in traditional environments which used to be solid, have been facilitating the penetration of globalized ideas and concepts, into the habitation field inclusively, extremely rapidly and aggressively."[29] But the only real way to recalibrate building practices and reduce these discrepancies and disfunctionalities will be to allow the assimilation of these technologies within traditional environments. Only in time will one see if they will succeed, through adaptation, experiment and practice, in using them in an intelligent manner proper to local needs.

Even Gheorghiu has pointed out that "the way of life of traditional societies is almost exclusively based upon decisions taking into account practical use."[30] This situation has not changed — peasants will not adopt a technical solution out of pure passion, and the attachment to the house in its present condition (if such an attachment exists) often disappears when generations change, in the face of practical arguments.

MIGRATION AND TOURISM

Since the early 1990s, two important phenomena, migration and tourism, have become more and more present in rural Romania. While tourism existed before 1989, it was only domestic, reduced, and usually concentrated in certain regions. Migration is a completely new phenomenon. Labor, leisure, ethnic or other types of migration have caused the almost complete emptying of some villages, the development of others, and (especially) the replacement of many cultural and social reference marks within rural communities with imported ones.

The effect upon Romanian villages of both phenomena intensified suddenly after the 2007 accession of Romania to the E.U. The strongest impact and the most immediate consequence of accession to the E.U. involved the new freedom of Romanians to move through Europe in search of economic opportunity. Thus, the village-town flow within Romania has since 2007 been partially replaced by the chance to look further afield for economic opportunity. Romanians now have the chance to leave areas which had been dominated by only one pole (the closest town, the county capital, etc.) in their search for a better life. The opportunity of a job (most of the time, an illegal one) in the much-dreamed-of and promising countries of Western Europe has thus caused a significant migration abroad.

These processes and their consequences upon rural habitation are connected with the rising importance of what Manuel Castells called "the space of flows," as opposed to "the space of places." AlSayyad has referred to this discussion in the context of changes which took place in the last decades of the twentieth century, "which dramatically altered the global order."[31] He argued that, as a result, it was important to adopt a new way of understanding the role of traditional settlements in the reconstruction of history, and of populations and identities. And he suggested that, although identity cannot exist without a place (while a global culture can exist only without a place), the impact of the new "space of flows" upon the form of settlements would make cultural experience less connected to place and more based on information.[32]

Vintila Mihailescu noticed the evolution of an apparently strange phenomenon after the fall of the totalitarian regime: ". . . instead of diminishing, in order to get closer to European dimensions to a certain extent, the rural world expanded after 1990. The villages have not grown older, but, on the contrary, they have received young people; however, they have been losing more and more women, because they go to work abroad."[33] Indeed, many people came back or moved to the countryside in the 1990s, trying to practice agriculture.[34]

This means that in many cases, those who are building in rural areas today are either townspeople, former peasants who had moved (or been moved) to a town, or (a new case nowadays) people who left the village and then came back with money made in Europe. The result is that these new buildings are not necessarily "local production." In other words, the new "space of flows" has extended the range of influences on the rural building process. Architectural models from the town, or from abroad (seen in other contexts, on TV, or in magazines), have been imported in an aleatory way, without discernment. For example, the built environment of Maramures County in northern Romania, renowned for its old timber vernacular architecture, is changing because of the influence of workers returning from countries like Italy and Spain. Their new houses are huge, to show their prosperity and success, and include large windows, indoor garages, and even exterior elevators. Undoubtedly, under the

influence of a culture of consumption and media, such buildings alter the coherence of the built, autochthonous environment, which has been unchanged for decades. But, leaving aside the extremes, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, do they freshen it at the same time?

Another visible consequence of migration, this time in economically inactive areas, are abandoned or seriously degraded houses. In many cases, the degradation is irreversible, and in most cases, the oldest houses (probably the most valuable) are the first to be abandoned (**fig.5**). Such abandonment can, however, eventually lead to the sale of rural properties to townspeople or foreigners as second homes. Unfortunately, for the time being, this is only happening in places where people have affective or family relations. No general policy has yet been formulated to promote the resale of traditional habitations instead of building new neighborhoods on the peripheries of existing towns.[35]

At the opposite pole, the areas which are most exposed to transformation are, predictably, those with touristic potential. The Prahova Valley and the Black Sea shore are two such areas that have been changed by a construction boom, driven by a "second-home" phenomenon and the development of tourist infrastructure. In such areas, the absence of private initiatives until 1989 and the sudden unchaining of their development potential during the years that followed have led to sudden and uncontrolled change.

The Limanu commune, at the south end of the seashore, close to the Romanian-Bulgarian border, is a particularly good example of the outcome of these new forces. Limanu is formed of four villages, two of which face the seashore, and two the interior. As attested by documents from the era of Ottoman domination, the commune has long been heterogeneous in terms of the status, size and nature of its villages, But it is also mixed from the point of view of the ethnicity of its population and the way each village has developed in recent years.[36] Of the four, Hagieni is almost "frozen" in a preindustrial era, with its houses made of stone

FIGURE 5. *Abandoned house in Dambovicioara, Prahova, 2007.*

and clay and with sandy, earthen streets. Limanu, being the administrative center of the commune, has experienced the most constant, normal pattern of development. The other two villages, 2 Mai and Vama Veche, on the seashore, however, are growing rapidly and changing with each passing year.

Although a handful of tourists did visit the area before the 1990s, Limanu was by and large isolated and almost unknown. Its discovery involved the appearance of so-called "weekend" tourism in the context of the transition to a market economy and an outburst (impossible before 1989) of touristic demand. Since then, the growing number of visitors and their effect on the urban and architectural development of the place has created a mental distinction between *before* and *now*, both on the part of the old tourists and the local people.[37] Tourism is now the main income source (instead of fishing or agriculture). And where people coming here once used to have minimal demands, they have now started "to ask for better conditions."[38] Therefore, money earned during the summer has been used in the offseason to make improvements to houses so they will be more attractive to visitors. The money is first used to build a bathroom inside the house (until now, the toilet and the shower were outside, in the yard). An electric boiler is then installed; and gradually, the house is extended so that it can accommodate more lodgers (**FIG.6**).

At the same time these changes have occurred at the level of individual houses, changes have also occurred at the village level. 2 Mai has been extended to include new neighborhoods with bigger houses planned from the very beginning so that they can accommodate tourists. And Vama Veche is growing mainly as a result of new tourist infrastructure, paid for by outside investors. As a result, the houses of the local people are now being dwarfed by new development.

FIGURE 6. *In the case of small, existing houses, where there was not enough space inside for a bathroom, it was built separately, in the courtyard. Here an old structure encloses toilets and a shower at Vasile Egor's house, 2 Mai, 2006.*

FIGURE 7. *Example of house where the original veranda has been closed, while a bower has been improvised in front of the house. Vasile Egor's house, 2 Mai, 2006.*

In such contexts, analysis of changes to vernacular design should be more concerned with how household spaces are being changed than how building materials are changing. For example, new construction has almost completely eliminated the verandah, a space of passage between interior and exterior that was once a characteristic of residential design across southern Europe. In 2 Mai, these porches have been closed to better protect against winter cold and to increase the comfort of tourists (most rooms are accessed through this space) (**FIG.7**).

It is curious that in this case, however, the duality between *before* and *now* manifests itself differently between groups. In particular, older tourists have viewed such transformations negatively, feeling that the houses are no longer as they used to know and like them. Thus, the process has also inverted itself: the verandah of some houses has been reopened, while in other houses the functions of the porch have been transferred to small pavilions or bowers built in the courtyard.[39] By extrapolating, the problem of the "loss of tradition" appears also to involve sentimental attachment. Generally, if people like a place, they like to find it as they remember it when they come back. If the place changes, they do not recognize it, and the emotion vanishes. Hence, they are disappointed, and they are left with the sensation that the place has lost its authenticity.

In the case of 2 Mai, the destructive pragmatism of villagers when it comes to building or restoring vernacular houses may thus be combated by the effect of tourism. Or, more accurately, it is redirected because the locals come to understand that building/restoring in a "traditional" manner is preferred by visitors, and it will thus bring more guests (**FIG.8**). In time, by meeting more and more people, villagers come to understand the difference between building approaches, and come to appreciate the local specificity and

FIGURE 8. *Agritourism: an example of a touristic pension where the typical open verandahs have been closed with glass (in front of the wooden structure), all around the house. Dragoslavele village, Dambovita, 2007.*

be proud of it.[40] This is, or can be, one positive outcome of the recent phenomenon of agritourism, which is becoming more and more widespread in rural areas. Its spread has been assisted by a recent infusion of European funds, aimed at reviving local economies and encouraging the sustainable development of rural areas.

Emphasizing site-specific characteristics through agritourism can, indeed, be a valid solution to the rehabilitation of many Romanian villages. But it must be initiated by the inhabitants, complementary to agricultural, zootechnical and handcraft activities, and in conformity with the traditional values of the region. Otherwise, as Ozkan has shown, the interruption of the old life and production cycles "are irreversible processes which could deeply harm the respective community if the flow of tourists decreases."[41] In other words, the village needs a deep and genuine resuscitation of its traditional mechanisms so that it can provide quality agritouristic activities, which can in turn inject vitality into the rural economy — a complementary outcome.

ADAPTATION AS AN ARCHITECTURAL MANIFESTATION

Many studies have previously advocated a view of tradition and vernacular building as dynamic and creative processes, open to change and evolution. For example, Vellinga argued that tradition can be understood only as "a continuous creative process through which people, as active agents, negotiate, interpret and adapt knowledge and experiences gained in the past within the context of the challenges, wishes and requirements of the present."[42] And Abu-Lughod

has described the impossibility that any existing architecture could have been formed without contact, diffusion, migration, reproduction, imitation, synergy, hybridization, etc.[43] In a world where "cultural and demographic migrations are the rule rather than the exception," she saw influence, encounter, combination or adaptation as the only genuine possibilities of architectural manifestation — a process which she defined, following John Turner, as "traditioning."[44] Consequently, the attempt to evaluate change instantly in the context of tradition is extremely difficult if we want to avoid subjectivity. Instead, such evaluation requires time, because *adaptation* best defines the way a tradition is given form and is able to endure.

At this point a distinction needs to be made. Although adaptation is a real form of vernacular manifestation and a vital process allowing a tradition to evolve, it is presumptuous to assert that the present "revolution" in the Romanian rural built environment is the proper, normal or only acceptable way to pass through these fuzzy times (which will supposedly end in the promised land of capitalism). The current transformations are by no means coherent or logical, and often lead to useless, aggressive exaggerations.

Vellinga has called for incorporating into academic discourse the interconnections between vernacular traditions and those that may be described as modern, popular or informal — as well as those that have resulted from their creative mixture.[45] This raises an important question: in the context of the post-socialist transition in Romania, is any kind of association/mixture, regardless of its intent or extent, *creative*? Of course not. The building onto and adaptation of existing structures — like the "modernized Minangkabau house," the "Cotswolds barn that is now used as luxury weekend retreat,"

or the "urban Mongolian yurt provided with a concrete base and electric lights" mentioned by Vellinga — are one thing. So is the transformation of open verandahs into courtyard pavilions, as in the case of houses in 2 Mai. These are vernacular manifestations of modern times. But eradicating whole rural structures and entirely replacing them with new ones (this occurred systematically under the Communist regime, and has occurred unsystematically, and is still occurring, today) is another thing.[46] In this case, the connection of the new structures with the place is hard to detect even according to the most optimistic view. Nevertheless, the way in which the local community will handle these new structures in time, assimilating or rejecting them, might still be *creative*.

Following Dell Upton's argument, we should not deny what may be the basic characteristic of the vernacular: change.[47] It is obvious that Romania's old, "traditional" rural built forms do not correspond to present social norms. Therefore, they should not, and could not, be imposed as the "correct" ones. Probably, there could not be a better field of research in which to examine Upton's call to study points of contact and transformation than the rural built landscape of Romania today: indeed, it is defined by nothing else but ambiguity, contrast, and apparent disorientation. Still, this is a landscape where, I dare say, one can also spot traces of continuity.

What is *local specificity*, and since when is it really *local*? Dobrogea, for example, with its picturesque houses, is in reality an ethnic and cultural conglomerate. The vernacular, the architecture that is specific to it as a place, is actually a mixture of types of houses and influences from various places. The reason is that the area is a place where Turks, Tartars, Bulgarians, Romanians, Greeks, Germans, Lippovans, Russians, Italians, and Macedo-Romanians have all historically lived together. Obviously, "the diverse spatial typologies have overcome mutual influences, leading to the migration of some typical architectural elements among them."[48] Moreover, present-day tourism marketing is trying to transform it from a "Romanian Land" into a "multiethnical space," or even a "California of the Balkans."[49]

If the scale is reduced, we could also wonder about the appearance between World Wars I and II of small modernist villas which mixed with the Ukrainian habitations in Sfantu Gheorghe, an isolated settlement at the end of the Danube delta, during a period when all buildings there were made of adobe and reed thatch. Today, it is precisely this very lively mixture which represents the specificity of the village.

The same thing happened later, during the Communist regime, but, because the circulation of people and information was severely restricted, it happened in a different manner. For example, in Ciocanesti village, in Suceava, the exterior of most houses is painted with folk motifs. But the tradition of painted houses (which was identified as a strong local specificity at the end of the 1980s) started, in fact, in 1950, when Leontina Taran, a local woman, began it.[50] The idea spread in the village because of the mimesis that func-

tions so well in rural Romania. Then, after the place became famous in the 1990s for its tradition, the Local Council decreed in 2000 that all houses must be painted. In this case, the success of tourism led to the instauration of a (relatively new) form of tradition as a legal rule.

In the collective mentality, the *specificity of the place* is connected to the "power of custom." The absence of change for a long time thus induces to the general mentality an image of things "like they should be," "like they have always been," or "since old people's time." Furthermore, the combination during the socialist period of total closure to the outside and centralized control of urban and rural development favored the emergence of perceptions like these when a systemic transformation followed during the post-socialist transition.

For example, when giving examples of "contemporary aberrations" in the modernization of a traditional house, Gheorghiu presented, under the category "Gypsy palace," the image of a house with typical details of Gypsy-style architecture (sharp roof, shingles, and shiny metal panels). But I cannot refrain from noticing an extremely interesting detail.[51] Although the intervention is visibly radical, the house preserves both the alignment to the street of its first floor and, most of all, the exterior passage under this level, from the gate to the back yard — a space which is characteristic only of the Transylvanian region.

Referring to the bigger and bigger houses appearing in the Romanian rural landscape, Rey noticed that "the increasing medium surface of the new buildings is due both to a positive dynamism of economic growth, with positive effects upon the living standard, and to the touristic demand."[52] However, "in the countryside, people often continue to live in a common room, while the number of rooms ostentatiously proves social wealth and the familial capital" (FIG.9).[53] It is possible that these houses will not survive in their present

FIGURE 9. *A new and an old house within the same family compound. Draganesti village, Prahova, 2005.*

form. Socioeconomic factors, such as a significant decrease in the birth rate, growing population mobility (especially among young people), the difficulty of maintaining such a big house, or even the experience of moments of economic crisis (like the present) associated with increasing unemployment might force the next generation to readapt this habitation for practical and effective use, or lead to a moderation of the constructive impetus in the case of future houses.

On the other hand, these "oversized and overwhelmingly useless spaces," as Gheorghiu called them, might have a different significance.[54] Starting from the well-known notion of the "fine" or "good" room, which exists in the houses of all Romanian villages, Mihailescu found that "peasant beauty" might be connected with the "space of the exposure, a self-exposure in front of a public and the recognition, by this public, of the status of this self, a confirmation of dignity and of self-esteem."[55] Thus, Mihailescu continued, there is a

. . . surprising continuity where all of us see, most of the time, a misleading and even alarming break. From this point of view, the difference between the traditional peasant's "fine room" and the imposing houses which have appeared in the countryside lately is no longer one of essence: all of them want to show their position "authentically," to expose their fulfillment in order to place themselves with dignity in front of the world. But "the world" has changed.

If, before, "being up to the world's standards" meant the world of the village, "now 'the world' has grown larger and everyone looks for their own reference marks in order to be up to *that* specific world and *those* specific standards which they take into account electively in order to measure the fulfillment of their position." Thus, Mihailescu concluded, "being modern" means merely "being up to the world's standards."[56]

Sometimes, adaptation also shapes a new vernacular by redrawing or interpreting traditional forms and elements with the help of new, "nontraditional" materials. The new houses in the submontane villages of the Arges Valley — for example, Corbsori — now use a mixture of red brick and white cement blocks, alternating the layers to obtain an image similar to that of older buildings, which used brick and stone or brick and white plaster (**FIG.10**). People also claim that brick is too expensive to use for the whole house. Details which used to be carved in timber are also now imitated by shapes poured in concrete (**FIGS.11,12**).

In the touristic village of 2 Mai, one can find new fences built up from plastic beer cases (with the top layer used as a container for planting flowers) or from surf boards (**FIGS.13,14**). Strange, contrasting juxtapositions can be found even in the remotest and poorest areas — a mixture of adobe, thatched roof, and thermal insulating windows in the village of Topalu; or an old, clay house with both a clay oven and a TV satellite dish in a southern Dobrogea village (**FIGS.15,16**).

FIGURE 10.
Alternate layers of red brick and white cement blocks used in a new house, Corbsori village, Arges, 2007.

FIGURE 11 (ABOVE).
The use of concrete to resemble the typical details of a timber structure, Corbsori village, Arges, 2007.
FIGURE 12. (RIGHT).
Mixed use of timber and concrete, Corbsori village, Arges, 2007.

FIGURE 13. *The creative use of beer cases to construct a fence (notice that the top row of cases have been used for plants). Village of 2 Mai, Constanta, 2004.*

FIGURE 14. *The use of surf boards to build a fence, 2 Mai, Constanta, 2004.*

The examples go on. They all might be considered simply isolated, incidental situations; but they might also be considered an appearance of tradition, as Duanfang Lu saw it — not so much "handed down" in a fast-changing society, as constantly constructed and deconstructed in daily reproduction, a *latent* potential which "tends to reappear in new guises and generate new contradictions in other contexts."[57]

FIGURE 15. *A new, unfinished house using adobe and thatch, but also thermal-insulating double-pane windows and doors. Topalu, Constanta, 2005*

FIGURE 16. *An old, clay house, with a TV satellite antenna, Dobrogea, 2003.*

IN-BETWEEN

Today Romania is still far from being a developed society, which "was expected as a natural becoming after the socialist parenthesis."[58] That is why, Rey claimed, "even the term 'transition,' initially understood as a more or less fast return to a democratic society, to a market economy, can be questioned."[59]

True, Romania is not a pure European democratic country yet, but neither is it a Third World country. Its rural space is not typically Western (and probably never will be). But, at the same time, it is no longer the unaltered "traditional environment" it was considered until not long ago. It is exactly this "in-between" that I find most attractive and challenging — a country with a strong rural and traditional background, experiencing today a social metamorphosis that provides an opportunity to study change as a process in itself.

The "good, old Romanian village" is no longer what it used to be, because its social and economic situation is different. Of course, its built landscape has followed this change and has not stay untouched. This leads to several questions. To what extent are traditional mentalities behind these new built forms, which seem to lack local specificity, as Mihailescu observed? Can the new buildings be seen as attempts to adapt traditional ways of building to new requirements, constraints and possibilities? How much are these buildings a taking over of foreign models, and to what extent do they represent the formation of new models?

Change is inherent, and the major problem is not change itself, but its speed. In the Romanian countryside its present speed has created a temporary incapacity for cultural adaptation, as there is no time for assuming and assimilating change.

This is why a static, romantic perception of the vernacular could only prevent the development and the survival of traditions. As Vellinga has pointed out, it would only reconfirm "persistent stereotypes that represent vernacular architecture as picturesque and charming, yet out of date and irrelevant."[60]

However, this landscape of mixture — a strange, unclear space in continuous turmoil — also needs practical initiatives, research, and concrete proposals. In this regard, designers at Planwerk, a Romanian urbanism and architecture office, have done something very important in their work on the commune of Limanu. Their research there is aimed at "translating the essential elements of the orientation of the buildings, of the succession of spaces which put rhythm into the use of the place, of traditional dimensions related to human dimensions, into norms and proposals for the development of new buildings."[61] Their emphasis is not on forms, details, materials, and the taking over of traditional architecture elements in the typology of present houses. As they say: "[It] does not mean the formal repetition of some obsolete expression forms, but the taking over of spatial diversity still present in the old typologies of dividing the plot." The essential aspects, the ones carrying identity, are "the orientation of the house on the plot, the marking of the passages between outside and inside, the spatial articulation of the dimensions and of the relationships between the dimensions of architectural elements."[62]

Such an approach by architecture and urbanism practitioners is the most appropriate way to contribute effectively to the recovery of that spontaneous and fresh spirit which has always kept Romanian rural settings vital, and which is today in the temporary condition of "in-between."

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2. I refer to the so-called systematization, the name of the program initiated by Nicolae Ceausescu in 1974, which aimed to urbanize, reorganize and uniformitize urban and rural places, which was transformed into a law in 1974. For a concise presentation of systematization, see M. Berindei, "Distrugerea satelor romanesti in arhivele Comitetului Central" ("The Destruction of Romanian Villages in the Archives of the Central Committee"), in *Revista Grupului Pentru Dialog Social*, 22 (June 30, 2009).

3. Similar situations are visible especially in rural spaces affected by touristic development. See, for example, the case of the Limanu commune, Constanta. Not only tourists, but also some of the village inhabitants have had reactions similar to this by Fedea, a Lippovan: "This is a disaster. Some people from the outside have come here and they destroyed all specific things, all tradition. If you look at those villas, only two or three are from Dobrogea, the others have one room and another one on top of it, without any architecture. They have destroyed things, they have spent money foolishly. I do not mean that they should not build, but they should build with taste, in the style of Dobrogea. Shouldn't they?" Cited in M. Tirca, "Povesti de la 2 Mai: O istorie orala a zonei" ("Stories from 2 Mai: An Oral History of the Area"), in V. Mihailescu, ed., *Intre stil si brand: Turismul alternativ la 2 Mai-Vama Veche (Between Style and Brand: Alternative Tourism in 2 Mai-Vama Veche)* (Bucuresti: Paideia, 2005), p.34.

4. B. Hüppauf, "Spaces of the Vernacular: Ernst Bloch's Philosophy of Hope and the German Hometown," in M. Umbauch and B. Hüppauf, eds., *Vernacular Modernism: Heimat, Globalization and the Built Environment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p.87.

5. M. Vellinga, "Engaging the Future: Vernacular Architecture Studies in the Twenty-First Century," in L. Asquith and M. Vellinga, eds., *Vernacular Architecture in the Twenty-First Century: Theory, Education and Practice* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2006), p.83; and D. Upton, "The Tradition of Change," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.5 No.1 (Spring 1993), p.14.

6. Vellinga, "Engaging the Future."

7. T.O. Gheorghiu, *Locuirea traditionala rurala din zona Banat-Crisana: Elemente de istorie si morfologie; protectie si integrare (Rural Traditional Inhabitation in the Banat-Crisana area: Elements of History and Morphology; Protection and Integration)* (Timisoara: Eurobit, 2008), pp.9–12,360–68. This recently published book is extremely valuable, offering a wide-ranging, profound study of vernacular architecture in Romania. Yet, although the study's motto is "through the spirit of tradition, in full modernity," there are few allusions to the importance of present changes in vernacular architecture. And the allusions to these changes refer only to their harmful dimension (which is real, but by no means the only one).

8. Ibid.

9. Similar problems connected with the lack of durability for most contemporary buildings are presented in Architect's Council of Europe, ed., *Europe and Architecture Tomorrow*, 1995, pp.27–29 (quoted in Gheorghiu, *Locuirea traditionala rurala din zona Banat-Crisana*, p.359).

10. At the end of the nineteenth century and during the first half of the twentieth century many important cultural figures referred to the Romania's rural space and its peasants as the main source of Romanian culture (which was forming and asserting itself during those years). Speeches given on the occasion of their admission to the Romanian Academy by L. Blaga, "Elogiul satului romanesc" ("The Eulogy of the Romanian Village") (1937), and L. Rebreanu, "Lauda taranului roman" ("The Praise of the Romanian Peasant") (1939), continue to be reference marks in the discussion about Romanian rural space. See E. Simion, "Satul romanesc nu mai poate exista in afara istoriei" ("The Romanian Village Can No Longer Exist Outside History"), a speech given in the Romanian Academy, in C. Hera, *Lumea rurala: astazi si maine (Rural World: Today and Tomorrow)* (Bucuresti: Editura Academiei Romane, 2006).

11. See also the discussion on the politicization of architecture in the spaces influenced by the Soviet Union after World War II in J. Czaplicka, "The Vernacular in Place and Time: Relocating History in Post-Soviet Cities," in Umbauch and Hüppauf, eds., *Vernacular Modernism*, p.173.

12. V. Enikö, "De/re-taranizare in Romania dupa 1989" ("De/re-peasantization in Romania after 1989"), in *Sociologie Romaneasca*, No.III (1999), p.85.

13. Ibid., p.80.

14. S. Costea, M. Larionescu, F. Tanasescu, *Agricultura romaneasca (Romanian Agriculture)*, p.49, quoted in Enikö, "De/re-taranizare in Romania dupa 1989," p.81.

15. Enikö, "De/re-taranizare in Romania dupa 1989," p.81.

16. See note no.2.

17. Gheorghiu, *Locuirea traditionala rurala din zona Banat-Crisana*, p.6.

18. Enikö, "De/re-taranizare in Romania dupa 1989," p.82.

19. Ibid., p.83.

20. V. Rey, O. Groza, I. Ianos, and M. Patroescu, *Atlasul Romaniei (The Atlas of Romania)* (Bucharest: Enciclopedia Rao, 2006), p.11.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., p.12.

23. A phenomenon which should be noticed here is the absence of a coherent agricultural policy. As a result, decollectivization led only to a kind of subsistence agriculture. Moreover, it involved the parallel destruction of the productive infrastructure of the former cooperatives. See Rey et al., *Atlasul Romaniei*, p.58; and Enikö, "De/re-taranizare in Romania dupa 1989," p.83.

24. Gheorghiu, *Locuirea traditionala rurala din zona Banat-Crisana*, p.360.

25. Ibid.

26. "Regulamentul de urbanism pentru Delta Dunarii, contestat de autoritatile locale" ("Urbanism Regulation for the Danube Delta, Contested by Local Authorities"), news published in *Obiectiv*, a

daily paper, Tulcea, June 23, 2009.

27. The regulation can be read at
http://www.mie.ro/_documente/ trans-
parenta/consultari_publice/consultare46/re
gulamentul.pdf.

28. Among other things, the regulation
specifies a maximum height for the ground
floors and first floors of all new buildings,
as well a maximum of twenty rooms for
touristic pensions, which contravenes the
huge real estate interest in the area.

29. Gheorghiu, *Locuirea traditionala rurala
din zona Banat-Crisana*, p.12.

30. Ibid., p.8.

31. M. Castells, "The World has Changed:
Can Planning Change?" *Landscape and
Urban Planning*, Vol.22 (Amsterdam:
Elsevier Publishers, 1992), as cited in N.
AlSayyad, "From Vernacularism to
Globalism: the Temporal Reality of
Traditional Settlements," *Traditional
Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.7 No.1
(Spring 1995), p.22.

32. AlSayyad, "From Vernacularism to
Globalism," p.23.

33. V. Mihailescu, "Lectiile unui atlas" ("The
Lessons of an Atlas"), *Dilema*, No.157
(February 9, 2007).

34. In fact, the conclusion reached by both
Mihailescu and Enikö is that Romania did
not have, and still does not have, a coherent
and consistent agricultural policy. Because
of the absence of a well-oriented political
interest and of an agricultural policy which
could revive agriculture, in a country which
seems to stand out in Europe because of its
increased agricultural rural character, there
are almost no measures for stimulating
local development and somehow motivating
the population.

35. This is, for example, the case of the vil-
lages of the Transylvanian Saxons. The pop-
ulation of most of them left in the 1980s or
immediately after the change of the political
regime, between 1990 and 1992. But some
houses have now been repurchased by
those who left, or by their relatives, as sec-
ond homes. See, for example, the case of
Viscri village.

36. For more information on the formation
and the evolution of the four villages, see

Consiliul Judetean Constanta, *Carta verde a
judetului Constanta* (Constanta: Ex Ponto,
2000), p.196.

37. Tirca, "Povesti de la 2 Mai," pp.21,31.

38. Ibid., p.31

39. Ibid., p.33

40. Ibid.

41. S. Özkan, "Cycles of Sustenance in
Traditional Architecture," *Traditional
Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.7 No.1
(Spring 1995), pp.41–46.

42. Vellinga, "Engaging the Future," p.89.

43. J. Abu-Lughod, "Creating One's Future
from One's Past: Nondefensively,"
Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review,
Vol.7 No.1 (Spring 1995), pp.7–11.

44. Ibid., p.8; and J. Abu-Lughod,
"Disappearing Dichotomies: First World —
Third World; Traditional — Modern,"
Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review,
Vol.3 No.2 (Spring 1992), pp.7–12.

45. Vellinga, "Engaging the Future," p.88.

46. After 1989, corruption and the lack of
political will, characteristic of all the admin-
istrative structures, have allowed ample
developments and interventions without
proper legal basis. Areas with economic
potential are thus being transformed into
real estate paradises through urbanistic pro-
jects that radically impair established rules.
This is, for example, the case of the Limanu
commune, where a general urbanism plan
produced by Planwerk in 2005 (see also
notes 48, 61 and 62) has yet to be approved,
because the village mayor's office has been
trying to approve other documents with
completely different provisions, which would
transform the two villages into a resort.

47. Upton, "The Tradition of Change,"
pp.9–15.

48. For more data related to the history of
Dobrogea and to the ethnic groups populat-
ing it, see, for example, A. Chiritoiu and R.
Ionescu-Tugui, "Introducere: Regimuri
etnice in Dobrogea" ("Introduction: Ethnic
Regimes in Dobrogea"), in B. Iancu, ed.,
*Dobrogea: Identitati si crize (Dobrogea:
Identities and Crises)* (Bucuresti: Paideia,
2009); and A. Radulescu and I. Bitoleanu,
*Istoria romanilor dintre Dunare si Mare —
Dobrogea (The History of Romanians between*

the Danube and the Sea — Dobrogea)
(Bucuresti: Editura Stiintifica si
Enciclopedica, 1979). For an analysis of
some inhabitation typologies in Dobrogea,
see "Comuna Limanu: Analiza tipologica si
morfologica" ("The Limanu Commune: A
Typological and Morphological Analysis"), a
study conducted by Planwerk within PUG
Limanu.

49. V. Mihailescu, foreword, in Iancu, ed.,
Dobrogea, p.8; and M. Stroe, "Concluzii —
Dobrogea, identitati si crize: de la mozaic
etnic la pamant romanesc, tur-retur"
("Dobrogea — Identities and Crises: From
an Ethnic Mosaic to a Romanian Land, a
Two-Way Trip"), in Iancu, ed., *Dobrogea*,
pp.151–63.

50. A series of interviews on this theme
with the village mayor and Leontina Taran
have been published in newspapers. See,
for example, D. Gheorghe, "Casele nepic-
tate, interzise de lege" ("Unpainted Houses,
Forbidden by Law"), *Romania Libera*, October
7, 2008; and C. Scortariu, "Minunile de la
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Evenimentul zilei, June 6, 2008.

51. Gheorghiu, *Locuirea traditionala rurala
din zona Banat-Crisana*, pp.363–64.

52. Rey et al., *Atlasul Romaniei*, p.123

53. Ibid.

54. Gheorghiu, *Locuirea traditionala rurala
din zona Banat-Crisana*, pp.360.

55. V. Mihailescu, "Ceva Frumos"
("Something Beautiful"), in *Dilema Veche*,
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56. Ibid.

57. D. Lu, "The Latency of Tradition: On the
Vicissitudes of Walls in Contemporary
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Tradition?* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.211.

58. Rey et al., *Atlasul Romaniei*, p.131.

59. Ibid.

60. Vellinga, "Engaging the Future," p.83.

61. For more on Planwerk, visit
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note 48.

62. Planwerk, "Comuna Limanu," p.38.

All photos are by the author.

Special Article

On Concrete and Stone: Shifts and Conflicts in Israeli Architecture

ALONA NITZAN-SHIFTAN

Israel is unilaterally building a wall to separate itself from Palestine. Within its confines, its citizens have been led to believe, Israeli society can flourish without interruption. This article challenges this assumption by questioning the impact of the former — the external political border — on the latter — the cultural production of Israeli society. More specifically, it explores the formative effect of the shifting border between Israeli and Palestinian territories on the imagination and production of "authentic" Israeli architecture. In this light, architectural trends such as "Bauhaus," "regionalism," and "place," as well as building materials such as concrete and stone, have assumed political dimensions in Israeli society.

> *"I believe in the (national) Thing" is equal to "I believe that others (members of my community) believe in the Thing." The tautological character of the Thing — its semantic void, the fact that all we can say about it is that it is "the real thing" — is founded precisely in this paradoxical reflexive structure. The national Thing exists as long as members of the community believe in it; it is literally an effect of this belief in itself . . . the whole meaning of the Thing consists in the fact that "it means something" to people.*
>
> — Slavoj Zizek[1]

Over the last seven years Israeli construction crews have been erecting a meandering concrete wall along the edge of the territory Israel claims for itself. These pale gray concrete slabs are simultaneously one of the world's most literal, and symbolic, reminders of the importance of the border for a nation's sense of self. Within their confines, its citizens have been led to believe, Israeli society can flourish without interruption.

In this article, I set out to challenge this assumption. My premise is exactly the interconnectedness of the two — the external political border and the cultural production of Israeli

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society. More specifically, I explore the formative effect of the shifting border on the imagination and production of "authentic" Israeli architecture. Defining a certain body of architecture as Israeli is contingent, following Slavoj Zizek's reminder, on the communal belief that such a "Thing" as "Israeli architecture" exists. The article recounts the history of the search for such a definition, and describes the state of this effort after two Palestinian *intifadas* and Israel's unilateral "disengagement" from Gaza. It then demonstrates how the external political border continuously carves a more subtle cultural border that ridicules these efforts — or, to put it differently, threatens the cohesiveness of what Zizek calls "the national Thing."

Since the British Mandate, locating the territorial border between Jews and Arabs has been a tenuous project. Yet such a border is at the heart of the "symbolic resources" that both Israelis and Palestinians deem necessary to establish visceral ties to the land. Throughout history, one of the most explicit, and most meaningful, ways to bind people to the land, and to history, has been architecture.[2] Thus, in Israel, the building of structures and the landscaping of nature — from housing estates in East Jerusalem to national parks in the Golan Heights — has both framed the private domain of everyday life and conveyed a narrative of state power.[3] Indeed, architectural production has been of paramount importance in forging the sense of "a national home" that both Israelis and Palestinians need to secure their claims to a contested land.[4] From an Israeli perspective, therefore, the shifting border has become a site where adopted national traditions collide with those of a formative "other," a process

that constantly disturbs laborious attempts to establish the sense of a stable Israeli built tradition.

Looking back, the rapid shifting of Jewish territories in Mandate Palestine and of Israel's external border since 1948 has arguably been one of the main reasons why Zionist architectural production has experienced such great changes. In stylistic terms, these are typically depicted as a series of transitions: from early-twentieth-century romantic Orientalism to the strict white modernism of the interwar period[5]; from the bare, mass-produced buildings of early statehood to the exposed sculptural concrete of the 1960s; and from these periods of abstract formalism to the stone-clad neovernacular of the 1970s and 1980s (**FIGS.1–3**).[6] All of these well-meaning but schizophrenic efforts have made it enormously difficult for cultural critics, intellectuals, and even architects themselves to decide what constitutes Israeli architecture.

Habitual explanations of these shifts emphasize they are either the result of a mimicking of global architectural fashions or the product of government rulings.[7] In this article, however, I argue that they have been driven by the politicization of architecture itself.[8] The latter, like every cultural field in Israel, has been constantly defined from without by the geographies of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.[9] The article therefore investigates how the persistent efforts of Israeli culture to (re)locate the border have produced cultural codes that condition the center — the pursuit and dissemination of architectural knowledge. This process has rendered "professional" disciplinary operations — stylistic, historiographic and bureaucratic — politically contingent.

FIGURE 1. *"The Levant Fair: Census of our Growth," poster of the Seventh exhibition, April 30 to May 30, 1936. Source: The Zionist Archive.*

FIGURE 2. *Ministry of Housing,* Israel Builds, *cover image, 1958.*

FIGURE 3. *L. Gerstel, sketch for a housing project in Upper Nazareth. Source:* Israel Builds *(Israel: Ministry of Housing, 1977), p.42.*

To address this proposition, this article first explains the connections between the external, political border separating Israel and Palestine and the internal, cultural border distinguishing the Jewish nation from the Israeli state. The Jewish nation in this case is defined by ethnicity, while the Israeli nation is defined by civics. Historically, the 1960s "architecture of the place" (*makom*) — which married the modern architecture of progress and development with the vernacular architecture of history and authenticity — embodied this connection between nation and state. But building this sense of "place" — a wishful remedy to the alienating newness of the state — meant unilaterally shaping a highly contested territory.

The second part of the article then examines what happened to this unifying architectural paradigm once Palestinian uprisings (namely, the *intifadas* between 1987 and 2004) posed a competing claim to the territory. It describes the consequential retreat of the Israeli architectural imagination from the "authentic" sites of historical (yet often Palestinian) locality — the sites of stone and light — in favor of a nostalgic revival of the state's earlier, purely white and "uncontaminated" modern architecture — the simple concrete structures of the "Bauhaus Style." But, the article then asks, can the grand narrative of modern architecture maintain its unifying power in a postmodern, multicultural, settler society?

The third part of the article locates the resurrection of the modernist heritage within the current context of globalization and political occupation. It describes how politicians, historians, critics and architects have now chosen as the idiom of the state the "modern and sane" White City of Zionism and the "gray and mundane" Israeli project of early statehood. This choice, however, has political dimensions that reveal the ideological underpinnings of a seemingly neutral aesthetic and technocratic discipline. By disengaging from the "nationalist stone" of local, "authentic" architecture, in favor of the concrete of the modern state, today's advocates of this modernist heritage have weakened the nation-state that their Zionist forebears labored for decades to establish.

Central to this argument is a question: how is a nation-building project, as well as its disintegration, articulated in architecture? The architecture of the *makom* — of place and stone — embodied the nation-building project called *mamlachtiyut* (statism, or literally, "kingdomism") that began with the establishment of Israel in 1948. After 1967, the newly occupied territories helped architects decipher the "genetic code" of the place, but the nation-building project that required this code fell under polarizing forces. The ensuing "cultural war" opposed the religious, national and territorial pole of Israeli society to its secular, capitalist and democratic pole.

Anchored in the latter, architects and critics have recently articulated their position through the built landscape of Israel, its history and its preservation. In their view, the regionalism of stone is associated with "a national camp," while the modernism of concrete stands for "a peace camp," which has endorsed its properties as the indisputable

emblem of Israeliness.[10] The promotion of the "white" and "gray" architectures of the Zionist and Israeli projects thus indicates a process that ventures far beyond historiographical trends. It indicates, I argue, a growing internal border that is fabricated between the architecture of the Israeli state and that of the Jewish nation.[11]

A STATE OF CONCRETE, A NATION OF STONE

A celebrated 1950s poster helps clarify the tension between the Hebrew state and the Jewish nation (**FIG.4**). It presents Israel to prospective tourists in a sharply dichotomized iconography. The scene on the right of the poster gives the architectural gist of a Zionist settlement: cubical white public buildings, identical horizontal windows, small white residences, red pitched roofs, and a white water tower. The complex is framed by bright green lawns with ordered cypresses in both background and foreground.

FIGURE 4. *G. Rothschild and Z. Lipman,* Israel, *1950s, lithograph, 50 x 70 cm., Ministry of Tourism advertisement. Source: the Zionist Archive, identification by Alec Mishory.*

Above is a blue sky. This view, the contours of which are intentionally faded, appears as a dream receding into the calm whiteness on which the name of the new state, Israel, is printed in bright blue Hebrew letters.

A large praying figure painted in transparent browns covers the left half of the poster, creating a background for the featured tourist sites and serving as a counterpart to the whiteness on the right. The figure is wrapped in a thin veil (presumably a *tallit* — a praying shawl), which gives it a feminine feel in spite of its engagement in the manly act of blowing the *shofar*. Halfway down the veil, the figure dissolves into a light-brown depiction of Jerusalem's walls and the Tower of David, sites symbolizing the ancient nation of Judea. The antiquated edifices form a horizontal continuum with the white buildings on the right. But this continuity is interrupted by the presence of the figure, whose body delineates a clear border between the whiteness of the Zionist *state* and the brown tonality of the Jewish *nation*. In forging this dichotomy, the poster provides a lens through which one can historically analyze the interdependence between the two divisions: an external border separating Israel and Palestine, and an internal one splitting state and nation.

A Labor Zionist seeing this poster would read the notion of "nation" and "state" progressively from left to right. The brown figure (with Latin letters spelling "Israel" down its veil), would represent the Jewish diaspora: the person blowing the *shofar* is taking part in the Jewish ritual of the high holidays, opening the heavenly gates and allowing the Jewish people to ask for forgiveness and redemption. But the "redemption" that Jews have longed for, this reading suggests, is no longer a dream; it has come true on the right side of the poster, in the form of a modernist Zionist state. Its fulfillment makes the brown diasporic figure obsolete.

This obsoleteness is part of the triple negation that underlay the cultural production of Labor Zionism.[12] First was the negation of diaspora life in favor of the construction of "a national home" (eventually in the form of a nation-state). Second was the negation of the bourgeoisie in favor of a working agrarian society. Third was the negation of the Orient (linked with an emerging Arab nationalism) in favor of a new collective image, which would generate the *"sabra"* myth — the stereotype of the Israeli-born, the native of the Land. By extension, this triple negation shaped the physical collective image of Jewish settlement in Palestine. Since the Zionist movement had emerged in Europe, remote from its realization in Palestine, the quest of Jewish people for a national identity in Mandate Palestine could not rely on an immediate past or local culture. The absence of a shared visual heritage thus allowed the region to be construed as a *tabula rasa*. This prepared the ground for the positivist Zionist project, whose visual mold was set by modern architecture, the declared epitome of universal rationality.[13]

The white village on the right of the poster, the quintessence of the Zionist project, was a spatial experiment in which

architecture accelerated the historical revival of the Promised Land. Accordingly, contemporary architects claimed that "[t]he new village is built . . . on the ground of scientific suppositions, in a modern way, or more correctly, it is based on hypothesis" (**FIG.5**).[14] This scientific legacy struck a special cord in the context of the Yishuv: the stark white house was conceived as the proper traceless home for the uprooted Jew, "an apartment free from past memories" (**FIG.6**).[15]

But once Israel was established, another way to read the poster emerged — one in which "nation" and "state" could be apprehended simultaneously. In this view, the brown-clad figure with the *shofar* and the brightly colored Zionist settlement are both inseparably located in "the land of Israel." This was the position of the ideology of *mamlachtiyut* — literally, "kingdomhood." Significantly, however, the symbols of the ancient *nation* did not quite manage to fuse with those of the modernist *state*. The nation, as an ethnically defined entity, was based on primordial sentiments; and to root their national
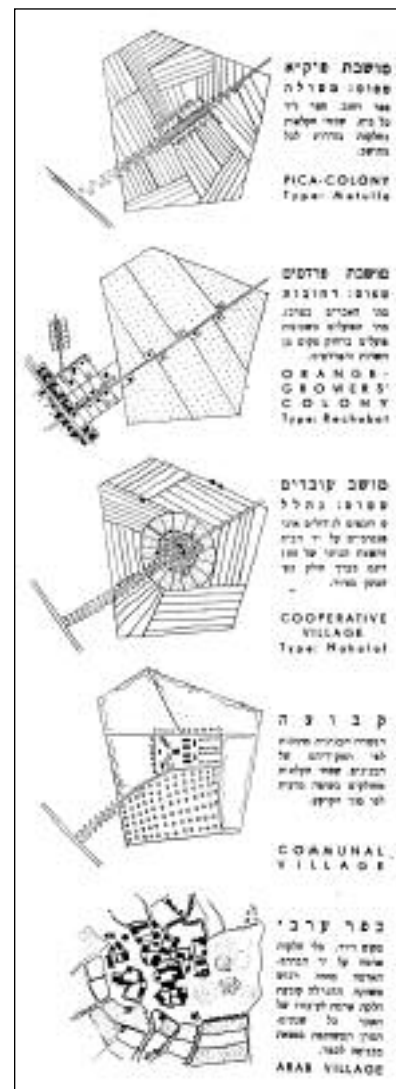

FIGURE 5.
J. Posener, "Villages in Palestine," Habinyan *3 (1938), p.3.*

FIGURE 6.
D. Karmi, apartment
building. Photo: Y.
Kalter.

FIGURE 7. Y. Segal, "The Arab Village in the Galilee," cover image,
Tvai 1, 1966.

community, Israelis turned to the ancient monuments and
archeological findings that would prove their historical claim
to the land. By contrast, the state, as a political-territorial enti-
ty, was based on sovereign rule and civic sentiments; and to
foster a view of the state as part of the developed world, Israeli
officials enacted a modernization project that emphasized for-
ward-looking infrastructure, housing and industry. It is no
wonder, then, that the symbols of the nation (the Jewish fig-
ure and the Old City of Jerusalem) could not easily mesh with
the symbols of the state (the modernist settlement that con-
quered the arid landscape of Palestine).

    The dichotomy within the poster thus came to nourish the
impasse of a country trapped, as Adriana Kemp elegantly put it,
by "the incongruity between the political space of the sovereign
state and the cultural space of the nation."[16] The architecture of
mamlachtiyut was an effort to conceal this rift: it aimed to be
modern and progressive, but also local, authentic and timeless.
It sought to cross the white/brown boundary — a divide that
was not only conceptual, but also political and territorial.

    These efforts to localize Israeli architecture were launched
in the late 1950s by a group of architects born or raised in
Israel. This generation saw in the newly acquired Israeli terri-
tories (including the shores of the Mediterranean, the hills of
Judea, the Galilee, and the Negev) a real homeland — unlike
the abstract, literary one nurtured by the founders of Labor
Zionism. Labor Zionists had chosen modern architecture as
their emblem, with its connotations of a new beginning — a
departure from the bourgeois (or Oriental) life in the diaspo-
ra, which, it was now believed, had previously contaminated
Jewish life. This younger *sabra* generation criticized the mod-
ern, stripped architecture of the nascent Israeli state for disre-
garding the Zionist promise of a national home.[17]

    Addressing the notion of place (*makom* in Hebrew), the
younger architects claimed that Zionist modernism had
failed to create a place to which the new immigrant could
belong, and with which she could identify. Nor did it fulfill

the desire to "naturalize" Israelis in this ancient region — to
devise an architecture "of the place," a place to which they
wanted to belong, as well as possess.[18] The alternative was
found in the Palestinian vernacular, which came to typify not
only an ideal communal built environment, but more impor-
tantly, a natural, harmonious and uncontrived extension "of
the place." It provided for Israelis a formal archive of indige-
nous culture and a type of structure that they believed bore
the "genetic code" of the land itself (FIG.7). This archive
grew in 1967 when Israel expanded its territory during six
days of military combat, by the end of which it imposed new
borders on neighboring Arab countries. Shortly after, Israeli
architects started transforming the newly occupied territories
— Jerusalem, in particular — into a testing ground for inter-
action with authentic vernacular architecture and timeless
historical landscapes (FIG.8).

FIGURE 8. M. Safdie, Block 38, infill, the Jewish Quarter of the Old City
of Jerusalem. Completed in 1979. Source: Moshe Safdie Archive.

In the years that followed, it seemed as if the architecture of *mamalachtiyut* was being realized. Architects who identified themselves as modernists created buildings for a centralized state market that were mass produced and thoroughly modern, yet were designed with forms and materials that evoked the Palestinian vernacular and the imagined serenity of biblical Palestine. East Jerusalem, in particular, was covered with concrete structures clad with stone — emulating traditional masonry volumes, spans, arches and terraces. Inspiration also came from an international discourse criticizing the Modern Movement, in search for a lost authenticity, for architecture as it has always been. By adhering to this discourse, Israelis succeeded in locating themselves on the cutting edge of both professional and national demands.

The nation and state were to celebrate their ultimate symbolic union in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. In 1948, after a long siege, the latter had fallen into Jordanian hands. Yet, Israelis saw in the 1967 reconquest of the Quarter and the return to the Western Wall — the holiest site for Jews worldwide — not only historical repair, but more significantly, a messianic redemption uniting the people of Israel with their glorious biblical past. The immediate overwhelming euphoria that swept almost all Israeli Jews indicated the extent by which the national narrative of the *mamlachtiyut* project — the return of Jews to their biblical land — was successfully rooted in the minds and hearts of Israel's Jewish citizens.

The prime location for articulating such a unitary vision of nation and state was the site of the Hurva synagogue, a slot of land already dedicated by the Ottomans to Jewish ritual in the sixteenth century. The large Ashkenazi synagogue built there three centuries later was the most symbolic building of the Jewish population in the Old City. It was therefore also a desired target for Jordanians, who tore it down as soon as they seized the Quarter in 1948. Israeli architects conceded the task of rebuilding the Hurva to Louis Kahn, who was known in Jerusalem as "the king of American architects."[19] With

this choice they hoped for no less than a world architectural paragon, a symbol of the validity of their national project.

Kahn suggested erecting a stone building that would enwrap a concrete structure and bring the connection between the two — stone and concrete — into poetic harmony.[20] Architect Ram Karmi, who brought Kahn to Jerusalem, later explained that the formal clarity of the proposal emanated from Kahn's respect for materials and his firm decision to "never use [a material] contrary to the material's merits and its 'will'."[21] Because of his famous respect for what the brick, stone or concrete "wants to be," Karmi explained, Kahn's stone walls had firm wide bases and narrowed as they rose; meanwhile, the concrete structure started narrow and gradually widened, eventually hovering over the synagogue and becoming the roof of the entire space (**FIGS.9–11**).

Karmi further described the slit Kahn proposed between the interior concrete pillars and roof and the tapered stone walls of the exterior, a slit wide enough to let the Jerusalem sunbeams penetrate, to light and animate the space of this bold twelve-meter-high structure. Kahn was famed for his ingenious use of light, and according to Karmi, it was this intangible building material that could weld oppositions between real physical elements. As he explained:

> *The yellow Jerusalem stone would bounce the sunbeams and cast a golden shade of light, while the gray concrete structure would bounce the light in silver shade. This would create in the building an impressive and fascinating play of light in gold and silver colors, which would thus enable the expression of stone and of concrete.[22]*

Khan's intention was thus not to mesh stone and concrete, but rather to keep their material integrity. The focus was on the human experience of this space, which was not necessarily tangible but certainly transcendental. The sublimity of refracting light, Karmi deduced, would have transformed the two materials into one — a symbol of the compatible unity and interdependency of nation and state.

FIGURE 9. *L. Kahn, the Hurva Synagogue, 1968 proposal, plans and section. Left: women's gallery. Right: synagogue hall. Source: D. Cassuto, ed.,* The Hurva Rebuilt: Proposals and Criticism of the Rehabilitation of the Hurva of Rabbi Yehuda the Hasid Synagogue, *1970.*

FIGURE 10. *L. Kahn, Hurvah Synagogue, section through the external tapered stone wall and the interior concrete structure with its hovering inverted pyramid, pencil drawing. Source: Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission*

FIGURE 11. *L. Kahn, the Hurva Synagogue, 1968 proposal, images of model. Source: D. Cassuto, ed.,* The Hurva Rebuilt: Proposals and Criticism of the Rehabilitation of the Hurva of Rabbi Yehuda the Hasid Synagogue, *1970.*
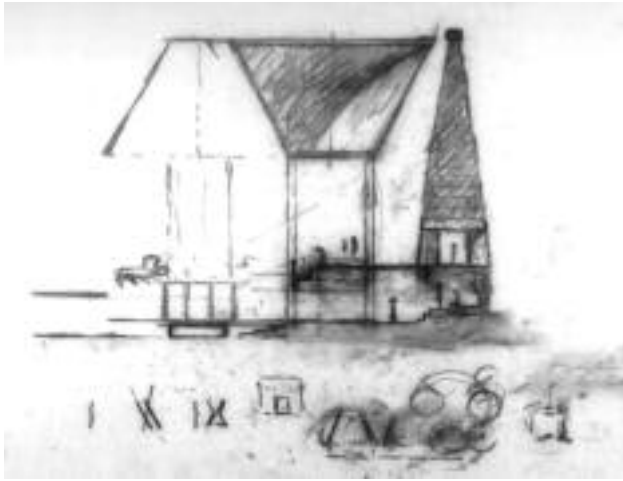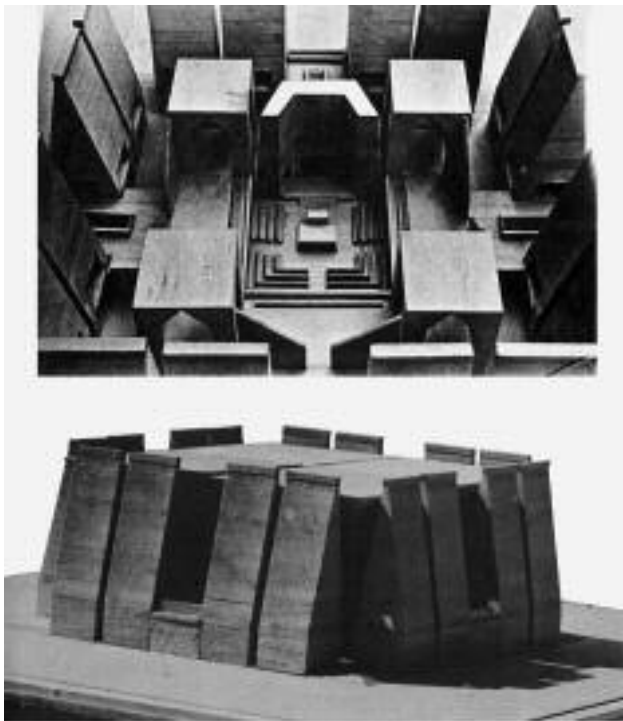
The inability to erect a new Hurva, however, eventually confirmed the impasse impeding the "architecture of place," the hallmark of the *mamlachtiyut* project. And during the decade between 1967 and 1977 the initial widespread support

for this movement lost ground.[23] One reason was that it was becoming apparent to a growing number of Israelis that their nation-building project was not only a national enterprise, but also a colonialist one. Hence, the success of the national campaign to consolidate the spaces of the state and the nation met its colonial complement, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. Thus began the erosion of Israel's apparent national unity.

During the 1980s the seam between nation and state that so much attention had been given to mending in the 1960s and 1970s gradually unraveled. If the Left and Right of Israeli politics during early statehood had been split between the social and economic creeds of the socialists and liberals, the so-called Six Day War of 1967 focused the Left/Right rift on the occupied territories. New and powerful civic movements took opposite poles: "Peace Now" advocated a Palestinian state within the confines of the Green Line, while "the Block of the Faithful" insisted on Greater Israel as the historical and sanctified biblical inheritance of Jews.[24] Ironically, it was the removal of the external border between Israel and Jordan that paved the way for the emergence of an "inner" border between these two camps — one side advocating two states (Israel and Palestine) on either side of the Green Line, the other advocating an inclusive Jewish nation redeeming its "land" from Arab possession.

In architectural terms, this meant that just when architects got the opportunity to interact with the tangible place for which they longed — complete with the history, authenticity, landscapes, and built materials of this ancient land — the legitimacy of the combined national-colonial project that had triggered this architecture started to fade. During the 1970s and 1980s architects continued to build in the localist paradigm, despite their discomfort with its slightly too nationalist "Jerusalemism."[25] But severe cracks in this architectural program appeared once the hyphen between "nation" and "state," the space within which this architecture was carefully located, began to weaken. The cracks became most visible with the onset of the Palestinian *intifadas* of 1987–1993 and 2000–2004.

ORDINARY CONCRETE VS. SPIRITUAL STONE

The two *intifadas* had the effect of politically charging the places from which the architects of the 1960s and 1970s derived their inspiration for local architecture. Already during the first *intifada*, it had become difficult to regard Arab villages as mere landscapes of stone and light, of picturesque Mediterranean alleys and squares. They ceased to serve as architectural precedents for biblical localness. And as a result of the armed conflict, Israelis could no longer regard Palestinians as generic "Arabs" living in the typical vernacular "of the place."[26] Rather, local Arabs became fierce competitors for the authentic territories of Judea and Samaria. The very

stones of the hitherto desired "place" were now thrown at Israeli soldiers by Palestinian youth. The conflict spread to Jerusalem and the West Bank — the characteristic sites of authentic localness — and made it difficult to find in their vicinity the consensus necessary for casting a national heritage.

Consider, for example, the following impasse. "Encounters: The Vernacular Paradox in Israeli Architecture," the official exhibition prepared on the occasion of Israel's Jubilee in 1998, aimed to cement Israeli architecture into "a permanent dialogue between Arabic architecture and her Israeli cousin: the first — rooted in the vernacular, ancient, and formed by native skills passed from father to son; the second — rich with knowledge and technology, but struggling to find its connection to the place."[27] Accordingly, its curator Ami Ran (also the editor of Israel's most popular architectural periodical, *Architecture of Israel*), displayed examples in the exhibition of contextual architecture, "of the place" — which he claimed Israeli architects had finally found. Of course, such a "dialogue" never existed on equal ground; it was clearly a product of modernist utopian presumptions.

A couple of years later, in the midst of the second *intifada*, and immediately after Palestinians ruined the Tomb of Joseph in Nablus, the false promise of Ran's Arab-Israeli dialogue was revealed. And in an editorial, "On Neighbors and Brutalism," Ran wrote about the destroyed Tomb of Joseph: "It is hard to believe that stone, a traditional building material in this part of the world, has become a weapon [used to destroy] peace. The sudden transformation right before our eyes of skilled craftsmen (casting, plaster and tile artists) into lynch mobs was shocking."[28] Here Ran painfully exposed the collective blindness of the architectural profession, which wanted to appropriate Palestinian material culture and crack its secret code for local connectedness, but which also assumed that this could be done through a peaceful exchange. That longing for traces of nativeness in the built environment was, however, not limited to Israelis. It was a pervasive post-World War II phenomenon, with various manifestations in late-modernist schemes around the world.[29] But in Israel this precarious desire was thoroughly enmeshed in the hard, cruel world of politics.

In light of this escalating conflict (and concurrent ambivalence about the proper role of Jerusalem in the Israeli state), Tel Aviv — the first city built by Jews, and a purely "modern" city devoid of both Palestinians and reminders of the Orient — came to epitomize for Israelis a site of calm and nostalgic recollection.[30] The modern age, ironically, has during the last two decades become the "good old days"; and this, in turn, has meant that the "history of modernism" is itself not without historiographic ambivalence.[31] Indeed, it has become a curious, and urgently embraced, heritage, one which allows embattled Israelis to dispense with the menacing immediacy of contemporary life in Israel (**fig.12**). On the occasion of the "Bauhaus in Tel Aviv" national celebration in 1994, for example, Michael Levin wrote in the city's local newspaper:

FIGURE 12. *"Bauhaus in Tel Aviv," advertisement for the 1994 events.*

The agreement between the aesthetics and vision of the new society and the society's spiritual rebirth was almost complete. In the realm of architecture, Le Corbusier proclaimed this as the birth of a new architecture, which was more or less creating something out of nothing. In the realm of society, politics and even personal life, the leaders of the Zionist movement and the Jewish yishuv proclaimed this moment the birth of a new society and a new man. This too was the creation of something out of nothing.[32]

Tel Aviv, the "first Hebrew city," which mythically "grew out of the sands," through this discourse became a prototypical Zionist settlement. The "nothingness" on which Tel Aviv was founded undergirded the ultimate white utopia: it was a city with no prehistory — and therefore indisputably and authentically Zionist. Paradoxically, in the search to redefine a secure Israeli past, it was the modernist channel, ahistorical by definition, on which the longing for the architectural roots of Israeliness was focused.[33]

More importantly, however, this discourse established the foundation of a modernist architectural frontier that has become a vital part of the so-called "First Israel's" sense of

self.[34] In the context of growing multiculturalism, of escalating political conflict, and of a political Right imbued with a sense of messianic religiosity, the old elite — Israeli-born of European descent — had to secure its own cultural codes and social status. The modern frontier, which is celebrated most spectacularly in Tel Aviv, has separated the secular Israeli elite from both the Palestinian Other and Jewish nationalism. In this vision, Palestinians and settlers could contend with each other, while Tel Aviv is dressed in white for the various celebrations of its historical newness.

The retreat into the modernist origin of Israeliness only grew deeper as the maintenance of normal, everyday life became impossible. "The Israeli Project" exhibition, for example, opened shortly after the onset of the second, Al Aqsa, *intifada* in 2000.[35] It displayed architecture of the 1950s and 1960s that was, according to curator Zvi Efrat, "Israeli in the fullest sense of the word, even if it was not born here." This architecture's wide distribution during early statehood made it, according to Efrat, "the pattern of the landscape of the homeland."[36] Ester Zandberg, an influential architectural critic, added: "These structures shaped both the country's landscape and consciousness during a period when the 'sanctity of the people' was not embodied in ancient stone walls and the tombs of pious figures, but rather in purposeful, innovative buildings, secular to the core" **(FIG.13)**.[37]

Indeed, in the present atmosphere, architecture and building materials are often charged with political and anthropomorphic rhetoric. Ran (who desires an Israeli architecture appropriate for "a society eager for both functional convenience and relevant spiritual content"[38]) has insisted that "stone has always been a friendly building material," and "[t]hat is all we've got."[39] In contrast, Efrat has firmly stated,

"the cement is no less local and no less natural than the stone. It is just less traditional, less Arab and less messianic."[40] While stone has been identified with Jerusalemite architecture at least since the British Mandate, and Tel Aviv's peeling cement has been celebrated in Israeli artwork and poetry from the 1960s on, it took the *intifada* to trigger the personification of these building materials, which architectural critics positioned at polar ends of the Israeli cultural war.[41] This split is a perfect example of how even the seemingly rarified field of architecture can be shaped by ideological battles. Even the banality of architectural materials can be enlisted to further advance positions on each side of the split in Israel between advocates of the democratic state and those of the Jewish nation.[42]

But the architects who built Jerusalem in stone, who advocated for localism during the late 1950s and 1960s, were also an integral part of the "secular to the core" socialist elite of "the first Israel." Could it be, as Efrat suggested, that these architects "changed colors" soon after the 1967 war? And if they did, how can this help locate them in this polarized battle over building materials, where democrats push for a Hebrew state against the nationalist longings of Jewish fundamentalists?

In the attempt by architectural critics of the last decade to split the architectural career of an entire generation into its concrete and stone periods, I read an effort to resurrect an Israeli identity not yet contaminated by conflicted Orientalist and religious overtones. This attempt subordinates, however, a comprehensive architectural program that preoccupied Israeli architects from the late 1950s through at least the late 1980s to the dictates of the current *intifada* era. Zandberg has identified the crux of 1960s and 1970s trends by asking, "what does this desperate desire to blend into the environment stem from?" Efrat responded by claiming that this desire is rooted in

FIGURE 13. *E. Zandberg, "The Lost Dignity of the Shutters,"* Ha'aretz Weekend Supplement*, October 27, 2000.*

. . . the diversion of practical concern with localness to an imaginary discussion taking place today about to whom history belongs and who owns this place. In the 1950s and even earlier, back in the 1930s, our foreignness in the Levant was regarded as obvious by the "Bauhaus" architects. They made an effort to develop an Israeli identity that was neither biblical nor Oriental. . . . In my opinion, concern with localness after 1967 reflects the release of dark tendencies that are fundamentalist in essence and in total contradiction to the non-tempestuous, non-Arabized, healthy logic of early statehood.[43]

This observation puts into sharp relief the question of what is "home" for Israelis, and what frontier that "home" is constructed against. Can a home be resurrected that is obviously foreign, a branch of global culture in the Levant? Can new borders be defined for a revised — global, secular, and internationally oriented — Israeliness?

JUDEA IS A NATION, TEL AVIV A STATE

A commentator recently reminded readers that three thousand years ago, after King Solomon died, there was much strife within the Israeli community. The result was the separation between Judea and Israel. Why not, asked the writer, separate Israel once more and establish a new secular state around greater Tel Aviv known as the Dan Block? Citizens of the State of Dan would enjoy complete civil freedom and no ethnic tensions. Relieved from the financial burden brought on by settlements and a huge security budget, they would enjoy economic prosperity and focus their energies on education, welfare and culture. "It may sound like a hallucination," the writer admitted. "Maybe, but what a pleasure it would be to hear the sentence, 'This is Rubi Rivlin from built and glorious Jerusalem which is bound together firmly' and know that it is some minister in a different, faraway country" **(FIG.14)**.[44]

This commentary bluntly exposes the fact that many Israelis detest the city of Jerusalem. And it begs the question: Where are the boundaries of Israeli collectivity, which are defined by the "cement" pole of the architectural map (i.e., the white utopian city and the gray Israeli project) located? Etienne Balibar has suggested that

. . . the "external frontiers" of the state have to become "internal frontiers" or — which amounts to the same thing — external frontiers have to be imagined constantly as a projection and protection of an internal collective personality, which each of us carries within ourselves and enables us to inhabit the space of the state as a place where we have always been — and always will be — "at home."[45]

FIGURE 14. *"Long Live the State of Tel Aviv," in* Ha'ir, *May 8, 2003.*

The debate indicates a problem within Israel's national program. The present external frontiers of the state of Israel — in sharp opposition to the country's besieged borders during the 1950s — can no longer be imagined as the internal frontier of a "collective personality" **(FIG.15)**. Israeli society is politically fragmented, economically privatized, and culturally diverse. From Israel's disputed position of power it is no longer possible to maintain any unified, or even desired, image of an Israeli citizen that can be a model for such a collective.

Nevertheless, the human need "to inhabit the space of the state as a place where we have always been" still allocates a privileged position to the history of architecture. And the current historiography can narrate alternative architectural roots for the state that do not necessarily intermingle with the messy vision of a self-contained nation. In like fashion, Efrat explains about the 1950s and 1960s: "As long as the Mapai [the leading Labor party] utopia survived, solidarity, whether real or imagined, was a supreme value, perhaps even more important than nationalism. It was a sort of survival instinct that forced a clear discipline on architecture as well."[46] Indeed, in the current political atmosphere, the imagined collectivity of early statehood would most likely survive better had it dispensed not only with the Orient but

FIGURE 15.
"Growth against Siege,"
poster published by
Mapai (the Land of
Israel Workers Party),
1955. Reproduced in
B. Doner, To Live with
a Dream *(Tel Aviv:*
Tel Aviv Museum,
1989), p.177.

There was a yearning for the country, for those who lived
in it and left in it the remains of their meager houses, the
ashes of their bonfires and their wells. The longing is
naive, it is not touched by the joy of appropriation that
took place here after 1967. The past is longing, the broken
clay pottery is connection, not a deed of property.[49]

This late reflection underscores Tzafrir's own path
toward a career in biblical archeology. For him, this yearning
for the country (*eretz*) and the place (*makom*) was inextricably
tied to a yearning for a secure past — a longing that bibli-
cized the country in its joint search for locality and history.

But, as David Lowenthal famously phrased it, modernity
turned the past into "a foreign country," and modern nation-
states found in this past fertile ground to negotiate their imag-
ined origin.[50] Thus, Israel's nation-building project has utilized
the past as a modern resource. And the scientific accuracy of
archeology has helped Israelis to imagine and consequently
experience their biblical past as accessible and real. The
demands of nationalism, however, extend beyond heritage.
Thus, Israel has had to embark on several simultaneous pro-
jects — modernizing, antiquating, and settling the same territory
— in order to fulfill the national formula of people emerging
together out of a collective past, sharing the same language, cul-
ture and territory, and facing the future in joined forces.

The foundation of Israel was based on this inner contra-
diction between the praxis of a settler society and the ideolo-
gy of a people returning to the land of their biblical origin.
When Zionists embarked on the colonization project that
prepared the way for the foundation of Israel, they sought a
new home for European Jews who had no metropole — no
home-base to retreat to. The chosen "home" was therefore
"the land of Israel" — the country of Jewish longings, where
Jews had always lived as a minority under a series of differ-
ent rulers. But the liberation of Jews and the settlement of
Jewish refugees were inextricably tied to the dispossession of
Palestinians and the occupation of their territories. In this
context Israel as a settler society rendered the past it desired
not only foreign and insecure but tenaciously hostile. It was
a past that was threatened by Palestinian histories, imagina-
tions, and interpretation of the same piece of land.

As a result of this conflict, Israelis could not sit peace-
fully on their thorny territory. Like nation-states worldwide,
Israel has always desired to conceal the process of "tradition-
ing" its national landscapes — in this case, presenting its
antiquity as a mirror of the Jewish biblical past.[51] Tradition is
at its powerful best when it is taken as nature, as ready-
made, as a solid and stable reality that has always been
there.[52] But the Israeli concealment of its "traditioning" has
been caught in the predicament of the conflict, clashing with
Palestinian traditions of the same place. It has forced
Israelis to constantly negotiate and always reconquer not only
the place — the physical territory — but also the past that
imbued the place with its existential validity.

with the entire national project, reverting instead to a glori-
ous socialist past of pervasive solidarity.

But this past, some would argue, was no less national or
colonial than Israel after 1967. The socialist Mapai Party
established the Israeli settler society. Its leaders committed
themselves to the Zionist colonization of Palestine in the
early twentieth century, helped found Israel in 1948, and
continued to settle Jewish immigrants on the ruins of the
Palestinian society until they lost political power in 1977.[47] It
was Mapai that insisted on Jerusalem as Israel's capital,
despite international protest. And between 1948 and 1967,
when Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Palestine, its
Western, Israeli part included numerous Palestinian resi-
dences that Israelis declared "deserted property" and appro-
priated for Jewish reuse.

The ambivalences that disturb such urban landscapes in
Israel/Palestine have similarly shaken the basis on which the
model of the native Jew took shape. The *sabra* youth of early
statehood invested enormous efforts in becoming native —
in appearance, language, social conduct, and built environ-
ment. They wished to see in their habitat a mirror of con-
nectedness to the place. This desired connectivity, which is
taken for granted by those born into it, indicated the extent to
which the model of the young *sabra* was itself the result of an
insecure possession of place.

Yoram Tzafrir, a member of this *sabra* elite, lucidly elab-
orated the trappings of his generation, which he identifies
with the protagonist of S. Yizhar's novel *The Days of Tziklag*.[48]
Yizhar described a group of Israeli warriors who conquered
the country not only with weapons but also with a Bible and a
plant guide, seeking traces of biblical sites beneath the broken
clay pottery of deserted Arab villages. Touring the country with
a pocket Bible was so common, Tzafrir explained, because

Until 1967 it was mostly archeology that had been entrusted with the mandate of authenticating the narrative of *mamlachtiyut* (statism/kingdomism), of meshing the Israeli state with the history of the Jewish nation.[53] In 1967, however, when Israel seized East Jerusalem and the vast territories of the West Bank, the "past" became more accessible and tangible, and the project of "traditioning" the pristine, Orientalized landscapes took a new turn. In particular, it animated an architectural program that had attempted to localize, authenticate and biblicize the modern landscape of Israel since the late 1950s.[54]

The architectural conquest of the Israeli "place" produced pervasive codes about "Israeli architecture." It had to be technologically updated yet rooted in its location; it had to be sensitive to topography, light, and building materials, and playful with simple, mostly cubical volumes; and it was geared toward communal and eventually urban life.[55] The strength of these codes for "Israeli architecture" was the consensual belief in what they communicated — a "naïve longing." Shared by the professional elite, this "yearning" and "longing" for "connection" was eventually caught in the crossfire of politics. Thus, a project of desire for an ever-evasive place was suddenly subjected to the harsh split between a Hebrew state and a Jewish nation. And the awkward search to unify these disparate ideologies was at the core of the Israeli (national) Thing — the nation-building project of *mamlachtiyut*. At present, its complementary "architecture of the place" can hardly survive the tension between the conflicting pressures brought on by nation-building, settler society, and the international ramifications of the conflict with Palestine. Subjected to a privatized market that weakens the nation-state, these forces erode the capacity of Israel to produce a unified architectural message that can mend the ruptures opening in its political body.

POSTSCRIPT

As I write these lines, a fence is ceaselessly being erected to separate Israel and Palestine. Its corporeal absurdity has caught the attention of numerous illustrators. In an Israeli caricature, two lively construction workers in blue overalls are lining up huge concrete slabs to build the tall, winding wall. On the left side of the wall, a mobile crane and extra slabs of concrete are depicted; on the other side, set at a distance, is a silhouette of what is clearly an Arab village — massed houses, arches, and a single minaret. In the midst of the commotion, the worker on top of the wall pauses for a second and asks: "Which side is the temporary state?" **(FIG.16)**.

This little image captures pertinent symbols: the labor heritage, its activism, and the very Israeli mix of existential insecurity and potent power that constantly and hopelessly creates new "facts on the ground." The new "fact" is the fabricated separation: concrete and activism on the Israeli side,

an authentic vernacular on the Palestinian side. Israel, in this and similar images, has happily conceded "locality" and "history" to the Palestinians. It has given up its entire architectural program of "united Jerusalem," eager to find instead a new modernist past of its own. Indeed, the new fence not only separates Israel from Palestine; it also metaphorically pushes apart the dichotomized halves of the *mamlachtiyut* poster with which this paper opened. Four decades of attempts to marry the brown figure with the *shofar* and Jerusalem's walls to the white modernist settlement and its green lawns have reached an impasse. From the point of view of current historiographical practices in Israel, which have already produced a large body of work on "white" architecture, and which is now producing extensive works on "gray" brutalism, the white Zionist settlement of the poster seems to have unilaterally divorced the Jewish brown figure — a state of cement withdrawing from a nation of stone. The state in this story is no longer interested in a history that is more than a century old.[56]

Tel Aviv perfectly suits this mandate. "Born" out of the Mediterranean sand dunes exactly one hundred years ago, it offers Israel a secular alternative to the sanctified place of Jerusalem and the occupied territories. While Tel Aviv celebrates its centennial, we are left to ponder the role of architectural history in claiming the (white) city as the alternative capital of the Israeli state, and its unilateral divorce from the Judean nation and its capital, Jerusalem of Gold(en stones.) Consider, for example, the definition of interwar modernism as a *historical* style. Until the 1980s, to be modern meant to constantly address the demands of the present. The radical new conception of modernism as a cherished past bears an important message: it provides an embattled society with a

FIGURE 16. *D. London Dekel, "The Daily Caricature,"* Haaretz, *July 17, 2002.*

reassuring heritage. It implies that the state can have a past of its own, separate from the ancient and contested past that legitimizes the nation.

This past, however, stands for a very particular set of values, those held by "the first Israel," members of the inner circle, the salt of the earth. Their émigré parents shaped the state prior to the huge immigration of European refugees and Arab Jews. The 1930s orderly landscape of white modern residences, and the 1950s landscape of development into which the population of "rooted" Israelis absorbed a population of "gathered exiles" twice its size, evoked feelings of utopia, purpose, order and modesty, a sense of control over a landscape that multiculturalism has since sabotaged.

It is useful to examine the values historians embed in the purely white, or authentically gray, architectural heritage in relation to a recent comment by Jean Louis Cohen urging architectural historians not to shy away from the political circumstances and implications of their research. History, Cohen claimed, "is always navigating between the temptation of knowledge disconnected from today's fights and the legit-

imization of current practice."[57] The current position of architectural history and criticism at the two poles of the Israeli cultural war on religion and democracy, secularism and occupation, may cast a shadow on the efficacy of this navigation.

It would be naïve, as Cohen rightly commented, to assume "an autonomous research strategy . . . immune from the interiorization of politics by scholars themselves."[58] At present, however, the "fruitful anxiety" Cohen advocates — an experience enhanced in light of the constantly shifting territorial border between Israel and Palestine — contributes to a further distancing of nation and state, stone and concrete, as opposing ingredients of a dichotomized reality.[59] Instead, the current condition of shifting, nonconsensual, and constantly negotiated borders may inspire a nuanced history of interwar and early statehood modernism that is less entangled in current practice. A history that explores the space in between these poles — the fading away figures, public spaces, events and buildings that escaped official historiography — may inspire an architectural discourse that challenges the cultural war, rather then solidifying its problematic premises.

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Field Report

Constructing Ethnic Identity: Making and Remaking Korean-Chinese Rural Houses in Yanbian, 1881—2008

YISHI LIU

Rural Korean-Chinese dwelling traditions have undergone deep social and political fluctuations since the arrival of Korean migrants in Yanbian in the late nineteenth century. However, the way this population has built their houses has continued to reinforce their sense of a separate identity in a foreign land. By examining ethnic policies related to Korean-Chinese rural houses in Yanbian, this study affirms the role of the state in constructing ethnic identity, and challenges the present theorization of hybridity.

Oriented toward China's frontier and adjacent to North Korea and Russia, Yanbian Korean Chinese Autonomous Prefecture is the largest administrative entity in Jilin province. Subdivided into six municipalities, it is home to an estimated 806,000 ethnic Koreans (**FIG.I**).[1]

Large numbers of Koreans originally migrated to this area in the late nineteenth century during a period of famine on the Korean peninsula. Thus, although Yanbian was officially designated an autonomous prefecture in 1952, its status as a formal administrative region can be traced to the foreign and frontier policies of the late Qing dynasty. Indeed, legitimization of the residency of Korean immigrants in Yanbian in 1881 marked a crucial moment in the development of the agricultural potential of Manchuria. Since then, however, Korean Chinese in Yanbian have experienced profound social and economic changes under a series of political regimes with very different ethnic policies.

The Korean minority in Yanbian is culturally distinct from other groups in China. Unlike many other minorities in China, ethnic Koreans were also incorporated into the

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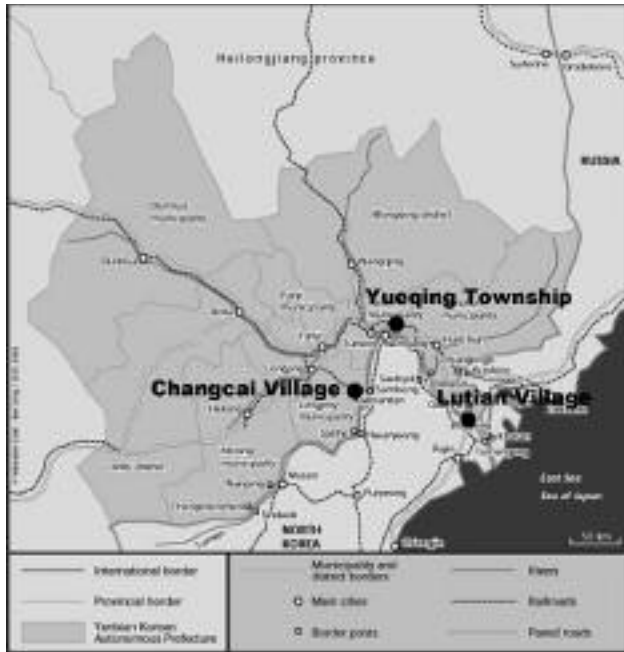
FIGURE 1. *The geography of Yanbian Korean Chinese Autonomous Prefecture, showing the three villages in which the fieldwork was done in 2008.*

Chinese state as the result of voluntary migration, not territorial expansion. However, since their arrival in northeast China, at a time of rising consciousness of the nation-state, Korean Chinese have been keen to maintain their ethnic distinctiveness — although there have been different reasons for this over the years.

This report examines three issues: Chinese ethnic (and frontier) policies in Yanbian during the last hundred years; the way ethnic Korean identity has been (re)constructed in China; and changes in Chinese-Korean house form in Yanbian. Specifically, I argue that policies of the Chinese government have been instrumental in (re)constructing Korean-Chinese identity. To illustrate this, I connect the material development of the rural Korean-Chinese house to changing ethnic and frontier policies, placing it within the rubric of ethnic identity, modernity and globality. In terms of ethnic policies and identity (re)formation, contrary to recent postcolonial and transnational studies, the report also affirms the strong role played by the Chinese state.

I cut into these issues from the perspective of the form and interior arrangement of Korean-Chinese houses. These residences, and the environment in which they have been built, are not just composed of physical and spatial forms; they are evidence of an attitude of mind. By comparing the plans of houses on the Korean peninsula to those in Yanbian, I show how the Korean-Chinese house, as a hybrid form, has changed over time and now differs in many respects from either its Korean or Chinese counterparts. More importantly,

I explain how before the Communist revolution, the hybrid rural Korean-Chinese house was a site of resistance to harsh attempts to assimilate migrant Koreans to Chinese culture. Yet even under more favorable Communist ethnic policies, the practice of hybridity has continued, and today it resists not state authority, but another powerful homogenizing force — globalization. This report thus tells how both sinicization and globalization have failed to assimilate and eliminate a separate sense of Korean-Chinese identity in Yanbian.

In order to discern how different ethnic policies have affected material culture, a long historical lens, covering several political regimes, is required. The report thus refers to primary and secondary sources on Chinese ethnic policies of different time periods, and incorporates the analysis of selected ethnic-Korean rural houses from my fieldwork. However, in addition to the rhetoric and intentions of central- and local-government policies, I look at the various social realities those policies have created during the last century — a period of political and economic turmoil. This involves examining such factors as family structure, the specification and use of rooms for different domestic activities, the availability of household consumer goods, and the apportioning of domestic space.

The report focuses on rural houses, because in traditional contexts, as Amos Rapoport noted, "designers were either the users themselves, or designers and clients typically shared the same culture."[2] In the case of Yanbian, these designers and clients have been local Korean-Chinese peasants. Furthermore, as an ethnic minority, immigrant Koreans have remained outside the workings of the Chinese state. Thus, the way they have built their houses reveals the repercussions of local resistance, confrontation and negotiation during the implementation of state policies.

To better understand how such political considerations have affected the construction of rural houses in Yanbian, it is important to understand the history of Korean migration to Manchuria. It is to this that I turn first.

FORMATION OF KOREAN-CHINESE COMMUNITIES AND DEVELOPMENT OF A HOUSE PROTOTYPE

Throughout history, the close interaction between China and Korea has resulted in population movements between the two countries. Written records exist of Korean migration to northeast China long before the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644–1911).[3] During most of their rule, however, the Qing emperors, who originated in Manchuria, restricted all other ethnic groups from entering their homeland in an effort to preserve it as a base separate from Han Chinese life and culture.

Koreans, however, kept crossing the border to Yanbian to cultivate wet rice. This activity led to their expulsion on several occasions during the early and high Qing dynasty.[4] Indeed, until the 1880s it was considered illegal by both governments for Koreans to cross the border to Yanbian as

either farmers or harvesters of ginseng.[5] Those farmers who did visit Yanbian in the summer were therefore temporary sojourners, and they avoided building permanent structures in fear that these would be destroyed by local officials.[6]

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, increasing Russian (and, after the 1890s, Japanese) aggression in Manchuria changed the population dynamic in Yanbian. To counter this outside threat, the Manchus modified their exclusion policy, and began recruiting Chinese from other provinces, such as Shandong and Hebei, to cultivate land in this sparsely populated border region. Yanbian was also opened to settlement by both Han Chinese from the hinterland and immigrant Koreans. However, Han Chinese were initially reluctant to move to the area because of its remoteness and primitive transportation system. As a result, in the next few decades, they were quickly outnumbered by Koreans.

Legalization of residency in 1881 meant that Koreans could build permanent structures on newly acquired lands in Yanbian.[7] The settlers also began to form immigrant villages, normally composed of no more than twenty households who shared a common surname. Despite harsh Qing policies enforcing ethnic assimilation, by 1900 there were already more than three hundred such voluntary villages, and Korean-Chinese communities had become firmly established in Manchuria.[8] The migration of Koreans to Yanbian in the late nineteenth century also brought new architectural ideas and construction techniques to the area. To understand their importance, however, requires a brief discussion of the traditional Korean dwelling.

Scholars have argued that *fengshui* and Confucianism together established the underlying rules for the design of traditional Korean houses, creating distinct patterns of siting and spatial organization that reflected distinct patterns of domestic life.[9] There were two basic house forms. Houses of the well-to-do were generally made of adobe brick, with an interior courtyard surrounded by colonnades and open rooms. A strong hierarchy of privacy, both visually and mentally, was enhanced by the use of thresholds, gates, screens and walls, which marked boundaries between outside and inside, and between male and female sectors. Also, unlike the simple intersections of four sloping surfaces common in northern Chinese houses, a vertical plane was normally inserted at both ends of the massive hipped roofs (tiled in grey or dark blue), creating a distinct architectural feature. The second house type was a more unassuming rural one. Its walls were made of mud with a plaster surface, and its roof was covered with mud and thick thatch. Humble dwellings of this sort did not include a formal courtyard. They also did not include a strict partition between genders, although a hierarchy of privacy could still be discerned.

It is important to note that Koreans customarily take off their shoes when entering a room. Furthermore, in traditional Korean dwellings, colonnaded porches with deep eaves played a crucial role in movement from one room to another.

Often such houses did not feature openings between rooms, and all doors opened directly to the exterior colonnade.

Above all, the most striking feature of Korean houses was a flat, heatable bed, built with bricks or thin stone slabs, the surface of which was often covered with wooden boards or fiberboard decorated with a yellow lacquer polish. Called an *ondol*, this was a common answer among people of the region to the need for warmth during the cold, damp winters. And because it provided the main location for everyday activities in the traditional Korean house (such as eating, playing, lounging and entertaining), it defined the interior layout. Moreover, because domestic Korean activities normally took place while sitting on the *ondol*, Korean dwellings appear lower than their Chinese counterparts, in which chair-sitting prevailed.

Both the tile- and thatched-roofed house types arrived in Yanbian with Korean farmers beginning in the 1880s, making the single-story dwellings of these early settlers quite distinct from those of the local Chinese. Unlike the Chinese houses, spaces in the migrants' houses were divided by light, sliding wooden screens that could be opened and closed according to need. It was hard to distinguish windows and doors from outside the Korean-Chinese house — quite unimaginable in the Chinese house. Latticed door panels allowed summertime ventilation in Korean-Chinese dwellings. And Korean-Chinese houses did not conform to the strict stipulation for bilateral symmetry and a central bay in a Chinese house.

Ethnic-Korean houses in Yanbian also put great emphasis on the *gudul* (the term Korean-Chinese used to describe the equivalent of the *ondol*).[10] Han Chinese or Manchu houses of the region also featured a heated bed, known as a *kang*. But in Korean-style dwellings this area was much bigger, and it was connected to a larger stove. Furthermore, in a Manchu house the *kang* was typically U-shaped, designed to honor the west wall, allow a place for a shrine, and leave space in the center of the room for movement. And in a Han house, it was normally I- or L-shaped — leaving room for furniture such as chairs and tables and indicating the equal importance of activities on and off it. By contrast, the Korean-Chinese *gudul* was a place of everyday life. In essence, it served as a multipurpose room, and most activities took place on it, as might be expected of a "floor-sitting" instead of "chair-sitting" culture (**FIG.2**).

Korean-Chinese houses also differed in terms of kitchen layout from Han or Manchu houses. In Manchu and Han houses, kitchens were built on one side of the central bay, facing the entrance. They were also separated from the *kang* and other rooms by partition walls. Korean-Chinese kitchens, on the other hand, were located next to the wide *gudul*. And where Han and Manchu kitchens were generally built at ground level, those in Korean-Chinese houses were built slightly lower. Finally, since a *gudul* was larger than similar structures in northeastern Chinese house traditions,

FIGURE 2. *The* kang *in a Manchu house (left), in a Han house (middle), and the* gudul *in a Korean-Chinese house (right).*
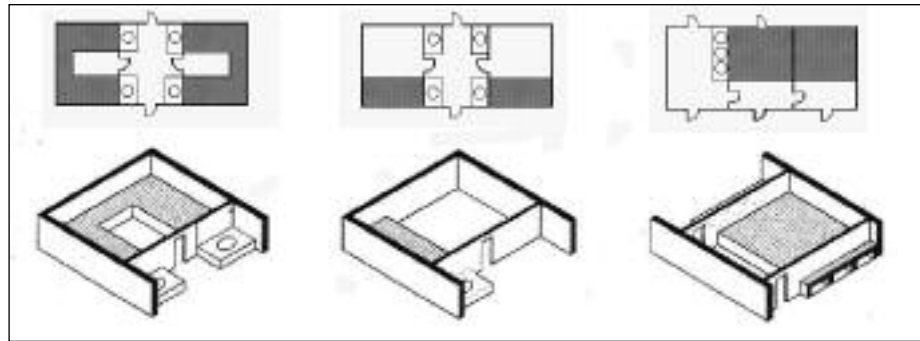
Korean-Chinese houses had one more (three in total) fire hole (**FIG.3**). Multiple flues were embedded under the floor and fed directly by fires in the kitchen stove, generating sufficient heat to enable the enlarged size of the *gudul* and making an insulating partition between the *gudul* room and the kitchen unnecessary (**FIG.4**). The proximity of the kitchen

FIGURE 3. *Three fire holes and the fire pit in the kitchen of a Korean-Chinese house in Lutian Village.*

FIGURE 4. *Section of a Korean-Chinese house showing the construction of the roof and* gudul. *Redrawn by author from Y. Zhang,* Jilin min ju (Vernacular House in Jilin) *(Beijing: Beijing Architectural Industry Press, 1985).*

and living room (*gudul*) also provided ample opportunity for men and women to talk during cooking, an important aspect of the Korean way of life.

Faced with the repressive ethnocentric policies of the Qing dynasty, immigrant Koreans responded by organizing themselves into various kinds of associations. These helped promote education and the use of the Korean language as a way to keep their ethnic identity and autonomy alive.[11] In addition, Korean immigrants, who moved to Yanbian due to famine at home, grouped themselves into compact "spontaneous" villages.[12]

In their new land, Koreans were forced to change many of their customs, including their hair and clothing styles. But they successfully maintained their dwelling form and domestic lifestyle (which were out of sight of mistrustful magistrates). As the local government was, until recently, neither able to provide economic aid to Koreans nor willing to regulate their building practices, for many decades Korean immigrants continued to build their houses according to practices familiar to them from their past lives on the Korean peninsula.

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ETHNIC POLICIES: PROCESS OF CHANGE

Koreans who migrated to Yanbian in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century consciously maintained their cultural difference and ethnic characteristics.[13] Scholars now agree that notions of ethnic identity are not formed as a natural byproduct of descent, culture and genetic transmission; rather, research has focused on its socially constructed aspects — i.e., the ways in which boundaries, identities and cultures are negotiated, defined and transformed through interaction both inside and outside an ethnic community.[14] The (re)construction of a minority ethnic identity, such as that of migrant Koreans in Yanbian, can thus be understood as a continuous process that not only involves socio-cultural self-definition, but also the impact of external forces.

Of these external forces, labeling by the state and by other ethnic groups can be very important. There are several ways that ethnicity can thus be "politically constructed," i.e., ways in
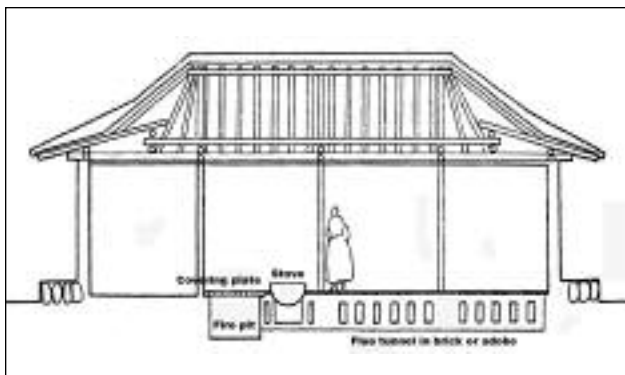
which ethnic boundaries, identities and cultures may be negotiated, defined and produced by political interaction.[15] Recent studies of borderlands have revealed how this negotiation may challenge the conventional political notions of late modernity.[16] This has been particularly true in Southeast Asia where state sovereignty in border regions is sometimes marginal, and may even be abandoned. However, in this report I argue that the nation-state has remained the dominant force regulating and shaping the ethnic boundaries of Korean-Chinese people and influencing their patterns of ethnic identification.

As a group, ethnic Koreans in Yanbian have generally been poor rice farmers, who have remained outsiders to state power.[17] As such, they have been greatly affected by Chinese ethnic and frontier policies. These can be roughly periodized into five phases: the harsh assimilating policies of the late Qing dynasty (1881–1911); overt hostility during the Nationalist and warlord governments (1912–1931); conceptual separation from Chinese during Japanese rule in Manchuria (1931–1945); improved status as a model minority during the early years of Maoism, but ethnic backlash during the Cultural Revolution (1948–1977); and the recent reform policies associated first with the opening of China to the outside by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, and including new internal aid programs since 2001 that have supported the development of ethnic border regions. As I will show, under Communist ideology, the designation of Korean Chinese as members of the "peasant" class has been crucial in bringing psychological change to their identity. However, reaction to their harsh treatment during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) has also been a significant motivator.

During the last years of the Qing dynasty and the succeeding years of Nationalist and warlord regimes, Koreans moved to Yanbian in increasing numbers, either to flee Japanese rule or economic hardship or to use China as a base for anti-Japanese resistance.[18] Yet even as these immigrant Koreans played a crucial role in developing the agricultural resources of Yanbian and contributed to Chinese frontier policies, local officials remained suspicious of them. In a report to Beijing in 1907, a Chinese official expressed anxiety over the great number of Korean immigrants:

> *Koreans who moved here should obey the regulations of our country, and get rid of their old customs. [However] local officials failed to carry out the decree of enforcing them to cut hair and change dressing, as a result, Korean immigrants sojourning here look alien from our culture. . . . Koreans in Yanbian amounted to more than 50,000, while Chinese were only one fourth of that number. The region now almost becomes a Korean colony.[19]*

In fact, the Qing rulers never loosened their ethnic assimilation policies, even after 1881. Naturalization and forced adoption of Chinese clothing and hair styles were prerequisites for owning a piece of land (*ti fa ru ji*, "changing hair style to be naturalized").[20] Furthermore, in 1910, one year before Qing rule ended, "Specifications of Naturalization of Immigrant Koreans" were issued to segregate Koreans from Chinese and further regulate their activities. These rules were explicitly seen as a way "to convert the temperament of Korean people, make them true Chinese, and eventually realize ethnic assimilation."[21] Despite all these restrictions, however, Koreans came to own 55 percent of the cultivated land in Yanbian by 1929.[22]

The mistrust between local Chinese and immigrant Koreans grew when Japan annexed Korea in 1910 and decreed that all ethnic Koreans would thereafter be granted Japanese citizenship. This caused the Chinese Nationalist government to fear increasing Japanese encroachment and a conspiracy between ethnic Koreans and Japanese to occupy land in Manchuria.[23] This led the Nationalist government to intensify ethnic assimilation policies directed at Koreans, and even to expel a few Koreans from Yanbian.[24] When the Japanese did finally occupy Manchuria in 1931, as Japanese subjects, Koreans were accorded higher status than Han Chinese; nevertheless, in an attempt to eliminate their ethnic identity, they were prohibited from using the Korean language.

Chinese Communists gained from the power struggle in Yanbian during the Japanese occupation. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) earned the backing of many Koreans by promoting a policy of ethnic equality and helping liberate Koreans from both Japanese colonial rule and the ethnocentric policies of the Chinese Nationalists.[25] Korean Chinese later played an important role in building the new socialist state by fighting effectively against Japan and the Nationalists.[26] The considerable contribution of Korean immigrants to the development of northeast China was also acknowledged, while the unpleasant memory of collaboration with the Japanese was generally obliterated from official propaganda.[27] Indeed, under early Communist rule, ethnic Koreans were depicted as a model minority, closely "associating with" the central government.[28] And, within the Communist ideology, the status of ethnic Koreans as "peasants" accorded them favorable treatment as members of a reliable social class.

For the older generation, who had experienced considerable hardship since coming to China, the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) was a blessing, because the Communists promised to give poor peasants land of their own. Most older Koreans accepted China as their own country with gratitude and sincerity.[29] Furthermore, the Communist government's ethnic policies guaranteed respect for minority traditions and customs, education in their own language, and regional political autonomy. Korean Chinese thus came to associate themselves psychologically with northeast China, regarding themselves as Chinese nationals. In general, they regarded themselves not only as beneficiaries of a new, "enlightened" Chinese minority policy, but also of Communist rule.

The Korean-Chinese house did not change much with the coming of the PRC in 1949. As was the case in northern areas of the Korean peninsula, rural houses were still roofed largely with mud and thatch, a condition well documented in the 1950s and 1960s in Manchuria.[30] And though Korean-Chinese villages were collectivized under Communist rule and government control was for the first time able to penetrate to very low levels, few official efforts were made to improve local housing conditions.[31] This lack of attention may have been the result of Communist modernization policies, which gave priority to industrial construction in cities; it also accorded with policies before the reform era that praised production and denounced consumption. Preferring to live in ethnic villages as "cultural islands," Korean Chinese were thus able to maintain their traditions, retaining such activities as ethnic songs and folk dances, which were encouraged by Communist policies. Throughout Mao's regime, the closed nature of Chinese society, which allowed no freedom of residence or movement, also helped Koreans preserve their ethnic boundaries and solidify their community. During this period, houses also continued to be built as they had been in previous decades.

Despite their loyalty to the CCP, Koreans were nevertheless among the ethnic groups in the northeast who suffered most during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Many Korean leaders and intellectuals were falsely charged with spying or with being regional nationalists. Korean-Chinese people learned from this experience that they were still somehow different from mainstream Chinese. And with the beginning of the reform period, this created a passion to construct a new sense of ethnic identity.[32]

The policies of the Cultural Revolution damaged the standing of Korean Chinese considerably. It was not until the promulgation of the 1984 "Law on the Autonomy of Regional Nationalities" that new government policies establishing respect for customs and that the use of Korean language in education were restored. However, economic development was the primary focus of government attention during the early years of the reform era. As Deng Xiaoping, the chief architect of Chinese reform, who visited Yanbian in 1983, explained: "(i)f we do not do well in economy, ethnic autonomy is but an empty slogan."[33]

In the wake of Deng's visit to Yanbian, reforms on science, commerce, health, taxation and education marked a first step toward opening the prefecture's frontier to the outside world, especially to South Korea. In a 1991 visit to Yanbian, Jiang Zemin, Deng's political heir, also encouraged local authorities to exploit the Korean population's ethnic network to create closer economic and trading links with the two Koreas. Then, in 2001, aiming to accelerate the economic development of ethnic regions in western China, the state publicized the "Strategy of Developing the Great West" — a policy that also covered Yanbian. Meanwhile, the state initiated "Activities to Bring Prosperity to Border Areas," and eth-

nic Koreans in Yanbian were granted economic subsidies to remake their houses. All these shifts in ethnic and frontier policies have brought tangible material change to Yanbian. They have also caused significant social change.

Moreover, as is the case elsewhere in the country, not all change during the reform era has had to do with economic development. The elevation of the status of women in society and in the family is now a prominent aspect of ethnic policy.[34] A steady transition has also taken place away from traditional multigenerational families to the nuclear family, and conjugality has replaced parenthood as the focus of domestic life. These changes were intensified by the household contract responsibility system, a milestone of reform policy instituted in 1978. In the 1990s, a survey of a village in Helong County of Yanbian showed that there were 36 nuclear households out of a total of 58 Korean families, accounting for 62.1 percent of all families.[35]

These changes to family structure have significantly altered domestic living patterns. The downsizing of the Korean-Chinese family, in particular, is now being clearly expressed in the remaking of house form and spatial arrangements. One obvious trend is toward separate dwellings to house and be the property of separate nuclear families. The decreasing number of family members in a household has also made it possible to combine small rooms into larger ones (**FIG.5**). Historically, bedrooms in Korean-Chinese houses were small, and partitions were used to allow a multigenerational family to live under the same roof. By comparison, a nuclear family today demands more space, but fewer partitions. These changes were clearly evident in my fieldwork. For instance, a *gudul* room in a house built in the 1970s in Lutian Village in Hunchun has been enlarged through the removal of partitions between it and the adjacent bedrooms. Modern furniture and electronic facilities have also been brought into the house (**FIG.6**). Such material change attests to the impact of ethnic policies on house form.

In China, Koreans have also been able to protect their particular identity by preserving their language, keeping their ethnic traditions, and attending ethnic schools (which have been promoted by Communist minority policies). As a result, many young Korean Chinese are bilingual, and can find jobs in trading industries in big cities like Beijing and Qingdao, or they have been able to go to Seoul as immigrant workers. Such rapid social mobility has, however, created disorder within family structures, as young people have left behind villages in the border region. Nowadays, Korean-Chinese communities in Yanbian are also undergoing a second wave of transformation as more and more young women are being attracted to cities, leaving single young men stranded in small villages. The birth rate is quite low in this region, despite the government's encouragement. In many cases, whole families have moved, and houses have been left deserted (**FIG.7**).

So far, I have examined the major role played by the state in the (re)construction of ethnic Korean identity in China.
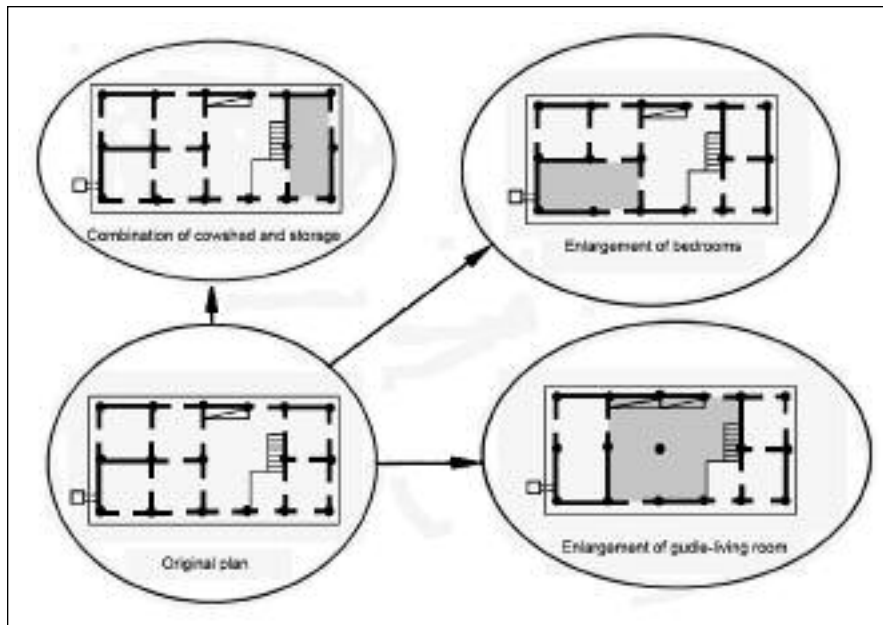
FIGURE 5. *Combination of internal space due to the change in family structure in Korean-Chinese communities. Enlargement of storage (top left), of bedroom (top right), and of* gudul-*living room (right). Original plan courtesy of Lin Jinhua, Yanbian University.*

From the imperial Qing to the PRC era, the portrayal of ethnic Koreans in official propaganda has changed from descriptions of a suspicious, if not vicious, minority group, to praise for Koreans as hardworking, reliable citizens. As shown in the next section, this (re)definition has in turn affected the self-definition and culture of Chinese Koreans. But this discussion first requires a recap of several points related to the construction of culture, the forces that shape and influence the contents of ethnicity, and the purposes of ethnic meanings. As Rapoport has suggested, one needs to "dismantle" the concept of culture to classify and clarify the component parts.[37]

FIGURE 6. *An enlarged* gudul *room in a Korean-Chinese house, built in the 1970s in Lutian Village. Note the Western-style furniture and modern electric devices.*

FIGURE 7. *An abandoned house in Lutian Village. The whole family went to Seoul as immigrant workers, an epitome of present economic changes that are causing the decay of old structures in Korean-Chinese villages.*

THE KOREAN-CHINESE HOUSE: A HYBRID FORM

Because Yanbian is oriented to a geographical border ("a region where two different civilizations face each other and overlap"[38]), interethnic interaction and everyday accommodation based on face-to-face relationships there was inevitable. Though ethnic Koreans retained their housing traditions as a way to maintain their identity, these had to be adjusted to new geographical and cultural surroundings. In other words, once ethnic Koreans settled down in Yanbian, they created a new, hybrid housing type that might be termed Korean-Chinese "overlap" architecture.

One of the most disputed terms in postcolonial studies, "hybridity" commonly refers to "the creation of new transcul-

tural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization."[39] Nezar AlSayyad has written that hybridity can be understood as a condition of interaction between parties with concretely differing positions of power, who must nevertheless cohabit.[40] Emerging from a space where elements encounter and transform each other, instead of simply being a synthesis of components, hybrid culture has the potential to be a site of resistance, where the colonial subject hybridizes, and the dominant power fails.

In the case of ethnic Korean houses in Yanbian, it is important to examine the nature of this hybrid form and its changing meanings and intentions over time. A hybrid house form did serve to resist the policies of assimilation under the Qing dynasty and colonization during the Japanese occupation. However, contrary to the present theorization, I argue that hybridity cannot always be seen as counterhegemonic or resistant to the policies of the state. Indeed, in this case the understanding of hybridity is inseparable from the self-perception by Korean-Chinese and from Chinese ethnic policies that encouraged them to voluntarily isolate themselves from others and manage their lives in small villages.

Exchange between Manchu, Han, and Korean-Chinese cultures has had a significant influence on housing in Yanbian, and it has resulted in the development of more sophisticated forms. As an immigrant ethnic group, it was inevitable that Koreans would be influenced by, and in turn influence, surrounding groups. In a continuous process of interaction with Han Chinese and others, the form of the dwelling and its elements, and finally ethnic identity itself, have evolved so they are no longer the same as those of Koreans on the peninsula.

The Korean-Chinese rural house can be called a hybrid form for several reasons. First, its plan underwent a number of modifications upon arrival in Manchuria. As the accompanying drawings indicate, the plans of Korean-Chinese rural houses display a number of variations from historic Korean prototypes (**FIGS.8,9**).[41] The kitchen was further compartmentalized, and more space was allotted for the cowshed and for storage because immigrant Koreans cultivated large areas of rice. Bedrooms were further partitioned, the additional complexity of arrangement suggesting an increased number of household members. The external chimney was also a visual marker of Korean dwellings. Yet, unlike traditional Korean houses, Korean-Chinese chimneys were built as diminutive towers constructed with a brick base and a square wooden or adobe pipe, and they were placed beyond an endwall instead of in the center of the building (**FIG.10**). Chimneys typically also protruded well above the ridgeline to lessen the possibility of igniting the thatched roof — a common feature of Manchu houses that can be dated to prehistoric times.[42]

Second, the way of everyday life changed subtly in the early years after the Korean migration to Yanbian. On the peninsula, the horizontality of a Korean-style rural dwelling was often accentuated by a colonnaded facade that sheltered an elevated wooden porch, providing a transitional space between outside and inside. Raised some 40 centimeters above the foundation stones, this was a functional space where household members and visitors could remove their shoes before entering and sitting directly on the *gudul*. In response to the harsh winters in Manchuria, however, Korean Chinese began to take their shoes off inside the

FIGURE 8. *Plans of the prototypes of folk houses in the north of the Korean peninsula, surveyed by Yoshiyuki Iwatsuki in 1924. Source: Shiro Sasaki, "Research Trends Geographical Studies on Korean Housing," Collection of International Studies at Utsunomiya University, No.12 (2006).*
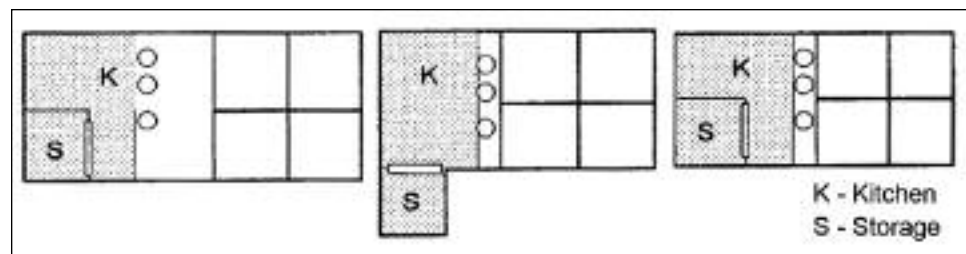
FIGURE 9. *The typical plan of Korean-Chinese houses in Yanbian, surveyed in 1953. Note the variations and modifications from Figure 8. Redrawn by author from Y. Zhang,* Jilin min ju (Vernacular House in Jilin) *(Beijing: Beijing Architectural Industry Press, 1985).*
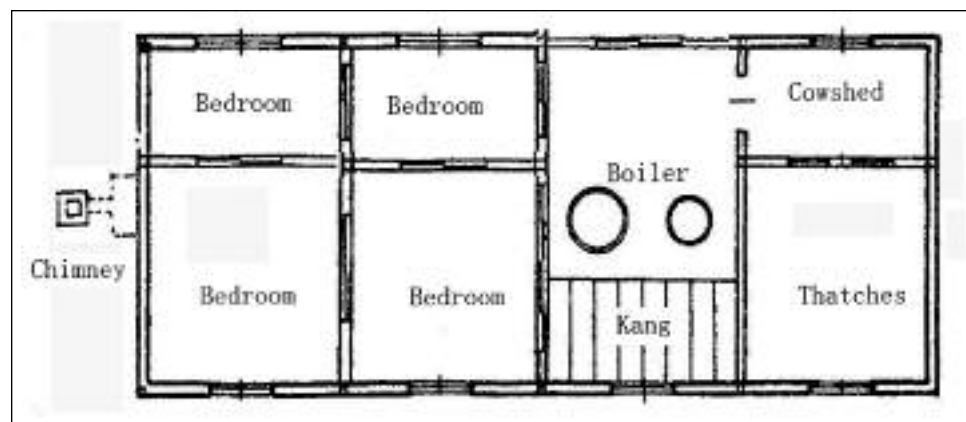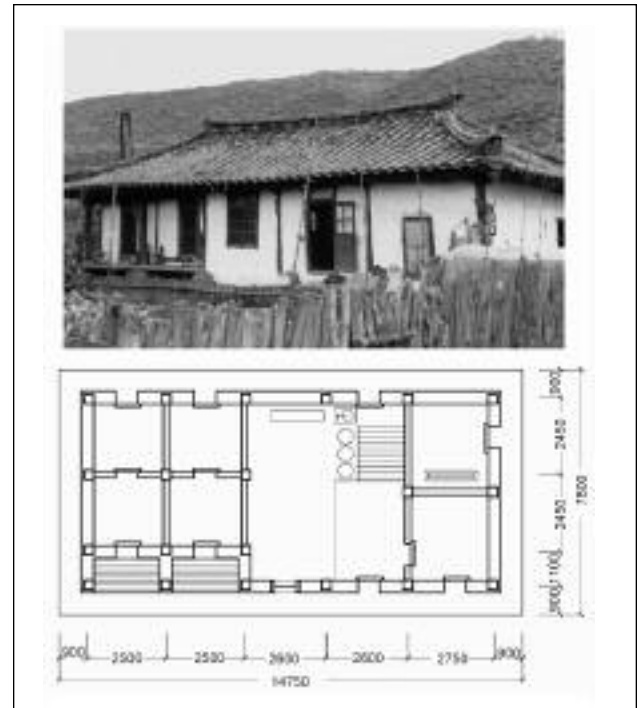
FIGURE 10. *A Korean-Chinese chimney (Lutian Village) is built as a diminutive tower with a square vertical pipe, and is placed beyond the endwall of the house.*

FIGURE 11. *The Li residence in Changcai Village, built in the 1910s. Note the external colonnaded porch has shrunk in size and is unconnected to the* gudul *room.*

FIGURE 12. *The Gao residence in Lutian Village, built in 1905. Note the external colonnaded porch is totally merged with the* gudul *room. Plan courtesy of Ms. Lin Jinhua at Yanbian University.*

house. As a result, the external porch became more decorative than functional, and has now disappeared entirely in many recently built and rebuilt houses.

In Changcai Village of Longjing City, one of the six municipalities of Yanbian Prefecture, there are approximately one hundred households, with a total population of 323 people, all of whom are Korean Chinese. This village was one of the earliest established by immigrant Koreans, who moved there from Hamgyŏngdo in the 1880s. During fieldwork here, I found that Korean-Chinese houses came to display many variations from the prototypical Korean folk houses described in 1924 by Yoshiyuki Iwatsuki (REFER TO FIG.8).[43] In the case of both tiled- and thatched-roof houses, the colonnaded porch has either been reduced in size or eliminated. Tiled-roofs houses originally featured a full external colonnaded porch, but the *gudul* room and kitchen were later extended to include this area as interior space (FIG.11). In thatched-roof houses the colonnaded porch has been entirely merged into the *gudul* room, indicating that both family members and visitors now remove their shoes inside the house (FIG.12). Moreover, in villages where Koreans and Chinese live together, L-shaped and even I-shaped *kang* may sometimes now be used for pragmatic reasons.[44] Korean-Chinese people have thus changed their lifestyle from that on the Korean peninsula to accommodate natural and cultural circumstance in Yanbian. Variations in house plan are a testament to this social and cultural change.

Although many modifications were made to produce a hybrid form, a large *gudul* has always dominated the interior spatial arrangement of Korean-Chinese houses. This has meant that the typical symmetry and hierarchy of layout in a Han Chinese house never became a reference for ethnic Korean houses. In the royal record of the Korean Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), the *ondol* was described as a way to prevent illness.[45] And in Korean domestic architecture subfloor heating has long been regarded not merely as an element of
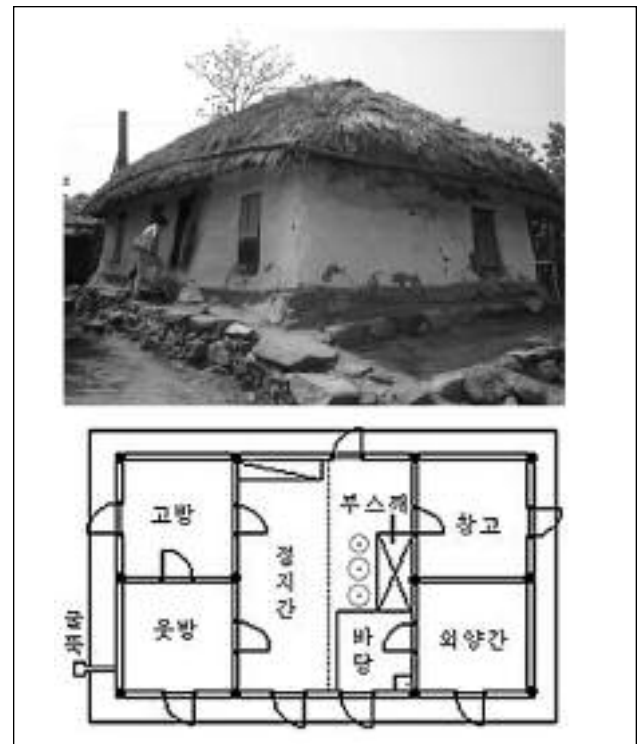
house design, but as a key infrastructure of culture and healthcare. Thus, when Koreans moved to Yanbian to cultivate rice, it is not hard to understand why they retained this system as a way to endure the long, severe winter.

In the Korean-Chinese house, the *gudul* is an arena where everyday activities and interactions take place. As a container for culture and a cultural mechanism, it supports traditional, familiar activities, food habits, and so on — i.e., expressions of the cultural core important to Korean Chinese as a group. No matter how the external circumstances changed, the *gudul* remained the dominant interior feature of the Korean-Chinese house. It provided comprehensible cues for behavior and fit people's unwritten rules and lifestyles. As a core cultural element, the *gudul* helped reinforce and redefine group identity.

Under the ethnocentric policies of the Qing dynasty, house form was one of the few choices Korean Chinese could effectively make to mark their ethnic identity in a foreign land. Almost everything in a house that reflected their lifestyle — height, size, decoration, number of bays, principles of spatial arrangement — were used to demonstrate closeness to the culture of the Korean peninsula and a different sense of nationality. And in continuing to build houses around the *gudul*, lifestyle became a form of resistance, part of an effort by which Korean Chinese could construct an ethnic identity that distinguished them from others. As such, house form became a realm of resistance to the coercive ethnic assimilation policies of the Qing dynasty and the oppressive regimes that followed.

Homi Bhabha has argued that resistance does not require "intentionality," and thus should not be defined by an oppositional politics. Instead, resistance is "the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference and reimplicate them within the deferential relations of colonial power — hierarchy, normalization, marginalization, and so forth."[46] Resistance, as exemplified in the making of the ethnic-Korean rural house, was not triggered by the ambition to gain political autonomy for the region. It merely indicated that the homogenizing politics of "colonizing disavowal" failed in domestic life. Thereby, the binary categories such as cultural domination and political hegemony were both dismantled, allowing a means of developing new anti-monolithic models of cultural exchange and growth.

If the original hydridity of the Korean-Chinese house represented a form of resistance, the practice of (re)making it after the Communist revolution likewise has not accorded with the official evaluation of ethnic Koreans as an obedient minority. However, in order to study the nature of hybridity in the Korean-Chinese house under the new ethnic policies of the PRC, the ethnic policies themselves deserve close examination.

The PRC is defined in its constitution as a "unitary multiethnic state," consisting of people from many nationalities. Its original ethnic policy thus guaranteed respect for such things as the traditions and customs of minorities, ethnic education in minority languages, and political participation through national regional autonomy. However, as I mentioned at the end of the last section, the ethnic policy of the PRC drew a distinction between ethnic identity and political identity. This distinction fit the needs of the Korean minority in China well. Under Maoist ideology, ethnic and cultural differences were replaced by class divisions, allowing ethnic Koreans to consider themselves Chinese nationals of Korean origin. The strong ethnic identity of a minority was actually presumed to help intensify its Chinese political identity. (The issue of how to construct ethnic identity did not surface until the end of Cultural Revolution.) This self-definition of Korean-Chinese people as part of, rather than apart from, the Chinese state is deeply rooted. In a 2004 report, more than 70 percent of young Korean Chinese indicated that they thought of themselves as Chinese by citizenship, Korean by culture.[47]

In this vein, keeping Korean-Chinese traditions and culture has become a crucial part of state ethnic policies, which in turn has encouraged the elevation of ethnic consciousness. Thus, since the beginning of the reform era, the government has felt it imperative to subsidize ethnic minorities to enhance their cultural identity. Indeed, present ethnic policies actually encourage strong cultural identity among minorities as a way to promote ethnic unity and stability in the border region. The hybrid form developed in (re)making the ethnic Korean house since then has thus become a state-supported practice.

Profound material change has taken place in ethnic-Korean rural houses since the reform era began, and since China has become increasingly integrated into the world economy. Material change has in turn brought change in the way of life, a crucial aspect of ethnic identity. If hybridity has come to resist anything during this new period, it is another "homogenizing, unifying force" — globalization. In this case, hybridization works to counter the normalizing and homogenizing aspects of globalization, even as globalization enhances certain aspects of local culture in material terms.

Since reform, Korean Chinese peasants have found that they can afford larger houses, more expensive materials, and modern electric devices. Other changes, such as the removal of cowshed from the main house and the use of glazed windows, have changed the exterior appearance of the traditional house altogether (**FIG.13**). Meanwhile, inside, modern, Western equipment such as a refrigerator, natural-gas stove, and water-purifying devices are now widely used. These changes can be seen in another house I surveyed during my fieldwork. Built in the late 1990s in Lutian village, its large *gudul* room is now equipped with Western-style wardrobes and electric appliances (**FIG.14**).

Language and education have been two of the most important elements that have increased the willingness of the Korean minority to accept outside influence. And in sev-
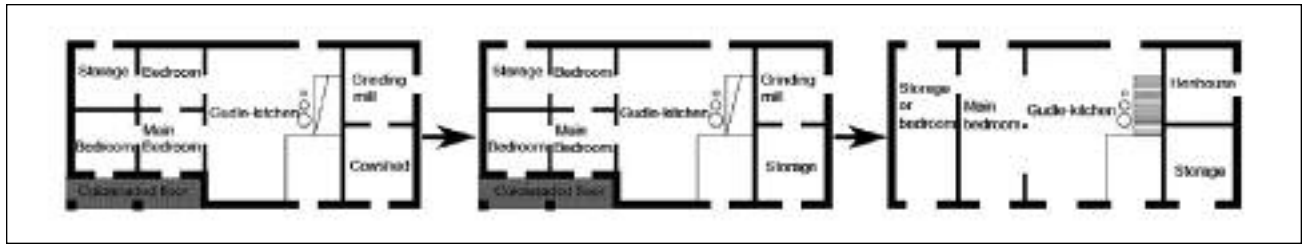
FIGURE 13. *The development of Korean-Chinese house form in Yanbian. Note the removal of the cowshed from the house and other changes in the layout. Redrawn by author from Baishou Li, "A Study of Korean-Chinese Rural House in Northeast China,"* Anthropology and Ethnography, *No.6 (2007).*

eral respects house form and interior arrangement now reflect a standardized notion of modern life. Perhaps most significantly, recent developments in spatial layout reflect a growing concern for health and hygiene. This helps explain the removal of the cowshed. In the aforementioned provincial survey of the 1950s, the cowshed was an integral part of the layout of a Korean-Chinese house. However, it subsequently came to be thought of as "unhealthy," and was removed from the house permanently.

Domestic space is now divided into separate and distinct, specialized rooms to accommodate different domestic activities and functions (cooking, eating, sleeping, bathing, relaxation), but more specifically to accommodate the accumulation of consumer goods. These have been made available through the mass market, and imported from the outside industrialized world. They include such items as Western-style furniture, specialized equipment, a variety of clothes, cooking utensils, and the general accoutrements of living.

However, long-standing aspects of the Korean way of life have not simply given way. The kitchen, for instance, was where young people were taught about formality, informality

FIGURE 14. *The interior of a Korean-Chinese house in Lutian Village, built in the late 1990s, showing the Western-style furniture and other facilities on the* gudul *room.*

and neatness and how to behave properly when watching food being prepared. In new affordable housing built in 2007, a thin partition with glass is used to separate the kitchen and the main *gudul* room. The new materials keep the cooking space from intruding on living space, without blocking visual exchange, allowing the old lifestyle to be maintained while enhancing sanitary conditions (**FIG.15**).

In the houses in this newly built community, the *gudul* also continues to occupy the largest area and govern the overall layout of interior space. In many ways the prominence of the *gudul* has been reinforced, even though partitions have been added to separate it from the kitchen. The *gudul* is an element of the culture core that maintains group identity. As such, its position has not been lost as a result of exposure to economic globalization, which has otherwise brought a new dynamic to rural Korean-Chinese houses.

The idea of globalization cannot be properly understood out of the context of local particularities. Though some authors have written that globalization implies processes of mass cultural homogenization, many scholars have argued that cultural globalization should be recognized as involving diverse phenomena originating in different nations and regions.[48] The material development in Korean-Chinese houses can be considered a testament to the latter view. In this case, the process of Yanbian's integration into the global economy has redefined and reinforced a group identity. The success of South Korea's modernization is regarded as a model for economic development in China, and the cultural influence of the South on Korean communities in China, especially among young people, is extensive. Cultural commodities from South Korea are particularly favored by Korean Chinese. For instance, faddish posters showing popular Korean movie stars are popularly used as wall decorations in Yanbian. Though standardized in many aspects, the forces of globalization thus are able to reinforce local identity in a context such as this.

The condition of the Korean-Chinese house is also today being influenced by a new Chinese government initiative to improve rural living conditions. Issues related to farmers, agriculture, and rural areas have become a major concern of the central government in the new millennium, and it enacted a policy of "Constructing Socialist New Rural

FIGURE 15. *The standardized plan for new Korean-Chinese communities to house two families, subsidized by the state in 2005. Note the glass partition separating the* gudul *room from the kitchen.*
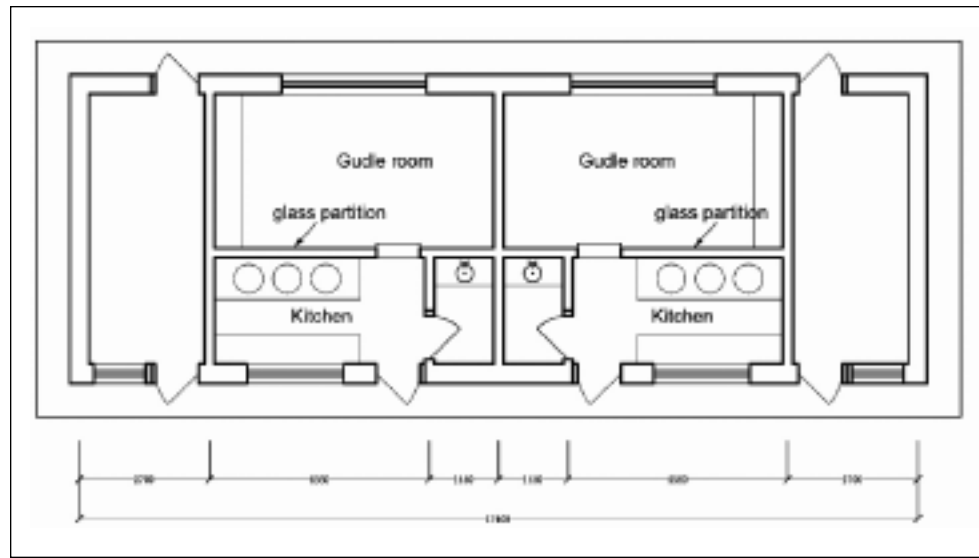
Communities" in 2005, whose aim has been to narrow the gap between urban and rural China. For the first time this new law has called for the improvement of rural infrastructure and included clear stipulations for planning and (re)building rural housing.[49] The policy is now being implemented on a national level, from villages in the outskirts of Beijing to the most remote corners of the country.

In Yanbian, the project gained full impetus in 2007. Rural houses were first classified according to standing conditions. For those requiring renovation, the policy then mandated that thatched roofs be replaced with tile, and plastered mud walls be replaced with brick and mortar. Dilapidated houses were to be demolished and rebuilt on their existing sites. As an official report admitted, in the construction of such new rural communities, "the central problem of rebuilding rural thatch-and-mud houses is that peasants generally fail to raise enough money."[50] However, government subsidies have now helped persuade peasants to remake their houses. In Antu County, the maximum financial subsidy to a Korean-Chinese household to renovate or rebuild a house was RMB 12,000 — a favorable term for ethnic Koreans. In Antu, it is reported that nine hundred thatched houses have been renovated in 2008, and more will be rebuilt in 2009.[51]

Scholars interested in vernacular houses and cultures may be worried about the rapid transformation in rural Yanbian, as it seems "renovating" a Korean-Chinese thatched house actually means rebuilding it from the ground up with modern materials. The expectation is that ethnic and cultural traits will disappear under the onslaught of globalization. However, the resilience of Korean-Chinese communities in response to external circumstances should not be underestimated, especially with the active support of the state. For instance, in the newly built Korean-Chinese community in Yueqing Township of Tumen City, not only do construction

materials and technologies differ from those in traditional houses, but the introduction of such elements as glazed windows, iron security doors, corbel friezes, and tiled-roofs in bright colors, have altogether altered the appearance of individual homes (**FIG.16**). However, as an indication of the continuity of the traditional lifestyle, the major living room is still dominated by the *gudul*, even if it is built using new materials and technologies (**FIG.17**).

FIGURE 16. *Newly built houses for ethnic Koreans in Yueqing Township in 2007 as part of the state-led project of constructing socialist new rural communities. The glazed windows and color scheme altogether change the traditional appearance of the Korean-Chinese house.*

FIGURE 17. *Inside the newly-built house in Yueqing Township. The* gudul *still dominates the organization of internal space, showing the continuity of lifestyle.*

THE NEW INSTRUMENTALITY OF HYBRID FORM

The ethnic-Korean house in Yanbian, after reform, thus provides an example in which hybridity does not resist political authority. It also raises questions about the present theorization of hybridity. What the Chinese state has done is to encourage the local government, headed by elected ethnic Koreans, to manage its cultural and economic life, while retaining power over external political affairs. Hybridity can thus be seen as a part of state ethnic policy, and it does not necessarily carry a negative political message. However, hybridity in this case does resist something — the homogenizing force of globalization — much as it resisted the assimilating policies of the late Qing dynasty. In this way hybridity retains its potential as a form of resistance to cultural domination and the politics of homogenization, and in the development of new anti-monolithic models of cultural exchange and growth.

The different political significations of hybridity in Yanbian track the impact of changing ethnic policies. Throughout this report, I have argued that ethnic policies, along with other external social and economic processes, have been crucial in shaping and reshaping ethnic categories

and definitions, and that these ethnic policies were designed and implemented by the Chinese state. However, ethnicity is also the product of actions undertaken by ethnic groups as they form and reform their own self-definition and culture. In order to understand the interplay between the actions of ethnic groups and the larger social structures with which they form and reform identity, I have examined in detail the change in ethnic-Korean rural houses since the 1880s.

The design of dwellings, the materials and manner of their construction, their size and contents, and their arrangement in settlements are perhaps the most visible signs of any civilization and culture. Housing standards clearly reflect forms of civilization, the extent of economic development, lifeways, social and political priorities. In this report I have traced the trajectory of notions of Korean ethnicity in China as a reaction to state policies, from the ethnocentrism of the late Qing dynasty to the accommodation with contemporary globalization that has characterized the reform era. I have examined how ethnic policies have manifested themselves in house form, both directly — for instance, in terms of the change in family structure following changes in government policies with regard to the role of women — and indirectly, as exemplified in the different meanings and intentions of hybridity. I have proposed that the ethnic identity of a minority group is constructed in a continuous process, and that house form, defined by culture, helps reinforce and redefine that identity. For example, I have shown that the *gudul* in the Korean-Chinese house provides comprehensible cues for behavior and thus continues to reinforce unwritten rules and lifestyles. It has thus been retained as an architectural element through different regimes for more than one hundred years and become a defining element of group identity.

Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture is labeled by the state as a model of ethnic unity and the stability. Though present Chinese ethnic and frontier policies, which have played a key role in forming ethnic identity and shaping house form, are basically a success story in Yanbian, in other border areas, such as Tibet and Xinjiang, recent uprisings and riots have challenged these policies.[52] It may well be that alternations and amendments to these policies will appear, and that social and political change will once again demonstrate itself in the making and remaking of physical construction.

1. This covers an area of 42,700 square kilometers, according to a provincial survey in 2002. The six municipalities are Yanji, Longjing, Helong, Tumen, Dunhua and Hunchun, and the two counties are Antu and Wangqing. For more details on the distribution of the Korean minority in China,

see Zaixian Zhu, "Dui Zhongguo Chaoxianzu ren kou fen bu yu te dian ji qi fa zhan qu shi de fen xi" ("Analysis of the Distribution of the Population and Characteristics of China's Korean Minority"), in *Chaoxianzu yanjiu luncong (Research Series on the Korean Minority)*, Vol.5, edited

by the Research Center on Nationalities of Yanbian University (Yanji: Yanbian University Press, 2001), pp.223–49.

2. A. Rapoport, "Culture and Built Form: A Reconsideration," in A. Rapoport, *Thirty-Three Papers in Environment-Behaviour Research* (Newcastle: Urban International Press, 1990).

3. Yuanshi Jin, "The History of Korean Immigration into Manchuria," *The Journal of Yanbian University (Social Science)*, No.3 (1996). The majority of the Korean population in China before the nineteenth century had assimilated into Chinese society.

4. During the early and high Qing dynasty, Koreans moved to Yanbian and built huts, which attracted the attention of both the Korean and Chinese governments. Emperors Kangxi, Qianlong, Jiaqing, and Daoguang ordered Korean huts burned and illegal Korean crossers expelled. See *Qing ji zhong ri han guan xi shi liao (Foreign Relations between China, Japan and Korea during the Qing Dynasty)*, edited by the Institute of Modern History of the Central Academy (Taipei: Institute of Modern History of Central Academy Press, 1972).

5. During its Joseon dynasty, 1392–1910, Korea was a dependent country to the Chinese Qing dynasty, until 1895 when the Qing dynasty was defeated in the first Sino-Japanese War. The peak of the Qing dynasty's control over Korea came in 1882, in the aftermath of the appeasement of a palace revolution. The two countries had much in common culturally and politically, sharing a Confucian ideology, a bureaucratic system, etc.

6. Immigrant Koreans first came to Yanbian seasonally for economic purposes, returning to the Korean peninsula in the winter; they did not form permanent villages until the 1890s. See Chunshan Jin, *Yanbian di qu chaoxian zu she hui de xing cheng yan jiu (A Study of Korean Communities in Yanbian)* (Changchun: Changchun Zhengtai Press, 2001), chapter 2, "Formation of Korean village in late Qing," pp.59–97.

7. Koreans at that time used thin wood rods to support the walls, and covered roofs with thatch. See *Hunchun fu du tong ya men dang an xuan bian II (Selected Archives of Hunchun Vice Commenter-in-Chief)* (Changchun: Jilin Literature and History Press, 1991), pp.322–33.

8. Huishu Shen, *zhongguo chaoxianzu ju luo di ming yu ren kou fen bu (Distribution and Names of Places of Korean-Chinese Communities)* (Yanji: Yanbian University Press, 1992), pp.32–39.

9. *Fengshui* is a traditional art and philosophy which deals with the formation of landscape and its evaluation, as well as with the selection of sites for settlement. *Fengshui* originated in China and was introduced to Korean peninsula. For more information on how *fengshui* defines the siting of a Korean village, see Sang-Hae Lee, "Siting and General Organization of Traditional Korean Settlements," in J. Bourdier and N. AlSayyad, eds., *Dwellings, Settlements and Tradition: Cross-Cultural Tradition* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989). See also Sun-Young Rieh, "Boundary and Sense of Place in Traditional Korean Dwelling," *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol.3, No.2 (2003), pp.62–79.

10. Some scholars, including Koreans, write the word also as *gudle*. *Ondol*, a word of Chinese origin, denotes a system, while *gudul* (a pure Korean word) denotes a material (stone). My thanks to Prof. Song Sangyong for raising this point.

11. The associations included private schools for young children, such as Dacheng Middle School. See Shoushan Qian, "chaoxianzu feng su lei xing ji qi feng bu qu yu" ("Distribution of Korean-Chinese Customs"), *China's Borderland History and Geography Studies*, Vol.36 No.2 (2000).

12. Until 1931, the compact villages established by immigrant Koreans were basically spontaneous — that is, they were formed by land-hungry peasants under a common surname who moved to Yanbian voluntarily. However, after 1931, when the Japanese extended their rule to the whole of Manchuria and established the puppet state of Manchukuo, Korean farmers were forced to migrate north to China by the Japanese government as part of a project of military colonization. At this time, Koreans were grouped together in designated sites, which I call "enforced villages." It is obvious the two types of villages developed under different sets of conditions, and in this report I will mainly focus on the development of houses in spontaneous villages formed before 1931.

13. By this time Koreans had already been molded into a "nation" in the modern sense.

14. For the conceptualization of ethnicity and its social constructs, see, for example, M. Spector and J. Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems* (New York: Aldine, 1997); and J. Holstein and G. Miller, eds., *Perspectives on Social Problems: Reconsidering Social Constructionism* (Volume 5) (New York: Aldine, 1993). For a comprehensive literature review of ethnic studies, refer to J. Nagel, "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture," *Social Problems*, Vol.4 No.1 (1994), pp.152–76.

15. J. Nagel, "The Political Construction of Ethnicity," in S. Olzak and J. Nagel, eds., *Competitive Ethnic Relations* (New York: Academic Press, 1986), pp.93–112.

16. L. Ross, G. Vos, and T. Tsuda, eds., *Ethnic Identity: Problems and Prospects for the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006); and M. Baud and M. van Schendel, "Towards a Comparative History of Borderlands," *Journal of World History*, Vol.8 No.2 (1997), pp.211–24.

17. Korean immigrants were skilled in raising rice. In 1908, a Qing official wrote in a famous report about the immigrant issues in the frontier region, "Currently, the number of Korean immigrants amounted approximately 100,000, most of whom are farmers." See Wu Luzhen, "Yanji bian wu bao gao" ("The Report on the Border Affairs in Yanbian"), in Li Shutian, ed., *Changbai Congshu I* (Changchun: Jilin Historical and Cultural Materials Press, 1986), p.144. Another gazetteer compiled during the Japanese occupation of Manchuria noted that "[T]he wet field rice in Jilin province became prosperous owing to the arrival of Korean immigrants . . . most of whom cultivated wet fields in Yanbian." See Liu Shuang, *Jilin xin zhi (New Gazetteer of Jilin)*, published in 1934, in Li Shutian, ed., *Changbai Congshu IV* (Changchun: Jilin Historical and Cultural Materials Press, 1991), p.170.

18. In 1910, resident ethnic Koreans in Yanbian totaled 202,070. In 1915, the number rose to 282,070. It had reached 459,427 in the year 1920, and 607,119 in the year of 1930. From Jin, *A Study of Korean Communities in Yanbian*, Table 4-1, p.169.

19. Quote from Wu Luzhen's "Yanji bian wu bao gao" ("Frontier Affairs in Yanji") to the central government. See Jin, *A Study of Korean Communities in Yanbian*, chapter 2, "Formation of Korean Village in Late Qing," p.93.

20. Later on, in fear that the Japanese would use naturalized Koreans to acquire land, it also became a requirement that landowners abandon their Korean citizenship. This became of particular concern after 1910, when Korea was annexed into the Japanese Empire, and the Japanese began to proclaim concerned for all their "citizens," including Koreans. For more detail on the duality of Korean citizenship, see Lanying Zhao, "Dongbei chaoxian yi min jing ji yu wen hua kao cha" ("A Study on Economy and Culture of Immigrant Korean Communities in Manchuria, 1840–1945"), *Northeast Asia Forum*, Vol.13 No.5 (2004).

21. See Jin, *A Study of Korean Communities in Yanbian*, chapter 2, "Formation of Korean village in late Qing," and chapter 5, "Duality of Citizenship and Property Ownership," pp. 194–212. After the Japanese annexed Korea, larger numbers of Koreans moved to China. Some merely fled Japanese rule or economic hardship, while others intended to use China as a base for anti-Japanese resistance movements.

22. H.K. Lee, "Korean Migrants in Manchuria," *Geographical Review*, Vol.22, No.2 (1932), pp.196–204.

23. A famous example of the heightening conflict between local Chinese and immigrant Koreans was the Wanbaoshan Incident, which involved leased land near Changchun in 1931, just a few months before the 9/18 Incident that resulted in the Japanese occupying all of Manchuria. For more details on the Wanbaoshan Incident, see Yu Jing, "The Beginning and Ending of Wanbaoshan Incident," in Yu Jing, *History of Changchun* (Changchun: Changchun Press, 2001), pp.304–77.

24. For the policies of expulsion in place in Yanbian before 1931, see Jin, *A Study of Korean Communities in Yanbian*, chapter 6, "Chinese Expelling Policies and Responses by Korean Communities," pp.244–53.

25. According to Communist propaganda, the idea of class struggle was more impor-tant than that of ethnic struggle or political independence. Thus, Korean-Chinese Communists believed they suffered more from class repression than ethnic discrimi-nation, either at the hands of the Japanese colonizers or previous Chinese regimes. The success of the Chinese socialist revolu-tion thus meant the liberation of the Korean ethnicity from class repression.

26. For example, when the Communists took over Changchun in April 1946, a regi-ment composed of Korean "brothers and comrades" took the mission of the avant-garde. See "Wu Hengfu and the 4/14 Campaign," in *Changchun Cultural and Historical Materials* (1988/5), pp.127–38.

27. For the official account of the history of the Korean minority in Manchuria, see *Chaoxianzu jianshi (Brief History of the Korean Nationality)* (Yanji: Yanbian People's Press).

28. Official reports document no serious social problems related to ethnic issues in Yanbian Autonomous Prefecture since its establishment in 1953, even during the tur-bulent years of the Cultural Revolution. After reform, Yanbian was the first autonomous prefecture that instituted the Ordinance of Autonomous Administration, and in 1994, 1999 and 2005, Yanbian was marked by the State Department as the exemplar of ethnic consolidation. See Jin Xian, "The Successful Practice of Ethnic Autonomous Policies in Yanbian," *Journal of Ethnicity in China*, Vol.1 (2009).

29. See Choiwoo Gil, "The Korean Minority in China: The Change of Its Identity," *Development and Society*, Vol.30 No.1 (June 2001), pp.119–41.

30. Y. Zhang, *Jilin min ju (Jilin Vernacular Houses)* (Beijing: Beijing Architectural Industry Press, 1985), pp.138–50.

31. In some villages, a study room, built in brick or adobe mud, became the center for the study of Communist propaganda and a meeting place for the village council. But few records of common rural houses have been found, and the officially initiated pro-ject of renovation of dilapidated thatched Korean-Chinese houses is but a very recent phenomenon. See the official website page of Antu City of Yanbian, http://www.yan-bian.gov.cn/yanbian/board.php?board=xin-nong_02.

32. During the period of the Cultural Revolution, many Korean leaders and intel-lectuals were falsely charged with spying or with being regional nationalists. The Cultural Revolution had tremendous impact on the marginalization of Korean identity in socialist China. Gil, in "The Korean Minority in China," argued that "In the decade following 1966, minority education and Korean usage were strongly under-mined. The emphasis on ethnic identifica-tion was strongly criticized as cultural degeneration and political retreat. Koreans were marginalized. This experience has remained in the collective consciousness of Koreans, who have considered themselves as marginals since their immigration."

33. Xiaoping Deng, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol.1 (Beijing: People's Press, 1994), p.167. This is actually a quote from one of his speeches on Tibet in the 1950s. Nevertheless, the idea of promoting eco-nomic work has dominated ethnic policy-making since the 1980s, and this is the statement most frequently cited by high-ranking CCP officials.

34. On Chinese state feminism and criti-cism, see L. Rofel, "Liberation Nostalgia and a Yearning for Modernity," in C. Gilmartin, ed., *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp.226–49.

35. Tingji Piao, "Chaoxianzu she hui jia ting jie gou bian qian yu xing bie ping deng yan jiu" ("Transformation of Korean-Chinese Society and Family"), *Dongjiang Journal*, Vol.23 No.4 (2006). The survey was con-ducted in 1994.

36. See Gil, "The Korean Minority in China."

37. A. Rapoport, "Culture and Built Form: A Reconsideration," in K. Moore, ed., *Culture-Meaning-Architecture: Critical Reflections on the Work of Amos Rapoport* (Vermont: Ashgate, 2000).

38. S.R. Ross, "Foreword," in S.R. Ross, ed., *Views across the Border: The United States and Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), p.xii.

39. B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and H. Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2003), p.118

40. N. AlSayyad, "Preface," in N. Alsayyad, ed., *Hybrid Urbanism* (Westport: Praeger, 2001), p.9.

41. Yoshiyuki Iwatsuki conducted systematic research and drew plan prototypes of Korean folk houses in 1924. His work is today regarded as the precursor of all Korean folk housing studies. He classified Korean folk houses into five types according to geographical divisions. See Shiro Sasaki, "Dai ni ji se kai I zen no ho bun bun hen ni mi ru kan min ka no chi ri gaku teki hen kyo no ni seki" ("Research Trends Geographical Studies on Korean Housing"), *Collection of International Studies at Utsunomiya University*, No.12 (2006), pp.1–12.

42. Dawei Tang, "Dongbei Fushun manzu min ju de te se" ("Characteristics of Manchu Houses in Fushun, Manchuria"), *Journal of Liaoning Institute of Technology*, Vol.7 No.4 (August 2005).

43. See note 41.

44. Dongxun Jin, "Chaoxianze de kang wen hua ji qi wen hua chuan cheng," *Journal of Yanbian University* (Social science), Vol.37 No.2 (June 2004).

45. Kim June Bong, "The Etymology: Development and the Future of the Ondol and Gudle," in J. Kim, *The House of Ethnic Koreans* (Beijing: Minzu Press, 2007).

46. H. Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817," *Critical inquiry*, Vol.12, No.1 (1985), pp.144–65.

47. See Gil, "The Korean Minority in China.

48. Some scholars of globalization, such as John Tomlinson in his book *Cultural Imperialism*, maintain that globalization of culture takes place according to integration and disintegration processes that transcend the nation-state, and that processes of cultural homogenization take place on a global scale. Other scholars argue that cultural globalization is a complex of diverse phenomena, and consists of global cultures originating from many different nations and regions. For example, see A. King, *Spaces of Global Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp.30–32.

49. See the official document, "The Suggestions on the Design of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan of National Economic and Social Development," approved at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, in October 2005.

50. A quote from "An Efficient Integration of Thatch-and-Mud Housing Renovation and the Construction of New Rural Communities in Antu," on the official Yanbian government website, http://longjing.yanbian.gov.cn/yanbian/board.php?board=xinnong_02&act=view&no=526&page=6&search_mode=&search_word=&cid=.

51. "The Report on Thatch-and-Mud Housing Renovation in Antu County in 2008," on the official Yanbian government website, http://longjing.yanbian.gov.cn/yanbian/board.php?board=xinnong_02&act=view&no=568&page=1.

52. A few that have engaged Western audiences were the uprising in Tibet in March 2008 and the riot in Xinjiang in July 2009.

All photos are by the author.

Book Reviews

The Politics of the Piazza: the History and Meaning of the Italian Square. Eamonn Canniffe. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008. 288 pp., b&w illus.

Visitors to Italy have long been struck by what Eamonn Canniffe calls "the strangely fascinating power of the piazza." Even more than elsewhere in Europe, and certainly more than in North America, much of daily life on the peninsula takes place *all'aperto* (out in the open). In both major cities and small towns, the *piazza* still serves as the focal point of the community, a place to buy vegetables, flirt, enjoy a gelato, or engage in vigorous political protest.

In *The Politics of the Piazza: The History and Meaning of the Italian Square,* Canniffe sets himself the monumental task of tracing the development of the *piazza* as an urban form in Italy from the foundation of Rome to the present day. He is primarily interested in these iconic urban spaces as expressions of political power and in examining how different ideologies have left their stamp on cityscapes across the centuries. As he notes, "this is largely a history devoted to spaces which have survived through long periods of use, the robustness of the forms adapting to changes in political and social circumstance." With millennia of architectonic heritage, Italian cities are palimpsests, not blank canvases, and any attempt to reshape them involves a complex negotiation between tradition and innovation.

Canniffe begins his narrative in classical antiquity, a period that would have a profound impact on the subsequent development of the *piazza*. The ancient forum not only established the basic morphology of Rome and many other Italian cities, but it would serve as an ideal for later planners, an "urban exemplar and source of archetypes." Whereas the emperors of pagan Rome exploited public space to project their authority, the fracturing of the empire and the rise of Christianity led to more heterogeneous cityscapes, reflecting the chaotic political environment of late antiquity. Later, during the Middle Ages, the *piazza* became a site of architectural contestation, as local elites, the papacy, and imperial rulers struggled to assert their presence through the construction of *palazzi*, churches and towers. Then, with the rediscovery of ancient models during the Renaissance, many cities gained a more coherent set of aesthetic values, informed by linear perspective and the idealized forms of classical geometry. For Renaissance theorists like Vasari, the well-ordered city reflected a well-ordered society.

The Politics of the Piazza becomes more compelling as Canniffe enters the modern period. Italian unification in the decade between 1860 and 1870 brought renewed vigor to city planning. The young nation sought to demonstrate its modernity through urban renewal and monumental new public spaces to honor the heroes of the Risorgimento. These aggressive interventions reached their peak during the Fascist period, which sought to identify itself rhetorically with the Roman past while embracing radically modernist aesthetics. Canniffe's analysis of Brescia's Piazza della Vittoria, in particular, vividly demonstrates efforts at this time to look both backwards and forwards, juxtaposing contemporary buildings with archaeological reconstructions.

The sections on post-World War II Italy are also fascinating. Canniffe takes a detailed look at the double bind facing postwar architects, for whom both modernism and historicism (and indeed the very concept of public space) were tainted by their association to Mussolini's regime. It was not until the prosperity of the 1960s that new visions could be advanced. As with their precursors, contemporary planners have had to navigate between the preservation of traditional spaces (whose main function is now economic — as tourist attractions) and responding to the exigencies of modern life. Canniffe concludes by speculating about the future of the *piazza*. In the media age (or, in Italy, the Age of Berlusconi), the spontaneity and community of traditional public space has been supplanted. Facebook, not the *piazza*, is where we congregate. What will the next step be in the evolution of these millennial spaces?

Given the breadth and magnitude of this topic, it is not surprising that some issues remain unresolved in this relatively short book. One conceptual problem that Canniffe identifies from the outset is the definition of the *piazza* itself. He writes that it is not simply "a matter of the absence of building, of space left over at the margins of construction." The bulk of his analysis is thus devoted to architectural analysis of the structures and facades that frame various sites. His argument that the *piazza* should be understood as a presence rather than an absence is important and valid, yet what exactly this "presence" entails is not clear. Is the square to be defined by the buildings that limit it? By the functions designated by its planners? By the ways in which the space is used by its inhabitants?

A related issue is that despite Canniffe's claim that his work is based on "experience of the place itself, not simply in its accumulated detail but in the generality of its effect," this study is curiously bloodless. One receives very little sense of the human dimension of these spaces or their quotidian function. Canniffe focuses almost exclusively on formal aesthetics and the stated intentions of theorists, designers and patrons. This "top-down" view of the *piazza* is important, but would ideally be complemented by a "bottom-up" perspective as well.

Finally, for a work on the Italian *piazza* writ large, the examples presented here come primarily from the major cities of northern and central Italy (Venice, Milan, Rome, Florence), all of which underwent similar trajectories in their development. Aside from a few mentions of Naples, the South is completely overlooked. It would have been productive to examine the wide diversity of urban cultures across the peninsula, from Moorish and Norman influences in Sicily to the Byzantine-inflected architecture of the Adriatic coast.

The Politics of the Piazza thus works best as an in-depth study of architectural forms and urban morphology, and specialists will find it a valuable contribution to the literature. Nonspecialists might wish that Canniffe's approach had been more broad-based and accessible, but it will still be useful to students of *il bel paese*.

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Space for Engagement: The Indian Artplace and a Habitational Approach to Architecture. Himanshu Burte. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2008. 340 pp., 134 b&w photos and 22 drawings.

Himanshu Burte has thought deeply about the social implications of space. Those who have read even a few of his articles over the past decade will open *Space for Engagement* anticipating intimate encounters with Indian architecture. These expectations will not leave them disappointed by this book. An evocative text, it expresses Burte's pleasure in deep contemplation of environments.

In terms of design philosophy, Burte is clearly distressed by the return of modernism, with its hostility to the inhabitant and the emptiness that is its soul. "[T]he bleak expanses of modernist environments [are] best imagined without people," he writes. And he reminds readers of modernism's "impersonality" and disdain for the body, for human comfort and pleasure. "[D]isconnected from the larger value systems of the societies . . . ," its vast unbroken surfaces deny natural "anchors of rest." With these concerns in mind, he casts a critical eye on the work not only of the founding fathers of modernism, but on more recent practitioners such as Frank Gehry, Phillip Johnson, Richard Meier, and their Indian counterparts.

In the U.S. and Western Europe, museum and concert-hall design has tended toward the Disneyfied object, creating buzz and exciting donors. But the resulting fortress or sculptural building is too often more of a logo than a functioning space for the arts. Over-glazing is a frequent problem, as radically demonstrated in the glass walls of Diller, Scofidio and Renfro's performance theater in Boston's new Institute of Contemporary Art. But this design flaw is also much in evidence in high-concept Indian theaters. Burte argues for modest spaces that comfort humans and offer places for art that are more approachable.

Having dismissed the prevailing design philosophy in major art spaces, the second section of the book presents Burte's ideas for how to achieve inviting, modest environments for "ordinary dwellers." The author is intensely focused on how the environment supports and encourages human activity and interaction, drawing on the work of psychologists, sociologists and philosophers as well as architects, landscape architects and urban designers. His thinking is in the tradition of Yi Fu Tuan, Christopher Alexander and Donlyn Lyndon, along with hints of the phenomenologist Martin Heidegger.

Burte's main proposals are five "affordances" (a term borrowed from James J. Gibson). These may best be thought of as qualities of place that support human action:

Occupiability, Penetrability, Legibility, Sociability and Possessability. In many ways, these design dimensions parallel Kevin Lynch's performance dimensions for urban space. In *Space for Engagement*, each of Burte's affordances merits a chapter in which it is developed in detail with numerous examples. They also work together to create a "dimensional weave" of habitability.

Burte focuses on contemporary rather than historic Indian environments, examining the fit between human gesture and space. For him, place is much more than space and form, and includes social protocols and practices. In contrast to the modernist need to maintain the blank surface in a pristine unmarked condition, he embraces the intimacy of touch instead of the logic of sight, and he welcomes the discolorations and abrasions that betray human use. Going beyond the simple perceived form, he appreciates evidence of what the space was in the past and will become in the future: "Thus it is difficult to think of a built form at any moment as distinct from the history that led to its conception and construction, as well as from the modifications that it will undergo in its future interactions with the forces of protocol and practice."

The third section of the book provides three case studies that offer specific illustrations of "architecture for wholesome habitation." The first, Charles Correa's 1984 Bharat Bhavan, is a "non-building" composed of underground galleries, a library, and an auditorium, which all open onto dugout courts on a hillside site. A second example, Correa's 1977 and 1987 National Crafts Museum, is a campus of structures and spaces in the rural village idiom. The third illustration is Ved Segan's 1979 Prithvi Theater, designed as a temporary workshop space for two actors. Only 3,500 square feet in size, it is minute compared with the other examples, yet it fully supports the needs of its users, or "dwellers" as Burte prefers to call them. All three examples in this section also serve as magnets for their communities, providing many transitional zones for sitting, eating, resting, or chatting in shade and shelter, while offering outdoor extensions for their interior activities.

Space for Engagement shows institutions and public-space designers everywhere how to engage with the public city and how to support "wholesome" use. It will be especially valuable to arts administrators, designers and students seeking a non-Western perspective on the making of art-places. Will this handsomely designed book lure major institutions away from their precious object architecture? It is a noble attempt.

Michael Southworth
University of California at Berkeley

The American College Town. Blake Gumprecht. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008. 448 pp., 82 ill., 12 maps.
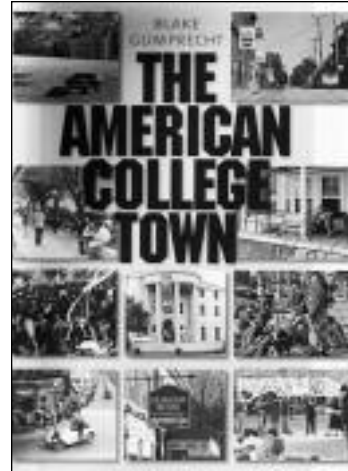
The American College Town is a collection of chapters on a type of place the author, Blake Gumprecht, describes as "any city where a college or university and the cultures it creates exert a dominant influence over the character of the town." However, instead of framing his research as a standard exploration of "town and gown" (only one chapter takes up this topic by name), Gumprecht proposes a taxonomy of college-town characteristics, addressing specific physical and social conditions that we observe and expect in these places.

At face value, Gumprecht's argument, that the American college town is a "unique type of urban place," is rather simple. But his eight case studies do a good job of substantiating the reasons why. American college towns are youthful; they have highly educated populations; and they are comparatively affluent, cosmopolitan, transient and unconventional. Gumprecht analyzes an array of social, cultural, economic and physical factors to illustrate and discuss these qualities and support his assertion that college towns form a distinct urban "archipelago."

The book begins by summarizing the characteristics of college towns, the history of universities in the United States, and the author's own approach to the subject. In his introductory chapter, Gumprecht also weaves together personal experience, interviews, and archival research to convey the reasons behind his selection of which towns and universities to study in depth. Each is intended to be a typical, but important, example. The bulk of the book then turns to the case studies, which he pairs with a corresponding theme.

Chapter two, "The Campus as Public Space," considers the University of Oklahoma and how it was envisioned by administrators as a cultural and social center. Gumprecht describes the design of the campus and its buildings in the town of Norman as highly symbolic, a park-like space intended to serve the public good. Interestingly, this is one of the few chapters that addresses the overall plan and design of a university campus.

In chapter three, "Fraternity Row, the Student Ghetto, and the Faculty Enclave," Gumprecht explores three distinct facets of Ithaca, New York, home to Cornell University. It recounts how fraternity members, students, faculty and developers have all helped shaped it as a place. As Gumprecht's discussion shows, both the social and physical geography have been important to how Ithaca has changed over time.

In "Campus Corners and Aggievilles," Gumprecht next turns to Manhattan, Kansas, home of Kansas State University, and the growth of its student-oriented commercial district. He discusses how this area, like many others near colleges and universities, not only serves student needs for books, school supplies and services, but also provides a source of cheap alcohol and fast food. Contrasting to this culture of consumption, in "All Things Right and Relevant," Gumprecht then examines progressive idealism in the town of Davis, California, as realized through recycling programs, food co-ops, bike lanes, and co-housing. The chapter shows how different members of the University of California community there — faculty, students and alumni — have played important political roles. And he smartly uses the town, rather than the university, to show how members of the academic community have helped shape the local culture and environment.

Continuing this effort to illuminate the various social actors in college towns, in chapter six Gumprecht recounts the lives of six individuals who have, for various reasons, returned to Athens, Georgia, to live near the University of Georgia. And in chapter seven, "Stadium Culture," he introduces another characteristic of college towns — intercollegiate athletics. In this case, his focus is football at Auburn University in Alabama. Enthusiasm for college teams not only brings alumni back to campus on game days but has helped shape the town of Auburn — providing it with hotels, wide main roads, and condominium complexes.

In chapter eight, "High-Tech Valhalla," Gumprecht next explores the knowledge industries originating from and developing around the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. As a driver of the local economy, they differ from student-oriented commercial districts, such as that near Kansas State, and the hospitality complex near Auburn. They are predicated on the ingenuity of faculty and the university's ability to provide high-tech companies with well-educated employees.

Finally, in chapter nine, "Town vs. Gown," Gumprecht revisits the issue of housing and examines how the politics of Newark, Delaware (home of the University of Delaware) have changed over time. As has been the case in Ithaca with Cornell, enrollment levels, university rules governing student behavior, and access to university housing have been important defining factors in the culture and form of the town.

Even though many of Gumprecht's sources are specific to each town and university, he ties local histories to national trends and to other college communities across the United States. But, as one might imagine, several themes reappear in each of the case studies. These include underage drinking, political progressivism, and the cultural amenities afforded by colleges and universities. Thus, the use of discrete case studies in some ways creates a false sense of partition among the shared qualities of college towns.

Instead of eight college-town characteristics, Gumprecht is essentially grappling with three hefty themes: commercial activities, housing, and the unique set of social relations (and conflicts) inherent in university settings. For readers interested in any of these topics, there is another way to organize the chapters from this book. For commercial activities (from local bars to big-box retailers to the high-tech industry), read the chapters related to Kansas State University, U.C. Davis, Auburn University, and University of Michigan. For housing — a topic Gumprecht covers well — read the chapters related to Cornell, U.C. Davis, and the University of Delaware. For the communities and individuals that form the college town, read the chapters related to Cornell, U.C. Davis, the University of Georgia, and Auburn University.

The best chapters in *The American College Town* are those that integrate both "sides" of each place. In these (namely, chapters three/Ithaca, five/Davis, and seven/Auburn) Gumprecht ably discusses how certain groups traverse the boundary between town and campus. With regard to Ithaca, this is especially apparent among the Cornell faculty, who live in careful proximity to campus. In the case of Davis, this applies to students who have remained in town and participated fully in the life and politics of the community. At Auburn, it primarily concerns alumni, who return to campus for football games and other celebratory events. Together, these case studies are rich because they show how the university as an institution shapes a set of social relations that are temporally contingent and tied to place.

Gumprecht concludes by reiterating how American college towns, with their shared characteristics, provide a special type of urban community. However, to claim that the American college town is a youthful, affluent, cosmopolitan and unconventional place, without addressing, with equal weight, other towns, is somewhat problematic. The American college town *is* a special place, but why is this significant? Why should we care? What do college towns show us that other towns and cities do not?

The chapters on Ithaca, New York, and the Newark, Delaware, illustrate how social and economic circumstances shape social conflict in ways that are different from non-college towns. For example, the fact that areas adjacent to the University of Delaware were once working-class neighborhoods is an important but underdeveloped detail in Gumprecht's book. In addition, universities own land, which not only affects property tax collections, as Gumprecht observes, but also creates a variety of urban-edge conditions absent in other cities. That said, how do the anti-growth sentiments in Davis, California, and the aspirations to be a high-tech center in Ann Arbor, Michigan — two topics discussed in many city development offices — compare to city planning efforts and urban spaces in non-college towns?

Although there are books on campus planning and design and others on the university as a cultural, political and economic entity, few combine the physical and social aspects of colleges and universities, and none attempt to define the college town. For this reason, and despite the text's shortcomings, *The American College Town* is a welcome addition to the literature on the history and experience of colleges, universities, and their urban settings.

Clare Robinson
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Mātrā: Ways of Measuring Vernacular Built Forms of Himachal Pradesh. Jay Thakkar and Skye Morrison. Ahmedabad: Research Cell, School of Interior Design, CEPT University, 2008. 314 pp., color photos, measured drawings, computer renderings, and sketches.

I read with great pleasure Jay Thakkar and Skye Morrison's *Mātrā: Ways of Measuring Vernacular Built Forms of Himachal Pradesh.* As an architect who lived and worked in Himachal Pradesh, I found the book extremely enriching. This beautifully illustrated volume brought back many memories of my own visits to the villages in this mountainous area of northern India. It is also of invaluable archival importance and high technical quality. In particular, it sheds light on the building technique called Kath-Khuni (cator and cribbage), and it clarifies many details, features and spaces I came across while working in the area. Nevertheless, this compilation remains a mere drop in an ocean of missing information about indigenous architecture in India, especially traditional dwelling forms and construction methods. Substantially more work of this type is needed to better understand and appreciate this heritage.

The book is based on two field trips to Himachal Pradesh by a mix of faculty and mostly interior-design students from CEPT (the Center for Environmental Planning and Technology) in Gujarat. During these trips the group measured and produced scaled drawings and computer models of a range of buildings. By documenting homes, granaries and temples, the book covers the main elements of a traditional village. Work by the group had a systematic, archival character rather than a targeted research agenda. Nevertheless, the book is put together in a way that makes sense and clarifies deeper aspects of lifestyle as projected in forms and spaces.

The first part of the book describes the two journeys the group made to Himachal Pradesh. By providing information both about the destination and the group, it emphasizes the cultural gap between the investigators and the place. This section also describes how destinations were chosen and some of the challenges faced by group. As one might expect, the section is not short on colorful anecdotes.

The second part of the book then dives into vernacular house features and forms as represented through the Kath-Khuni construction method. Common to Himachal Pradesh and other mountainous areas south of the high Himalayas, it employs horizontal wood beams and layers of local stone to produce an earthquake-resistant structure appropriate to the region. The book does not delve into the origins of this method, and it does not describe other locations where similar techniques can be found. But it provides a wealth of technical description and detail about the construction process.

Kath-Khuni is not the only construction method used in the area (for example, later sections of the book examine all-wood construction for temples and granaries), and the presentation here does not explain the advantages of Kath-Khuni over other methods of house-building. Therefore, the book's subtitle, "Ways of Measuring Vernacular Built Forms of Himachal Pradesh," may create some unmet expectations. But, in fairness, such a comparative analysis might have required a whole other project, studying the use of mud bricks, bamboo construction, and flat-slate layering techniques, among other building methods.

From its lengthy discussion of house form, the book moves on, in Part 3, to look at granaries. While these shared storage spaces may at first seem insignificant, the discussion of them sheds light both on village social structure the need of people in the region to cope with harsh seasonal weather. Moreover, as mentioned later, granaries may be the first structures to disappear from these villages as they are modernized, unless new uses can be found for them. The book divides the granaries into freestanding forms and forms combined within houses. Some are made using the same Kath-Khuni construction; others are made fully of wood. The chapter explains their features and includes detailed drawings.

Part 4 of the book then focuses on wooden and wood-and-stone temples. It divides these into six typologies based on roof construction. The variety of temple forms in the area is wide and has been influenced through history by outside visitors. This explains the research team's decision to include both all-wood and wood-and-stone structures. Naturally, looking at only one type of construction will not give a comprehensive overview of the temples in the area. Nevertheless, the chosen typologies do present a good way to structure understanding of the types studied.

The last, fifth, part of the book is an epilogue that looks at the next generation of villagers and at the future of these buildings — as well as at the future of these construction methods. Here many questions are raised. What is the environmental impact of this traditional building technique? Can it survive a shortage of wood supply? Can it survive the penetration of concrete buildings into these villages? Can these houses be adjusted to changes in lifestyle? Some of these questions may have answers in other similarly developing places. Some have the potential to generate further, fascinating research in the field.

The drawings and photos in *Mātrā* are beautiful and detailed. They are also systematic and accurate. If I had one

complaint with the presentation, it would be that the sources for the wealth of additional information provided are not always clear. Sadly, it appears the investigators also did not take thorough-enough notes during their visits and interviews with local people. Greater attention to this dimension of their work would have deepened its academic credibility and added to its social-science applicability. Ultimately, however, the text, presented in a storytelling form, nicely complements the detailed measurements and brings life and meaning to the drawings and photos.

Finally, the high architectural quality and detailed level of drawing is more than can be perceived in print. It would be of great value if these drawings could be made available online, with the ability to zoom as needed. Measurements are often missing in the drawings. And although the scale is sometimes provided, it is not enough to extract the actual sizes of various elements. Again, technology could easily address these limitations without adding cumbersome detail to the printed version.

Mātrā is a very aesthetically pleasing book, filled with beautiful photos and drawings of the villages of the Himalayan foothills. It is also an important source, of exceptional quality, for architects and designers interested in vernacular and traditional architecture, as well as for historians and social scientists looking into indigenous built forms.

Yael Valerie Perez
University of California, Berkeley

Conferences and Events

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

8th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Arts & Humanities, **Honolulu, HI:** January 13–16, 2010. All areas of arts and humanities are invited. To be held at the Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa and Hilton Waikiki Prince Kuhio Hotel. For more information please visit: http://www.hichumanities.org.

"Visualizing the Future of Environmental Design," **Berkeley, CA:** February 3–6, 2010. Part two of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the College of Environmental Design at U.C. Berkeley. For more information on particular events and talks, please visit: www.ced.berkeley.edu/events/50thanniversary.

"Istanbul: Layers of History, Culture, and Architecture," **Istanbul, Turkey:** April 8–12, 2010. Sponsored by continental Europe's chapter of American Institute of Architects. For more information, please visit www.aiaeurope.org.

"The Sustainable City's Annual Conference," **La Coruña, Spain:** April 14–16, 2010. The conference, sponsored by the Wessex Institute of Technology, focuses on themes of urban regeneration and sustainability. For more information, contact Irene Moreno Millan, imoreno@wessex.ac.uk.

The 63rd Annual Meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians, **Chicago, IL:** April 21–25, 2010. The SAH, an IASTE affiliate, has also issued a call for session proposals for its 64th annual meeting in New Orleans, LA, in 2011. Session proposal submissions are due January 4, 2010. For more information, please visit www.sah.org.

"Multiple Belongings: Diaspora and Transnational Homes," **London, England:** May 21, 2010. Second conference of the Histories of Home Subject Specialist Network. Submit abstracts by January 8 on themes related to the material culture of migrants' homes throughout history. For more information, contact Krisztina Lackoi, klackoi@geffrye-museum.org.uk.

"Public Life in the In-Between Cities," **Haifa, Israel:** June 6–10, 2010. Technion University is hosting this conference, which will critically examine the changing nature of public space. Abstracts are due December 15, 2009. For more information, please contact: plic2010@gmail.com.

"Cities and Nationalisms," **London, England:** June 17–18, 2010. Sponsored by the Centre for Metropolitan History, the conference seeks to explore understudied geographies related to colonial cities and cities of the global South. For more information, contact: Vivian Bickford-Smith, vivian.bickford@sas.ac.uk, or Olwen Myhill, Olwen.Myhill@sas.ac.uk.

The European Architectural History Network, First Annual Meeting, **Guimarães, Portugal:** June 17–20, 2010. Conference sessions will pursue the following themes: Architecture in Nineteenth-Century Photographs; Architectures of the Suburb; The Changing Status of Women in Architecture between the Wars; The Urban City: Cultural Urbanism in the Heyday of Functionalism; Fictionalizing the City; and Village Architecture in the Age of a Sustainable Future. For more information, please visit: www.eahn2010.org.

"East meets West," **Osaka, Japan:** June 18–21, 2010. The Inaugural Asian Conference on Arts and Humanities will feature scholars from a wide range of disciplines. For more information, please visit: http://acah.iafor.org/.

"Global Rebalancing: East Asia and 21st-Century Globalization," **Busan, South Korea:** June 21–23, 2010. Scholars from a wide range of disciplines are encouraged to participate in this year's Global Studies Conference. Please visit: www.onglobalisation.com.

"Emerging Landscapes: Between Production and Representation," **London, England:** June 25–27, 2010. Co-sponsored by the University of Westminster's School of Architecture and the Built Environment and School of Media, Arts, and Design. The conference will focus on the intersections between architecture and media. For more information, please visit: www.emerginglandscapes.org.uk/.

"Imagining," **Newcastle, Australia:** June 30–July 2, 2010. The annual conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand, will take place at the University of Newcastle and explore the role of the imagination in architecture and architectural history. For more information, please visit: www.newcastle.edu.au/confer-ence/sahanz-2010/.

"Electronic Visualization and the Arts," **London, England:** July 5–7, 2010. The annual Electronic Information, Visual Arts, and Beyond conference will focus on architecture and heritage. The deadline for abstract submission is January 15, 2010. For more infor-mation, visit: www.eva-conferences.com/eva_london/2010_home.

"Modern and Postmodern Vision: New Belgrade and Port of Belgrade," **Belgrade, Serbia:** October 7-10, 2010. Sponsored by continental Europe's chapter of American Institute of Architects. For more information, please visit www.aiaeurope.org.

RECENT CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

"Traditions of Design Activism and Their Consequences," **Berkeley, CA:** September 25–27, 2009. Part one of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the College of Environmental Design at U.C. Berkeley. For more information on particular events and talks, please visit: www.ced.berkeley.edu/events/50thanniversary.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

In recent years IASTE scholars have examined traditions and their multitude of built forms in an increasingly interconnected global landscape. To advance this effort, this conference seeks to study how tradition inspires and informs changing concepts of utopia in theory and space. Utopian theories and plans emerge from a complex symbiotic relationship with traditions that are based on notions of the ideal. Indeed, utopias cannot be understood without understanding the traditions from which they develop.

At its etymological root, utopia embodies both the theoretical paradox of an ideal place, *eu-topia,* and a non-place, *ou-topia*, rendering it an impossibility. As an ideal place, utopia relies on tradition, but as a non-place it attempts to negate it. Although most utopias have spatial manifestations, they often attempt to harness and make static the traditions used to create these spaces. The geographies of utopia physically ground tradition, but tradition simultaneously controls these very same geographies. This contemporary moment of economic crisis necessitates a re-examination of this dynamic.

The word "utopia" is no longer as commonly referenced in professional practice as it was a few decades ago. However, architects, planners, and politicians continue to look for and disseminate notions of ideal forms. Regulated by ethnicity, religion, or race, the identity enclaves of many modern nations use territory to perpetuate visions of perfect communities based on specific traditions. The continuation and strengthening of tradition, cloaked in the language of utopia, may thus be seen to provide the focus for new gated communities in the developing world, the dreamscapes in cities around the Persian Gulf and the Pacific Rim, and the faux-colonial homes in American suburbs. On the other hand, there is an emerging discourse that reconceptualizes utopia itself, not as a product but as an open process aimed at transforming, rather than transcending, the existing condition.

Perhaps the relationship between utopia and tradition can best be understood by examining dystopia, utopia's twin other. Dystopia finds its clearest manifestation in literary and filmic representations, such as *1984* and *Blade Runner*, which embody complex imageries of terror, control, and urban anxiety. Tradition, in these brave new worlds, has often been explicitly rejected, and new forms are introduced as alternatives.

The historical development of utopia both draws upon and creates anew traditions of space, citizenship, and government. Those engaged with the idea of utopia have always come back to its physical realization within space, however elusive and/or illusory. In writing his *Republic*, Plato drew heavily on Greek traditions of warfare, civic engagement, and physical form, while Augustine of Hippo's *City of God* was a response to a particular moment of empire and decadence. Thomas More created a sketchy ideological geography of "no place" as a mythical island with a-spatial intonations. Since the Renaissance, when architects and artists such as Vitruvius searched for the *citte felice*, practitioners have tried to create physical spaces that would provide Eden-like environments for humankind. In more recent times, the modernist schemes of Ebenezer Howard and Le Corbusier envisioned ideal spaces that claimed to erase difference. This IASTE conference will focus on the theme of utopia and tradition in the twenty-first century.

The conference will attract an interdisciplinary group of scholars and practitioners from around the world working in the disciplines of anthropology, architecture, art and architectural history, city and regional planning, cultural studies, geography, history, landscape studies, sociology, and urban studies. They will present papers related to the following three themes:

Track 1 | Utopian Ideals versus Traditional Physical Realities

Central to the conference theme is the main tenet that utopias use tradition in their formulation and perpetuation of the ideal. Inquiries regarding attributes of utopia that may be rooted in traditional practices are encouraged in this line of inquiry. This track seeks to explore the convergence of ideals and realities as well as the underlying concepts of utopia and how they relate to a given traditional context or are manifested in space.

Track 2 | The Practices of Utopia and the Politics of Tradition

The deployment of tradition demands a certain selectivity that negates some forms of the past while celebrating others, making this exercise inherently political. In constructing utopias, practitioners also draw upon traditional discourses, practices, and forms, thus politicizing the quest for ideal communities. A key component in interrogating utopia and tradition is the political backdrop against which they occur. Examining the linkages between utopias, politics, and tradition, papers in this track are encouraged to investigate how tradition is deployed within the political sphere and the role the state plays in formulating notions of community and governance.

Track 3 | Utopia and the Space of Difference

By the end of the twentieth century, the crisis within modernism and the critical opposition to authoritarianism had caused a retreat from the idea of utopia as an ideal and perfected spatial form. This track seeks to examine new concepts of utopia that have risen to question its previous incarnations and established traditions. Papers in this track are encouraged to explore how the latest utopias have become more of an open process that engages both the present condition and the forbidden, the unseen, and the marginalized, straying from the imagined idyllic landscapes towards a new politics of difference.

THE UTOPIA OF TRADITION

OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please refer to our website www.ced.berkeley.edu/iaste for detailed instructions on abstract submissions. A one-page abstract of 500 words and a one-page CV are required. For further inquiries, please email IASTE Coordinator Sophie Gonick at iaste@berkeley.edu.

Proposals for complete panels are welcome. All papers must be written and presented in English. Following a blind peer-review process, papers may be accepted for presentation in the conference and/or publication in the Working Paper Series.

Contributors whose abstracts are accepted must pre-register for the conference, pay registration fees of $400 (which includes a special discounted $25 IASTE membership fee), and prepare a full-length paper of 20-25 double-spaced pages. Registered students may qualify for a reduced registration fee of $200 (which includes a special discounted $25 IASTE membership fee). All participants must be IASTE members. Please note that expenses associated with hotel accommodations, travel, and additional excursions are not covered by the registration fees and have to be paid directly to the designated travel agent. Registration fees cover the conference program, conference abstracts, and access to all conference activities including receptions, keynote panels, and a tour of the Beirut Central District.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

February 12 | Deadline for receipt of abstracts and CVs

May 5 | Notification of accepted abstracts for presentation

July 15 | Deadline for pre-registration and full paper submissions for possible publication in the Working Paper Series.

October 5 | Notification of accepted papers for the Working Paper Series

December 15–18 | Conference program

December 19 and 20–22 | Optional trips

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School of Architecture and Allied Arts, University of Oregon

CONFERENCE SITE & ACCOMMODATIONS

The conference will be held at American University of Beirut's West Hall, with accommodation at nearby hotels. In order to be able to obtain special room rates, reservations should be made online, over the phone, or through email at the conference hotel:

Gefinor Rotana Hotel, Hamra, Beirut, http://www.rotana.com/property-6.htm
E-mail: gefinor.hotel@rotana.com

Other accommodations with a special IASTE discount:

Casa d'Or Hotel, Hamra, Beirut, http://www.casadorhotel.com
E-mail: Info@casadorhotel.com

POST-CONFERENCE TRIPS

Two optional one-day trips are offered at participant's expense to Byblos and Tripoli, or to Baalbek and Anjar, on Sunday, December 19, 2010.

A two day/two night trip to Damascus, Syria, is also available from Monday, December 20 to Wednesday, December 22, 2010.

To participate in any of the three additional trips, please contact:

Mr. Charbel Salem, Nakhal Travel, http://www.nakhal.com
E-mail: tours@nakhal.com.lb or charbel@nakhal.com.lb

Note: An additional visa may be necessary for travel to Syria. Please check with your local consulate.

INQUIRIES

Please use the following information when making inquiries regarding the conference.

MAILING ADDRESS:

IASTE 2010

Center for Environmental Design Research

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Website: www.ced.berkeley.edu/iaste

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 orig-
inal 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
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Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the journal, papers should be written for an academic audience that may have either a
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Provide a one-paragraph abstract of no more than 100 words. This abstract should explain the content and structure of the paper
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Please divide the main body of the paper with a single progression of subheadings. There need be no more than four or
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Sample Progression: The Role of the Longhouse in Iban Culture. The Longhouse as a Building Form. Transformation of
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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.[1]
   An eminent architectural historian once wrote, "The roof form in general is the most indicative feature of the housing
   styles of North Africa."[2] Clearly, however, the matter of how these forms have evolved is a complex subject. A thorough
   analysis is beyond the scope of this paper.[3]
   In my research I discovered that local people have differing notions about the origins of the roof forms on the dwellings
   they inhabit.[4]

The reference notes, collected at the end of the text (not at the bottom of each page), would read as follows:
   1. E. Regis, *Egyptian Dwellings* (Cairo: University Press, 1979), p.179; and H. Lacompte, "New
   Study Stirs Old Debate," *Smithsonian,* Vol.11 No.2 (December 1983), pp.24–34.
   2. B. Smithson, "Characteristic Roof Forms," in H. Jones, ed., *Architecture of North Africa* (New York: Harper and Row,
      1980), p.123.
   3. For a detailed discussion of this issue, see J. Idris, *Roofs and Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984).
   4. In my interviews I found that the local people understood the full meaning of my question only when I used a more
      formal Egyptian word for "roof" than that in common usage.

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