TRADITIONAL DWELLINGS AND SETTLEMENTS REVIEW

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The International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE) was established at the First International Symposium on Traditional Dwellings and Settlements held at Berkeley in April 1988. IASTE is an interdisciplinary forum where scholars from various disciplines and countries can exchange ideas, discuss methods and approaches, and share findings. As opposed to disciplinary associations, IASTE is a nonprofit organization concerned with the comparative and cross-cultural understanding of traditional habitat as an expression of informal cultural conventions. IASTE's purpose is to serve as an umbrella association for all scholars studying vernacular, indigenous, popular and traditional environments. Current activities of IASTE include the organization of biennial conferences on selected themes in traditional-environments research, the publication of edited books on selected themes, a public outreach program which includes supporting films and documentaries, and the publication of the Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Working Paper Series, which includes all papers presented at IASTE conferences and accepted for publication.

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

IASTE membership is open to all who are interested in traditional environments and their related studies. In addition to receiving the Association's semi-annual journal, members are eligible to attend the biennial conference at reduced rates. Subscription to the journal is available only with membership in IASTE. Domestic order rates are as follows: Individual, $60 (one year), $110 (two years); Institutional, $120 (one year), $240 (two years). Foreign members add $15 per year for mailing. Libraries, museums, and academic organizations qualify as institutions. Subscriptions are payable in U.S. dollars only (by check drawn on a U.S. bank, U.S. money order, or international bank draft). Send inquiries to:

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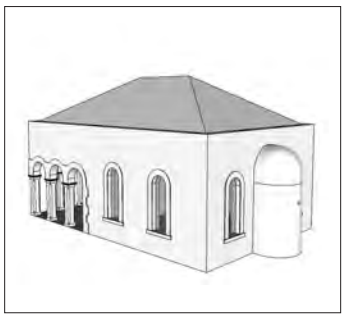

COVER ILLUSTRATION: DUBAI'S TEXTILE BAZAAR. PHOTO BY MOHAMED EL-AMROUSI.

Editor's Note

With the publication of the fiftieth issue of *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, I would like to reflect on the continuing vitality of IASTE as an organization. IASTE now links two universities — the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Oregon — with Berkeley managing the intellectual mission of the association, the conference themes, and *TDSR*, and Oregon, under the direction of Mark Gillem, managing the Working Paper Series and our conferences and workshops. We have also recently made some changes to our staff, with Jennifer Gaugler joining as Coordinator, and Tomi Laine Clark continuing in her role as Administrative Coordinator. IASTE is in good hands as we continue our mission to bring exceptional interdisciplinary scholarship to a growing audience.

We are pleased to begin this issue with an invited article from John Archer, a distinguished architectural historian and scholar of cultural studies and comparative literature. Archer was one of the keynote speakers at the 2012 IASTE conference, and he expands on his insightful comments there concerning both the resilience and vulnerability of the myth of the American dream. Focusing on the impact of the recent economic crisis, his article provides a timely look at both contemporary social issues and the persistence of a national mindset. Continuing with the theme of resilience, John Biln and Mohamed El Amrousi next take a critical look at the small house museums of Dubai and how they reflect a profound sense of absence in the face of the relentless development and urban spectacle characteristic of that city. The two make a compelling argument that through various strategies of substitution and simulation these discrete heritage projects have become "unwitting vehicles for melancholic lament."

Moving back to the U.S., Anna Goodman evaluates the representational strategies that shape the practice of the Auburn University Rural Studio. She suggests that particular forms of representation have distorted perceptions of the program and restricted its critical capacity — an assertion that may have relevance to other humanitarian architecture practices. In our fourth article, Han Li explores what happens when architectural heritage is literally "transplanted" from one context to another. A linguist, Li discusses the complex meanings and outcomes of such acts of appropriation through the case study of Yin Yu Tang, a Huizhou residence that was purchased, dismantled, and shipped from China to the Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts. Finally, this issue contains a field report by M. Mizanur Rashid and Katharine Bartsch, who examine the little-known architectural legacy of the early Islamic diaspora in Australia. In particular, they explore the historical roots of the Adelaide mosque, both as an architectural counterpart to the sociocultural and anthropological work done on this population and as a plea for proper appreciation of such hybrid structures within the Muslim world.

I would like to end this note by reminding all our readers to join us in December for the 2014 IASTE Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Our biennial event will explore the theme "Whose Tradition?" by studying in what manner, for what reason, by whom, to what effect, and during what intervals traditions have been deployed with regard to the built environment. We expect it to be a very exciting event. We look forward to seeing you in Kuala Lumpur.

Nezar AlSayyad

Special Article

The Resilience of Myth: The Politics of the American Dream

JOHN ARCHER

During the twentieth century the myth of the American dream, synonymous with upward mobility and especially ownership of a single-family detached house, became a mainstay of the American political system and of American popular culture. The economic crisis of 2006–2012 profoundly shook confidence in this myth. In consequence, the myth-dream has been exposed to unprecedented efforts to abandon, critique, redefine and appropriate it. This essay analyzes those efforts and what they demonstrate about the vulnerability and durability of myth in the American political and cultural landscape.

The American dream: it is a concept, an aspiration, and an expectation, so well known it seldom seems to need explaining. The underlying principles — expectations of upward mobility and, more recently, homeownership — date as far back as the early nineteenth century, while the term itself is nearly a century old. Over that century the term has borne several different definitions; still, those using it, whether in print or daily discourse, typically dedicate little, if any, time to explaining it. In one notable instance, a Time-Life book titled *The American Dream: The 50s*, published in 1998, declared its very subject to be the American dream, yet it never defined or explained what that meant — it was simply taken for granted that readers would know. Such has been the widespread and enduring credence given to this guiding ideal in American life.

Integral to the genealogy of this term, its persisting role as a cornerstone of contemporary political and social discourse, is its status as a premier and lasting American myth: an object of common understanding that embodies broadly held cultural aspirations and expectations. While "myth," as a concept, admits of multiple definitions, this essay takes it to mean a guiding set of understandings and beliefs that serve to organize in a very practical way the relationship between human consciousness and the physical environment. In other words, myth establishes a framework and sets the terms by which people encounter, comprehend and shape social relations and the space around them.

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By their very nature, myths are frequently, and in large measure, political. They have much to do with establishing the role and place of the citizen in society, and even organizing the ways citizens conduct daily life. In this sense, the crucial role of myth is often to sustain the relationship between the citizen, the broader culture, and social and political institutions. But a central goal of this essay is to examine how the role of myth also works inversely: how a myth may be turned against the prevailing regime when social and material circumstances no longer correspond to the expectations and understandings incorporated in it, and how it may then become a site for the interrogation and contestation of political positions and institutions.

The American dream has long been bound up with America's politics and political ideology, and for the most part the relationship has been harmonious. When in the 1920s ownership of a single-family house became woven into the dream as one of its central components, it was for deliberately political purposes: the dream house would become the standard material artifact accepted as fulfillment of the dream-myth. The rapid expansion of single-family housing after mid-century, by accelerating the numbers of Americans realizing the dream, thus became a principal mechanism of American political stability and economic prosperity. And for the remainder of the century this arrangement worked. Indeed, it embodied all the hallmarks of a highly successful myth: it was taken for granted, as a bedrock tenet of American citizenship and culture, that to have that single-family house was to fulfill the dream, and it was assumed that to fulfill the dream was to have "made it" in America.

The myth functioned collectively, too. The fact that homeownership continued to be extended across the population demonstrated the success of the United States as a nation and a political system. Myth thus became a template for tradition, specifically in the form of the single-family house — or, more precisely, the detached single-nuclear-family house — widely understood to be the locus of the "traditional" American family. And despite the preponderance of multigenerational households prior to World War II, the widespread presence of other, multifamily housing types, and the fact that "nontraditional" households today far outnumber "traditional" households, the single-family house remains the iconic American ideal. By virtue of housing as much of the population as it does, and by serving as a template that shapes the experience of those who live and grow up in them, this object of the dream-myth normalizes, replicates and instructs future generations in the apparatus and practices of tradition.

But what happens when a myth fails? Or, more precisely in this case, what happens when U.S. citizens find that the American dream-myth doesn't work for them the way that it is supposed to? What happens when those playing by its rules discover that success eludes them, that they haven't made it — indeed, that they can't make it? A simplistic answer would be to imagine that people would suddenly see the myth in another sense — as a fallacy or falsehood. But the recent course of events, from the housing bubble of the early 2000s through the mortgage crisis and Great Recession of the late 2000s and its lingering effects in the 2010s, shows that despite crisis and despair, the power of the American dream-myth remains durable. Instead of blaming the myth — which would effectively entail rejecting deeply held beliefs — the crisis has thus afforded opportunities to look inside and behind the myth, to question whose interests it favors and whose precipitated its breakdown. Simultaneously, other, opportunistic interests have also taken advantage of the occasion to revitalize the dream by recasting it in terms favorable to themselves.

In this process, as circumstances have fallen out of alignment with beliefs and expectations, temporary moments of political consciousness have appeared — when the functioning of myth as a critical nexus between the political system and the practices of daily material life have been opened to scrutiny and interrogation. In other words, as material conditions have made the myth seem increasingly unattainable — indeed, thwarted the aspirations of many to achieve it — the myth has temporarily ceased to be an instrument for sustaining the political system, and instead become a fulcrum for interrogating it and potentially changing, or even hijacking it. The goal of this essay is to chronicle this process as it has unfolded in recent American history.

THE POLITICAL GENEALOGY OF THE DREAM

The American dream is, and always has been, critically allied with American politics. This condition was never more apparent than in October 1956, at the height of the Cold War, on the eve of the crisis of the Hungarian Revolution, when *House Beautiful* issued a "Report to the World on How Americans Live," pretentiously prepared to be "distributed, in sizable quantities, to all other countries of the world." Several articles in this volume tellingly focused on the private house, with titles such as "Everybody Can Own a House" and "The People's Capitalism" — both clear rejoinders to Soviet socialist practices. The keynote essay by *House Beautiful*'s editorial director, Joseph A. Barry, titled "America — Body and Soul," encapsulated the role of the single-family house in fulfilling the American dream, and thus its importance for America's success and global hegemony:

> *To own one's home! Has this not been part of the democratic dream? . . . To have a good life while knowing the same good life is being enjoyed by most of the people around you. Here is a moral basis for civilization that has never before existed on so grand a scale.*[1]

In this overly jingoistic celebration of the single-family house as the redemption of civilization, Barry nevertheless encapsulated five core principles that have, over time, consis-

FIGURE 1. *Federal National Mortgage Association headquarters, Washington, D.C. Photo by author.*

tently tied ownership of the single-family house not only to fulfillment of the dream but also to the hegemony of American capitalism: (a) it is a private, personal possession, ownership of which (b) furthers democracy, (c) encapsulates the good life, (d) articulates a moral vision, and (e) epitomizes the height of civilization. While few American homeowners or politicians would ever speak in such grandiose terms, these ideals have operated on many levels, from the tax deductibility of home mortgages to the very architecture of the Federal National Mortgage Association headquarters in Washington, D.C. (FIG. 1). Erected during the same period as when Barry wrote his essay, this massive, sprawling edifice is wrapped in a brick-and-white-trim veneer that couches (or conceals) in colonial-Williamsburg domesticity the immense Washington bureaucracy inside. The message is that the business of this quasi-governmental agency is all about citizens owning a home, that homeownership is their most important product. Not to let the implicit connection with the dream go unstated, during 2000 and 2001 this agency's National Public Radio credit line reaffirmed its raison d'être: "We're in the American Dream Business."[2]

The political roots of this dream extend at least as far back as the turn of the nineteenth century, to the beliefs of Thomas Jefferson and many of his contemporaries that the American republic required a population of independent gentleman farmers. Individual farmsteads, maintained by self-reliant men of virtue, would provide a foundation for the new nation. By mid-century, individualist pioneers staking out homesteads across the continent were celebrated as agents of American political and economic triumph, the nation's manifest destiny. Embedded in such a vision was the notion of opportunity: the ideal of the United States as a country whose citizens were free to realize their ambitions through their own diligent efforts.

Henry Clay articulated this ideal of the "self-made man" on the floor of the U.S. Senate in an 1832 speech urging protectionist trade barriers that would safeguard Americans' entrepreneurial opportunities. It was soon amplified and widely popularized through books such as John Frost's *Self Made Men of America* (1848) and Charles Seymore's *Self Made Men* (1858). The ideal gained further momentum by means of rags-to-riches stories such as Horatio Alger's *Ragged Dick: Or, Street Life in New York with the Bootblacks* (1866). This work ultimately became a series of more than a hundred books, selling an estimated twenty million copies, and emphasizing opportunities for people to achieve great success by pulling themselves up by their bootstraps. Popularizers such as Russell Conwell, whose "Acres of Diamonds" lecture, delivered more than six thousand times before his death in 1925, also preached self-directed industriousness and perseverance. And Dale Carnegie, whose books *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936) and *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* (1948) became common household reading, solidified the dream-myth of America as a land of opportunity for self-made success.

Despite the widespread appeal of the ideal, the term itself, "American dream," did not appear in common usage until 1931, when historian James Truslow Adams, in his best-selling *Epic of America*, employed it to help explain what he called the structure of the American mind. In thus characterizing the myth as deeply lodged in an ideological register, he acknowledged its ongoing primacy and power in American politics. In passages where Adams discussed the dream in detail, his recurring theme was equal opportunity, affording access for all to a trajectory of success:

> *[T]he American dream [is] the belief in the common man and the insistence upon his having, as far as possible, equal opportunity in every way with the rich one. . . .*
>
> *[T]he American dream [is] that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement.*

Despite the worsening outlook for any such success in the Depression year when Adams was writing, his historical perspective allowed him to sketch the evolution of the myth into an American ideological imperative: "It was on frontier after frontier of his vast domain that the American dream could be prolonged until it became part of the very structure of the American mind."[3]

Meanwhile, the process of conjoining the single-family house with the American dream, effectively establishing a material benchmark for individual or family achievement, originated in the 1920s as a product of political and economic policy. Beginning early in the decade, government policy under the Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge administrations progressively evolved to establish the ownership of a single-family detached house as the goal of every American family. The campaign was undertaken both in response to the specter of Bolshevism as well as in the interest of American capitalist enterprise. One of its central goals was to bind as many Americans as possible to the American political system through property ownership. As then Vice President Coolidge argued in 1922 in "A Nation of Home-Owners," capitalism could not prevail without widespread ownership of property. It was "time to demonstrate more effectively that property is of the people," which he proposed to do by urging "America to become a nation of home-owners."[4]

As Secretary of Commerce under Harding and Coolidge, Herbert Hoover also played an instrumental role in this process. Concerned in part about the spread of Bolshevism, he actively orchestrated federal government support for home-ownership. As he wrote in the opening line of his 1922 best-selling tract *American Individualism*, "we have witnessed in this last eight years the spread of revolution over one-third of the world."[5] And heeding the interests of those he represented through his portfolio at the Commerce Department, he argued that America could best secure immunity from this threat by broadening participation in the capitalist economy — specifically, through homeownership.

As Hoover wrote in a foreword to the 1923 government-produced manual *How to Own Your Home*, "The present large proportion of families that own their own homes is the foundation of a sound economic and social system and a guarantee that our society will continue to develop rationally as changing conditions demand." He set a goal of "maintaining a high percentage of individual home owners," because they "have an interest in the advancement of a social system that permits the individual to store up the fruits of his labor."[6] In 1925 Coolidge went Hoover one better, suggesting that ownership of property in the form of a single-family homes was, in effect, a patriotic duty: "No greater contribution could be made to assure the stability of the Nation, and the advancement of its ideals, than to make it a Nation of home-owning families."[7]

EMBRACING THE DREAM IN POPULAR CULTURE

The force of such a national campaign promoting single-family homeownership as a national ideal and a patriotic duty found resonance in popular culture. In 1926 a recording was made by Earle Fox and Lynn Cowan of the song "Dream House" that would became a standard for decades to come (and the first of numerous songs about dream houses through the remainder of the century). As its first line announced, "I've got a secret to tell you." The suitor's lyrics went on to describe a "cozy little dream house" that had just been built, in which "happiness" was already waiting for his chosen love. Even the "preacher man" was waiting; all that was missing was a response of "YES" to the proposal of marriage, children, and happy domesticity that this vision of a dream house conveyed.[8]

Within the next several decades popular culture readily propagated and solidified the dream-house ideal across other mass media. The daydream sequence in the 1936 Charlie Chaplin film *Modern Times* centers on a suburban bungalow in which the lead characters imagine themselves enjoying the good life. In *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947), the Christmas wishes of young Susan are similarly realized in a house she spots for sale, and in which her mother and her lawyer friend ultimately decide to get married, fulfilling Susan's hopes. The dream house took a title role in *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House* (1948), starring Cary Grant and Myrna Loy. And the "somewhere that's green" daydream sequence in *Little Shop of Horrors* (1986) features a house that realizes heroine Audrey's trinity of class, social and marital aspirations. These and countless other representations of the dream in film and television progressively established and reinforced the single-family house as both the premier instrument for achieving the American dream and the premier mechanism for signifying that its owner had "made it."

In the mid-1940s, with the end of World War II in view, marketers of building products and appliances seized this dream-house ideal as a fertile opportunity for commercial expansion. Using images of detached, suburban, single-nuclear-family houses as dream-objects, companies such as General Electric, Kelvinator, and others established the dream house as the justifiable expectation of returning GIs and their families after years of separation, privation and loss. As early as 1943 General Electric was producing advertisements featuring daydreaming GIs and their brides envisioning houses

filled with consumer appliances.[9] A 1959 *Saturday Evening Post* cover imaginatively expanded the scope of the dream to literally include constellations of commodities, as a young couple sitting under a nighttime sky spots all the elements of their future life outlined in the stellar patterns above — a pool, two cars, two pets, three children, a stereo, a television, a washer and dryer, a drill press, an air conditioner, and an assortment of other appliances (FIG. 2).[10] In 1962 the first of many versions of Barbie's Dream House also appeared, disseminating the dream-house ideal ever more widely, educating future American housewives as to what they should expect and strive for.

In music, too, songs such as "Dream House for Sale" (Joe and Rose Lee Maphis, 1953), "Dream House" (John Eddie, 1986), and others centering on dream houses such as Bing Crosby's "Dear Hearts and Gentle People" (1950), "My Heart Wasn't in It" (Neal Coty, 1995), and "Dream House" (jp jones, 2000) affirmed and reinforced the single-family house as an aspirational ideal. Not every song was a record of success, however. Red Sovine's "Dream House for Sale," one of the top country hits of 1964, was cast in the form of a newspaper advertisement, its lyrics portraying a life of ruined dreams, now encapsulated in the forlorn emptiness of the erstwhile "dream house":

> *I was looking through the morning paper . . .*
> *When I saw an ad that caught my eye. . .*
> *One dream house for sale. . . .*
> *[T]here's no closing costs for the dreams I lost*
> *When the girl I loved left town. . . .*
> *The only thing wrong with this house of mine*
> *Is the black cloud that hangs above.*
> *I guess it's there to keep out the sunshine*
> *Since mine was a house without love.*[11]

A video produced by the Kottonmouth Kings to accompany the 1997 film *Scream 2* featured a far more acerbic recognition that the dream was not working:

> *Now my pops bought the system, American dreamer*
> *Bought a new home and a brand new Beemer*
> *But it didn't take long for things to fall apart*
> *Because the system that he bought ain't got no heart*
> *From the bills for days he got blood shot eyes*
> *The American dream was a pack of lies.*[12]

Such tales of downfall and defeat were nevertheless a testament to the pervasive hold exerted by the dream-myth across all sectors of American life, extending well beyond the middle class to encompass rural blue-collar audiences and those attuned to urban and suburban hip-hop. They were tales of exception, chronicling that moment of disillusionment when the system and all of its promises fail and the dream is exposed as a sham, "a pack of lies." However, typically, such moments were understood to be individual exceptions, tales of glitches and misfits, not yet the wholesale disillusion that spread during the massive economic crisis that would come early in the new millennium.

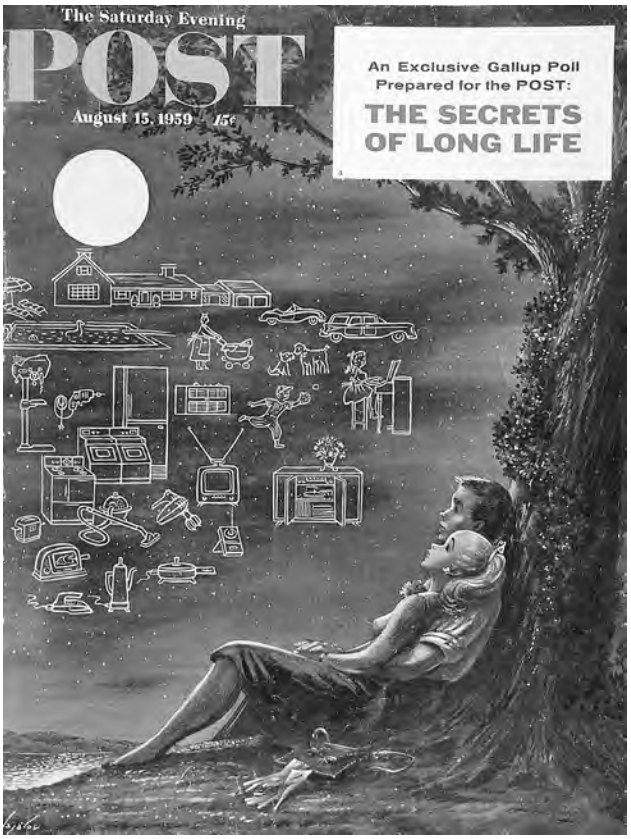

FIGURE 2. Saturday Evening Post, *August 15, 1959, cover.*

Indeed, throughout the twentieth century, when adverse economic or social conditions tested the promise of the dream, the myth remained resilient, rebutting or even refuting the challenges confronting it. Thus, while the Depression forced many from their homes and precipitated widespread downward mobility, films such as *Modern Times* and books such Dale Carnegie's continued to sustain dream-house and self-betterment ideals. And in the 1960s and 1970s, despite the widespread and popular savaging of suburbia, its residents, and their aspirations — as evident in songs such as "Little Boxes" (Malvina Reynolds, 1963), "Pleasant Valley Sunday" (The Monkees, 1966), and "Subdivision Blues" (Tom T. Hall, 1973), or films such as *Over the Edge* (1979) — ever greater numbers of people ultimately chose houses in the suburbs that aspired to the dream-house ideal.

More recently, exasperation with the social and environmental effects of sprawl called the prevailing manifestation of the dream into question. *Newsweek*'s cover of May 15, 1995, sported the banner headline "Bye-Bye, Suburban Dream," and complained that much of America had reached "the

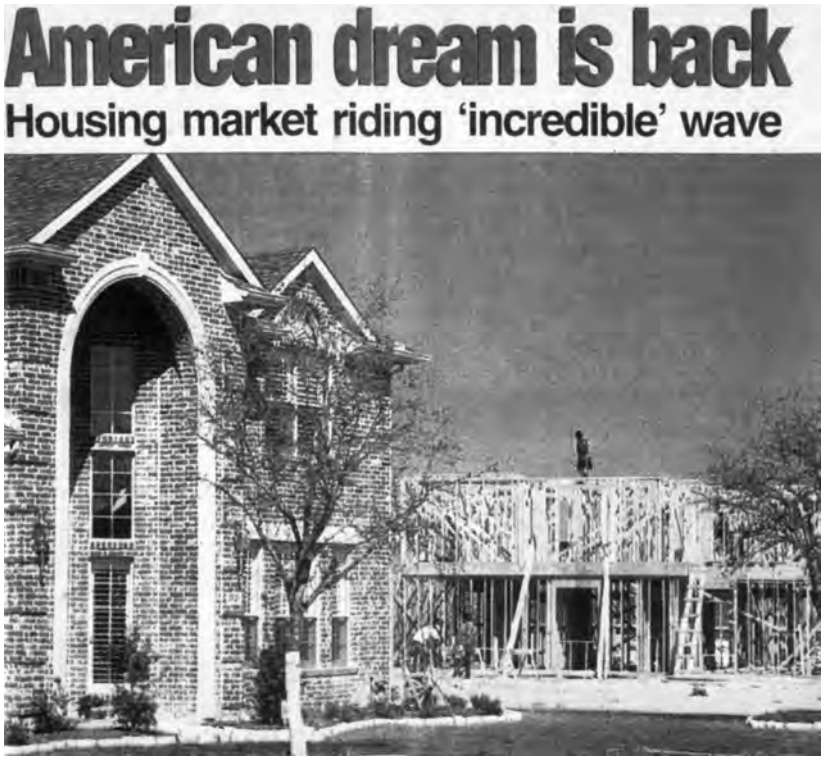

FIGURE 3. *"American Dream Is Back."* USA Today, *April 7, 1998, cover.*

point at which each new subdivision subtracts more from the quality of life than the new inhabitants will contribute to the economy by buying wind chimes, mesquite logs and Navajo-motif throw rugs." Still, any loss of confidence in the dream was short-lived. Indeed, by 1998, just a year after the Kottonmouth Kings' acerbic lament, a *USA Today* cover story sported the bold headline, "American dream is back: Housing market riding 'incredible' wave" **(FIG. 3)**.[13] As it proclaimed, progress toward the dream had only been temporarily interrupted. And the cover photo of McMansions under construction affirmed that progress had resumed toward the realization of ever greater dreams through ever more monumental houses. The fundamental political myth of widespread opportunity for upward mobility, quintessentially realized in ownership of a "dream home," remained stalwartly intact.

REAL ESTATE COLLAPSE AND RECESSION: FAILED DREAM

The first years of the new millennium promised to demonstrate the vitality of the dream on a scale never before seen, as easy mortgage money expanded homeownership opportunities to segments of the population for whom the dream had previously seemed unattainable. Politicians were only too eager to reinforce and capitalize on this trend. In 2001 President George W. Bush stated in a radio address that "homeownership lies at the heart of the American Dream," and he urged all Americans "to make the American Dream a reality for more families."[14] His administration began doing just that through a series of initiatives in 2002. First came a white paper, "A Home of Your Own," issued over the president's name.[15] Next, the Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a "Blueprint for the American Dream."[16] The American Dream Downpayment Act of 2003 then explicitly aimed to assist minorities in their efforts to become homeowners.[17] Unmistakably mirroring Coolidge administration policy, and clearly cognizant of the crucial political role of the dream myth, Bush administration policy sought to commit as much of the population as possible to property ownership. As part of that process, the political and economic identities of ever more citizens became tied, for better or worse, to the fortunes of an economic regime in which the imperatives of property, finance and capital soon displaced the interests and very expectations of citizenship they had once promised to fulfill.

The political association of housing with the American dream had originally been an undertaking of the 1920s — which, like the first decade of the twenty-first century, was a period of overconfident financial expansion. But those harmed by the financial collapse of the Depression (and of the periodic recessions thereafter) amounted to only a fraction of those who committed themselves to the real estate market during the bubble of the early 2000s. Those who would be swept up in this new collapse constituted a segment of the population whose numbers and demographic breadth were impossible to ignore.

It might be expected that such an extensive failure would result in the dream being discredited and abandoned. When conditions change so much that they undermine and subvert a myth, and when trying to live in accordance with it becomes a widespread exercise in frustration and failure, it could easily have been forsaken. Instead, what happened bespeaks not only the power of this particular myth, anchored as it is in two centuries of American social and political history and wedded to private-property-based American capitalism, but also the potency of myth itself as a fundamental and necessary component of the American polity.

The remainder of this essay explores six different (though overlapping) respects in which this crisis has engendered intensive debate and activity — engaging dream and myth, often critically, but not always with a willingness to abandon either. These six respects, mapping different directions in which responses to the crisis have unfolded, took form as follows: as declarations that the dream was "only a myth," thus challenging its very authority; as attempts to maintain the authority of the dream by redefining it in other, more sustainable, terms; as efforts to shore up the dream in its original form so that it could remain an aspirational force in American politics and society; as political and economic critiques of the dream, leveraging its collapse to mobilize widespread disaffection with the American political system; as overt politicization of the dream to advance partisan electoral politics; and as advertising campaigns to hijack the dream, in efforts to bind the dreamer to commercial interests through opportunistic marketing.

DECLARING THE DREAM IS "ONLY A MYTH"

The word "myth" bears a number of significations. In popular parlance, it often functions as a synonym for fantasy or deception. But in academic discourse, it commonly is understood as a central component in processes by which cultures establish and legitimate themselves. The American dream-myth, as described here as a set of guiding principles and beliefs, has functioned in the latter sense for the past two centuries. Nevertheless, at a moment of crisis, when expectations in accordance with those principles and beliefs could no longer be sustained, it became possible to condemn the guiding principles as fictive, or even as outright misrepresentations.

In *Second-Rate Nation: From the American Dream to the American Myth* (2005), Sam D. Sieber did just that. Analyzing what he saw as the accelerating decline of the United States as a country and a society, he concluded that a long-term process of degradation since the 1960s had become "a gradual shift from the traditional American Dream to a full-blown American Myth." A dream, he explained, is "a fond vision of the future," while "[a] myth is a theatrical celebration of past and present with little substance, and in fact conceals the emptiness of the present under false colors of greatness as a means of assuaging anxiety." Thus, the American Myth, embracing the notion that "in spite of its flaws, the United States is the best country in the world," was nothing more than "the American Dream running on empty."[18] While not necessarily blaming the erstwhile dream for America's decline, Sieber did identify the collapse of the dream into the empty and deceptive sort of myth as complicit in, and to an extent responsible for, America's decline.

In a similar vein, Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph E. Stiglitz, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors in the Clinton administration and a harsh critic of economic inequalities under American capitalism, identified the dream-myth as having deliberately misled Americans. In *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future*, which appeared in 2012 in the wake of the Great Recession, he discounted the promises of opportunity and upward mobility integral to the American dream as the deceptive kind of myth, a lie: "America has always thought of itself as a land of *equal opportunity*. Horatio Alger stories, of individuals who made it from the bottom to the top, are part of American folklore." But, he wrote, "increasingly, the American dream that saw the country as a land of opportunity began to seem just that: a dream, a myth, reinforced by anecdotes and stories, but not supported by the data."[19] The effect of the dream-myth, in other words, was a travesty: those who aspired to its fictive objects could do nothing but fail.

At the same time these writers have sought to show that the American dream is based on falsehoods, the Center for the Study of the American Dream at Xavier University in Cincinnati, a Jesuit institution, has sought to document this empirically. This has involved efforts to establish concrete grounds on which to benchmark the dream, approaching it in terms of qualities that can be quantified and measured. Paradoxically, the center's extensive website offers no clear definition of its object of study; however, some inference as to its crucial role can be gleaned from the assertion that "[t]he American dream defines our aspirations; it is these aspirations and their connected values that distinguish us in the world."

The center's publications are heavily focused on information derived from surveys, which in turn center on such issues as whether immigrants should pass a civic literacy test or whether elected officials have lost sight of the American dream, however defined. Its flagship report is a periodically updated chart called the American Dream Composite Index, which amalgamates several proprietary statistical measures, including an economic index, a well-being index, a societal index, a diversity index (i.e., respondents' "level of satisfaction with diversity"), and an environment index. Yet what is most notable with respect to the center's work is that it has radically undermined the practical role of the American dream as a foundational myth. To clear up any "myths" surrounding the dream (and thereby authenticate this version of the dream), it has identified five specific myths (i.e., falsehoods) that have corrupted the dream. Among these are that "Homeowner-

ship is the American dream" and that "The American dream is American."[20] Thus recasting the dream in terms that reject its longstanding role as a foundational American myth, the center has attempted to divorce the dream not only from homeownership but, even more remarkably, from America.

REDEFINING THE DREAM

In the eyes of many such as Stiglitz, the disconnect between the deceptive optimism of the dream-myth and the incapacity of the American economy to fulfill people's hopes ought to have accelerated public recognition of deficiencies in the nation's capital- and property-centric economic system. But for many, it was impossible to abandon the appeal of myth itself, or the confident optimism that it sustained. Faced with crisis, there has therefore been ample incentive to redefine the dream in more attainable terms.

As early as 1980 Studs Terkel laid important groundwork for this understanding in his book *American Dreams: Lost and Found*. By pluralizing "dream" to "dreams," Terkel focused not on the collective dream, participation in which bound Americans to aspirations of upward class mobility and homeownership, but rather on individual stories of people pursuing their own personal hopes and ideals based more in their particular life trajectories than a collective social enterprise. In parallel fashion, Dan Rather's collection *The American Dream: Stories from the Heart of Our Nation* (2001) recounted the stories of individuals defining their own versions of the dream — from living off the land, to serving God or country, to simply starting a family. More recently, in 2012, in the face of the Great Recession, Fox News Latino broadcast a series of very particularized portraits under the common headline "Our American Dream," which highlighted stories of individual immigrants achieving remarkable success. As with the work of Terkel and Rather, these portraits cast the dream quite narrowly in terms of fulfilling individual trajectories, such as becoming a hotel manager at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas or winning a Small Business Administration award for entrepreneurial success. Perhaps inadvertently, the series nevertheless made it clear that these individuals were outliers, succeeding despite the odds and challenges faced by so many others.

By detaching particular narratives from the common, collective myth, efforts such as these have become one way to redefine the dream without abandoning it, in terms that are more individually achievable, if less universally recognizable. Other approaches to redefining the dream have maintained the notion of a common and collective myth, but recast it in terms of radically different sets of issues. Abandoning such traditional concerns as upward mobility and homeownership, the Center for a New American Dream, founded in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1997, has instead focused on consumption, quality of life, and environment. On a webpage titled "Redefining the Dream," the center thus recast the dream as "[i]nspiring, engaging, and challenging Americans to re-examine their cultural values on consumption and consumerism and initiating a new national conversation around what 'the good life' and the 'American dream' mean."[21] The definition of the dream, in other words, was now up for grabs, as the center sought to appropriate the rhetorical value of the term to address issues of consumption and sustainability.

The Museum of Modern Art has similarly taken advantage of the opportunity to advance a reformist social agenda. In 2011 it mounted a large and highly publicized exhibition, including a series of associated public forums and publications, titled "Foreclosed: Rehousing the American Dream." Nominally concerned with housing as an instrument for pursuing or achieving the dream, MOMA's featured text was "The Buell Hypothesis," produced by the Buell Center at Columbia University in 2011. Like the architectural and urbanistic projects on exhibit, this report focuses quite narrowly on affordable and sustainable housing. It leaves the impression that the dream could be realized by virtue of a population being housed according to two common criteria, equity and sustainability — rather than in terms of personal aspiration and achievement.

In 2010, as the housing crisis persisted and the economy stagnated, others defined the problem in terms of fixing the wreckage: redefining the dream in terms that could fill the void that the collapse had produced. Since the myth had not delivered, Tom Hartmann's book *Rebooting the American Dream* sent the dream back to the drawing board. Hartmann's dream, thus recast, yielded "11 ways to rebuild our country," ranging from rolling back the Reagan tax cuts to "Put Lou Dobbs out to Pasture" — a panoply of objectives that no longer added up to a coherent dream, but rather suggested pragmatic fixes to immediate problems.[22] Later that year *Time* magazine took up the very same problem of regenerating the dream, in an issue whose cover showed a house fronted by a withered, decaying picket fence. Yet its featured essay, by Fareed Zakaria, "How to Restore the American Dream," omitted any mention of housing, upward class mobility, or other aspirations by which the dream was once recognized. Instead, it outlined specific fixes for the American economy, ranging from job creation and investment to training and education.[23] "Restoring the American Dream: Getting Back to Work," a program aired on CNN in September 2011, also featuring Zakaria, narrowed the focus even more. Virtually jettisoning the ideal of a dream house, it focused simply on job creation. "If there's an idea of the heart of the American dream, it's surely a job. A family, a house, two cars to be sure. But at the center, a good job and rising wages."[24] Simply repairing the economy so that it would function better seemed to have become the new American dream.

In the above cases and in parallel efforts elsewhere — such as redefining the dream as unfettered property rights, unhindered entrepreneurialism, restoration of economic productivity, more available and affordable housing, and (not

least) the freedom for anyone to delineate the dream on their own terms, however idiosyncratic — the effect of the political and economic crisis has generally not been to expose and challenge deficiencies in the underlying political and economic system. Rather, it has essentially been to blame the messenger — that is, the dream that embodied and signified the principles and processes built into the system. The remedy, in effect, has been to recast and redefine the messenger-dream-myth in terms that are more pragmatic, or more attuned to narrow interests, leaving the system itself intact.

SHORING UP THE DREAM

In 2002 and 2003 the Bush administration had already undertaken a series of initiatives, described above, aimed at broadening the base of those who could aspire to and perhaps achieve the dream. Although the American Dream Downpayment Act (2003) and President Bush's support for it were underreported in the mainstream press, Bush emphasized a vision that involved expanding the population of American-dream aspirants to include those historically most disenfranchised from it. In an address at the St. Paul AME Church in Atlanta on June 17, 2002, Bush framed his remarks (as had Hoover eighty years before) in terms of defending America and its freedoms against foreign threat, and he opened with a reference to the "60,000 troops fighting terrorism so that we can be free, all of us can be free." The rest of the speech focused on increasing the rate of minority homeownership. His approach was to tout the appeal of the American dream, to make it desirable and appear attainable for minorities, ultimately in hopes of recruiting them into the ranks of homeowners. As Bush attested:

> *I do believe in the American Dream. I believe there is such a thing as the American Dream. And I believe those of us who have been given positions of responsibility must do everything we can to spotlight the dream and to make sure the dream shines in all neighborhoods, all throughout our country. Owning a home is a part of that dream, it just is. Right here in America if you own your own home, you're realizing the American Dream.*

Bush emphasized that he was counting on the dream to perform a specific role — namely, to provide the necessary motivation to propel its new adherents to homeownership:

> *Now, we've got a problem here in America that we have to address. Too many American families, too many minorities do not own a home. There is a home ownership gap in America. The difference between Anglo America and African American and Hispanic home ownership is too big. . . . And so that's why I propose and urge Congress to fully fund the American Dream Downpayment Fund. This will use money, taxpayers' money to help a qualified, low income buyer make a downpayment. And that's important.*[25]

The devastating effects of the housing bubble, the ensuing mortgage crisis, and the Great Recession ultimately limited, and perhaps even reversed, any potential impact of the Bush-era program. Yet this did not necessarily limit the opportunity for politicians to continue efforts to shore up the dream and maintain its force as an aspirational goal in American political and economic life. In 2011 the Congressional Progressive Caucus, acknowledging a precipitous decline in popular confidence in the dream, and the economic disenfranchisement experienced across a broad spectrum of the population, sought to remedy these problems head-on by means of the "Restore the American Dream for the 99% Act." Recognizing the growing vulnerability of the dream to being hijacked by commercial interests, the object of the legislation was to recast the dream in a way that might facilitate buy-in for more of the population at large, "the 99 percent." As one cosponsor, Representative Keith Ellison, stated:

> *Well, the thing is, the American dream is up for grabs at all times. . . . But we believe that the American dream is a dream that includes the private sector and the public sector, that it means that we're in this thing together. . . . And I think that that dream is under assault from a certain sector of our community and so we're going to snatch it back from them and hold up an American dream that is inclusive and that means that we're going to invest in our public wealth, not just private gain.*[26]

Although never passed by Congress, the proposed act was a forceful legislative attempt to recast the dream in terms of creating jobs, while decreasing government support for defense, the Afghanistan war, the oil and gas industry, and Wall Street, while sustaining Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security. In other words, it sought to trade in upward mobility and homeownership for adjustments to the economy that might help reverse the declining condition of the nation's middle and lower economic strata.

Those on the other side of the political and economic spectrum were no less worried about the possible collapse of the dream and what that might mean for the American economy and political system. As early as June 2007 *Forbes* had published a special issue on "The American Dream," replete with images of picket fences and articles about homebuying. Although some of the articles in it were pessimistic (which was not surprising, given the housing market collapse then in progress), one nevertheless touted a rise in homeownership among Hispanics, while others offered plenty of reassurance that the house was still part of the dream, and that the dream was alive and well. Despite its acknowledgment that the bubble was in the throes of bursting, *Forbes* was eager to shore

up the dream with fulsome remarks reminiscent of Joseph Barry's 1956 panegyric in *House Beautiful*: "the fact remains that the American Dream of a white picket fence has never before been so widely realized and so concretely. If allowing people to have a home they can call their own is a measure of a society[']s legitimacy, our national house stands tall."[27]

CRITIQUING THE DREAM

As the country sank deeper into the Great Recession over the next two years, such optimistic exhortations proved harder to sustain. In May 2009 an American RadioWorks series titled "A Better Life: Creating the American Dream" acknowledged that the ideal of a house as a universal goal was crumbling. Without abandoning faith in the dream itself, the series nevertheless questioned whether it might be time to dissociate it from homeownership. "The American dream has roots in the nation's loftiest ideals — the right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness. So when did it also come to mean a house, a car and a college education?"[28]

Four years earlier, the comedian and social critic George Carlin had fixed on the American dream as the quintessence and centerpoint of what he saw as the consummate failure of the American system to address the needs of ordinary citizens. Recognizing the power of the dream to captivate, he exhorted his audience to wake themselves to the inequitable and dysfunctional system it fronted. "[T]he owners of this country know the truth: It's called the American Dream, because you have to be asleep to believe it," he said, urging his listeners to recognize how their complacent faith in it only abetted the rich and powerful.

> *It's never going to get any better, don't look for it, be happy with what you got. . . . I'm talking about the real owners now, the real owners, the big wealthy business interests that control things and make all the important decisions. Forget the politicians. The politicians are put there to give you the idea that you have freedom of choice. You don't. You have no choice. You have owners. They own you. They own everything. . . . They don't want a population of citizens capable of critical thinking. . . . You know what they want? They want obedient workers. Obedient workers, people who are just smart enough to run the machines and do the paperwork. And just dumb enough to passively accept all these increasingly shittier jobs with the lower pay, the longer hours, the reduced benefits, the end of overtime, and the vanishing pension that disappears the moment you go to collect it, and now they're coming for your Social Security money. . . . It's a big club, and you ain't in it. . . . [I]t's the same big club they use to beat you over the head with all day long when they tell you what to believe. . . .*[29]

Although Carlin's salvo was delivered as the housing bubble was still growing, he spoke to glaring cracks already evident in the system, cracks that got wider as the bubble burst and the recession took hold. His critique of the dream, although light-hearted, addressed it incisively as the keystone of a system that ultimately served the interests of a very elite few. It was that system that was fronted by the carcass of a myth promising opportunity, mobility and homeownership.

As the collapse of the housing market gained momentum in 2007, the growing number of families and households failed by the dream precipitated more widespread queries into the corrosion of the dream by (and even the complicity of the dream in) a corrupt economic and political system. In *Chasing the American Dream: New Perspectives on Affordable Homeownership*, editors William M. Rohe and Harry L. Watson blatantly questioned whether the expectation of owning a home, as part of the American dream, wasn't just the real estate industry ginning up a phony expectation. As they wrote: "some have questioned the extent to which this cultural propensity for homeownership has been artificially created, or at least enhanced, by those who seek to benefit from the construction, financing, and sale of single-family homes."[30] Likewise, an acerbic cartoon by Randy Bish, appearing in March 2009 in the *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*, spoke to the feelings of many who had been dispossessed by the mortgage crisis, and who were angry that large corporations had been bailed out by the government while they had been left to languish. Titled "The American Dream," it included images of a husband and wife, two children, a modest bungalow captioned "A Home I Can't Afford," and an image of a grinning President Obama, holding an object labeled "Mortgage Deal," sarcastically captioned "And a Government That Will Bail Me Out."[31]

By 2011 Carlin's exhortation to wake up from the dream also reverberated in a report issued by The Pew Charitable Trusts titled *Downward Mobility from the Middle Class: Waking Up from the American Dream*. The report, authored by Gregory Acs, documented not only that expectations of upward class mobility were no longer realistic, but also that many Americans should instead anticipate a downward fall. Despite "[t]he idea that children will grow up to be better off than their parents [being] a central component of the American Dream, . . . [a] third of Americans raised in the middle class . . . fall out of the middle class as adults."[32] The import of this study reverberated loudly in additional studies that confirmed and expanded upon Pew's findings. Notably, the November 14, 2011, issue of *Time* featured a cover emblazoned with the words "Can You Still Move Up in America?" and an illustration showing a ladder with a hand grasping one of its broken rungs, which was clearly evocative of the populace falling down, and even off, the American ladder of opportunity **(FIG. 4)**.[33]

Undoubtedly, the most trenchant political fallout of the mortgage crisis and the recession that followed was the rise of the Occupy movement. The housing crisis and the ensuing collapse of the dream were so acute that large numbers

FIGURE 4. Time, *November 14, 2011, cover.*

of people mobilized across the country, and even across the globe, to reclaim their place in a political and economic system that had not only disenfranchised them but had actively abetted the deterioration of their lives. News coverage was extensive, and the vocabulary of political discourse expanded to include potent critical terms such as "the 99 percent." Occupy protesters, many bearing signs proclaiming "The American Dream Is Over" and "RIP American Dream," or forming funeral processions bearing the symbolic body of the American dream, made clear that the dream-myth, or its remains, was a pivotal issue in this moment of crisis. Their message was only amplified by extensive and sympathetic press coverage.

Jonathan D. Moreno, writing for *The Huffington Post*, observed that "more than any other, ours is a country founded on progress, the core concept of the 'American Dream.'"[34] But as he and many others observed, the dream now stood out in embarrassing relief against the failures of the very system it ostensibly had sustained. As Yascha Mounk wrote in *Slate*: "These days, though, politicians are no longer so confident about the American Dream. Questions about America's class system — and its strain on the country's social fabric — have entered the national conversation in a way unlike any time in recent memory."[35] Other commentators focused on how the collapse of the dream revealed a broken system that exacerbated divides along other lines — generational, racial and educational, in particular — leaving America's youth, minorities, and less well educated in the lurch. The failure of the abiding myth had catalyzed, at least temporarily, trenchant and productive critique.

POLITICIZING THE DREAM

The peak moments of disillusion with the dream, along with the most intensive critiques of it, coincided with the campaign leading up to the 2012 presidential election. In such a period of flux, with constituents presumably hungry for reassurance and credible aspirations that they could pursue with some confidence, candidates found a ready opportunity in repurposing the dream. Seizing what still remained of the aspirational expectations embedded in it, they recast it as a vehicle of their own political vision. "Steel Dynamics," a Mitt Romney television commercial broadcast in May 2012, featured shots of (presumed) employees at a Steel Dynamics industrial plant (in an unspecified location) recounting the process of starting up the company as "building a dream," thanks to "Mitt Romney's private sector leadership team" **(FIG. 5)**. Tapping into the enduring aspirational expectations associated with the dream, one employee testified on screen, "One of the hardest things to do, is move up a socioeconomic status in a generation. . . . Because of this company, I'm able to do that with my family." Clinching the dream for the Romney campaign, the voiceover proclaimed, "American workers in a small town: proving that anything is possible in America," while another employee concluded the commercial saying, "If that's not the American dream, I don't know what is."[36]

Allied with the Republican right, the Heritage Foundation produced a number of publications in 2011 and 2012 that cast its vision in terms that again latched on to the aspirational power of the dream, and that promised that adopting its agenda would amount to restoring the dream. In fact, "Saving the American Dream: The Heritage Plan to Fix the Debt, Cut Spending, and Restore Prosperity" (2011) preserved virtually nothing of the traditional dream. At best, it paid lip service to homeownership and upward mobility, while instead presenting "a detailed plan to redesign entitlement programs, guarantee assistance to those who need it, and save the American dream [which remained undefined] for future generations."[37]

The dream was so central to political discourse in this period that commentators insisted that candidates were talking about the dream even when the candidate hadn't mentioned it. Assessing Barack Obama's 2012 State of the Union address, in which there was no mention of the American dream (and the noun "dream" did not even appear), media outlets as diverse as Fox News, the Associated Press, and *The Huffington Post* nevertheless promoted the notion that

FIGURE 5. *"Steel Dynamics." Mitt Romney campaign commercial, May 2012. Screen capture by author.*

Obama was talking about the dream, with headlines such as "Obama: American Dream Is in Peril, Fast Action Needed."[38] Unlike the above instances in which the Romney campaign and the Heritage Foundation appropriated the dream to serve their own agendas, in this case the press independently felt compelled to hold Obama to a long-lasting standard, even though it remained ill defined in their commentaries — and completely unmentioned in his text.

HIJACKING THE DREAM

Perhaps the most dramatic, and most insidious, transformation of the dream, once it became fair game for reassessment in the wake of the mortgage crisis and the Great Recession, was its appropriation by commercial interests to serve their own ends. This entailed using the dream as an emblem of specific products and services or redefining the status of having achieved the dream in terms of owning or using those products and services. Some of the groundwork for this approach was evident as early as 2004 in Cal Jillson's *Pursuing the American Dream: Opportunity and Exclusion over Four Centuries*. This book proposed a neoliberal conversion of the dream to serve private commercial interests by redefining it in terms of entrepreneurialism:

> *The American Dream has always been, and continues to be, the gyroscope of American life. It is the Rosetta stone or interpretive key that has helped throughout American history to solve the puzzles of how to balance liberty against equality, individualism against the rule of law, and populism against constitutionalism. The American Dream demands that we constantly balance and rebalance our creedal values to create and preserve an open, competitive, entrepreneurial society in which the opportunity to succeed is widely available. Despite the many conflicting strands of the American Creed, the American Dream insists that this must, and must increasingly, be a country in which opportunity is available to all and honest hard work yields the chance to succeed and thrive.*[39]

As the national economy continued to flounder in 2011, a number of those entrepreneurial interests, seeking new marketing strategies to engage the distressed economic landscape, recognized in the population of potential customers the same disillusionment with the dream that political critics and candidates for office had identified, and they sought to turn that disaffection to their advantage. For example, in 2011 American Family Insurance launched its ingenious "American Dreams" marketing campaign. Recognizing that the ideal of homeownership had become increasingly fragile in the minds of many Americans, the company produced a series of billboard advertisements and television commercials that promised a way to protect that ideal from harm. Cleverly shifting attention from the source of greatest anxiety, foreclosure (against which American Family could afford no protection), the campaign sold standard homeowner liability and casualty insurance as "dream insurance": "American Family Insurance is your American dream insurance. . . . Your dream is out there. Go get it. We'll protect it."

In one American Family commercial, a concluding sequence emblazoned the words "WE'LL PROTECT IT" over a shot rolling past suburban tract houses.[40] The key factor in this video, as in the entire campaign, was a shift in approach to how the dream would be fulfilled. What used to be understood as fulfillment — simply possessing the house and living in it — was now overlaid with a thick layer of anxieties about potential losses, some of which (fire, burglary, etc.) could be addressed by American Family, and some of

which (underwater mortgage, foreclosure) could not. What the commercial implied was that an additional instrument was necessary if one really wanted to achieve the dream, and that instrument was insurance. Once it was purchased, the dream would truly be secure.

In the same year the Principal Financial Group took this approach a step further, recasting the road to the dream ever more explicitly in terms of purchasing a retail financial service. Their iPhone app, called "The Dreamcatcher," launched in December 2011, featured a photo gallery in which users were encouraged to place images of their "Top 10 Dreams." For those unsure as to what those dreams might be, they offered explicit suggestions: "Capture anything that represents financial dreams. A bigger house. Paying for college. A more secure retirement."[41] Key here was the characterization of those dreams as financial objectives, which in turn transformed the process of achieving the dream into the purchase of a financial service. Thinking such as this may likewise have been behind the introduction in 2012 of two new Girl Scout badges, "Financing My Future" and "Financing My Dreams," which effectively transmitted the importance of financializing the dream to subsequent generations.[42]

Several years earlier, in 2007, just as the housing collapse was entering its worst phase, Ameriprise Financial had pioneered this approach with perhaps the hardest sell of all. Its commercial "Dream," featuring Dennis Hopper, did not explicitly refer to the American dream, or to upward mobility or homeownership. But in the examples it offered, such as starting a new business, making a movie, or "build[ing] an eco-friendly house in the desert," and in the sequences showing an Ameriprise planner helping every step of the way, from definition of the objective to its realization, the implication was clear: fulfillment of the dream was necessarily reliant on, and perhaps an unrealistic objective without, the ongoing engagement of a financial services company.[43]

Other efforts to retailize the dream centered more explicitly on homeownership. In 2011 the National Association of Realtors® (NAR), concerned over a lack of confidence not only in the real estate market but in those associated with it (not least the mortgage brokers who had led so many down the road to ruin) released a commercial whose script related a cautionary tale. The opening sequence showed a young boy, excited to visit his grandparents' house, saying "I love staying here," and "I'm going to have a house like this when I grow up" **(FIG. 6)**. But as the camera panned to the house across the street, it showed another family packing a moving van, emptying a house with a "For Sale" sign in front. As the voiceover warned, "For the first time in generations, the dream of homeownership is being threatened. Realtors®, members of the National Association of Realtors®, are here to represent you and protect homeownership." Here, as with American Family Insurance, a Realtor® would hardly have been able to mitigate the present circumstances causing the family to move out across the street. Still, a Realtor® might well have helped a prospective home purchaser avoid a risky investment. But the commercial offered a much broader, more indeterminate, promise — namely, to "protect homeownership" — again communicating the message that the dream would be sustained as much through the purchase of a service as through other means.[44] As with the campaigns of other commercial and professional interests, the message broadcast by the NAR sought to salvage what it could from the still durable aspirations and expectations of the dream-myth, and convert them into imperatives for new generations of consumers to pursue fulfillment of the dream by means of financial and professional services.

FIGURE 6. *"Future Generations." National Association of Realtors advertisement, 2011. Screen capture by author.*

Here, as with countless other commercial interests seeking advantage in the transformed conditions of the postcrisis landscape, the dream was profoundly transformed. From homeownership as an instrument for achieving the dream and emblem of having made it, the dream had been recast in terms of purchasing a professional or financial service. Having hijacked the dream, purveyors of those services essentially sought to sell it back to their clients in a form equivalent to a time-share.

THE RESILIENCE OF MYTH

It is too soon to tell how profoundly the economic crisis of the past several years may have changed the content and course of the American dream-myth. Myths are living social and political constructs. What the recent history of the American dream demonstrates is the degree to which myths are resilient. As malleable and manipulable sociopolitical constructs, they serve as durable, evolving instruments to guide and coalesce the interests of varied social cohorts.

The historical course of the American dream-myth shows that in times of political and social accord, as in the 1950s, myth is a bond, a common foundation. In times of economic and political disruption, as in the case of the recent Great Recession, myth can become the site of struggle, contestation, redress, and new political and economic configurations. Throughout these upheavals, however, just as the central tenets of the myth — opportunity, mobility and homeownership — have not been wholly displaced or supplanted, neither has its instrumentality in the operations of the underlying political and economic system.

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Feature Articles

Dubai's Heritage House Museums: A Semiosis of Melancholy

JOHN BILN and MOHAMED EL-AMROUSI

Although spectacular resorts and high-profile shopping venues now symbolize Dubai, the city has an important heritage of residential buildings, many of which have recently been reconstructed as small museums. This article analyzes several of these projects: the Sheikh Saeed bin Maktoum Museum, the Al-Siraaj Gallery in the Obaid and Jumaa bin Thani house, the Majlis Gallery in the Mir Abdullah Amiri house, and the Dubai National Museum. It argues that together these house museums register a profound sense of melancholy in the face of an urban fabric being relentlessly developed by forces largely unresponsive to history, heritage, or cultural continuity.

> *From outside they were inscrutable — cubes of burned pastry without windows. But here and there a bit of wall had fallen out, and I caught passing glimpses of courtyards, vines, stairways, lattices, carved doors and hanging balconies; all the essential ingredients of the inward-looking order of the Arab household.*
>
> — Jonathan Raban

This passage from Jonathan Raban's 1979 travelogue *Arabia* recounts the author's impressions of the traditional courtyard houses of the Dubai Creek area in the 1970s.[1] Abandoned and exposed, they seemed to authorize for him a peculiar form of voyeurism, one inseparable from a melancholy of ruin and disrepair. In their presence, Raban experienced a profoundly visual desire to possess an otherwise inaccessible and proscribed "inward order." Initially "inscrutable," this could be "caught" by means of "glimpses" through unplanned openings onto the spaces where private life had previously unfolded out of sight.

In retrospect, what is perhaps most interesting about Raban's insights about these houses — in addition to the visual drive to violation they seemed to provoke — is how a sense of transgression and revelation still accompanies them now that many have been transformed into museums. In a sense, this fragment from Raban's memoir thus of-

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fers initial insight into how the heritage house develops the received conceptual logic of the history museum as an institutional and architectural type — only here in a particularly Arab and Gulf urban and cultural context.

In Dubai, the heritage house as a cultural construct should first be understood in relation to the megamuseum and the shopping mall. The latter has begun to assume the role of popular "museum" — with perhaps the most explicit example being the Ibn Battuta Mall, which devotes large areas along its promenades to vitrine-based displays and object reconstructions seeking to document the travels of the famous Arab adventurer. But in Dubai these two models are augmented by the heritage house museum, which typically appears as little more than a container for various "archives," sometimes only loosely connected to the house itself or to local histories of place. Alternatively, these heritage houses may appear as fetish objects in their own right, essentially reduced to the status of found artifacts, suitably modified, in which purely visual qualities dominate. Restored and repurposed, Dubai's historic mansions thus serve as little more than anthropological exhibitions of cultural traditions; vessels for variously politicized agendas related to the enhancement of national identity; or, more radically, autonomous and free-standing urban "sculptures." Ironically, however, it is precisely these reductions of purpose that allow them to perform an explicative function effectively unavailable to museums that assume more conventional roles.

In this article we view this condition as symptomatic of more general cultural conditions. We will explore how these museums capture something otherwise largely ineffable, related to an overwhelming sense of loss and absence in Dubai. This, in fact, reflects a more general aspect of the museological and heritage project *in toto*, in which understanding is necessarily produced as much out of absence as presence. As part of our investigation we will consider the degree to which these museums are "authentic" reconstructions of the heritage houses they are developed around, and we will reflect on various degrees of fit between specific house museums, their status as heritage vessels, and their museum contents. We are not primarily interested in producing a criticism of these museums; rather, we would like to consider what they have to say "as is." But in the process, we will necessarily consider what "authenticity" and "tradition" can be taken to mean in this context.

It might be argued that in a "new" city of global proportions and vast developments such as Dubai, small heritage museums have no enduring value. To the contrary, we believe that these institutions — precisely in the apparently problematic and diminished form they present — are deeply compelling as revelatory objects. Indeed, it is here that their value primarily lies. Therefore, rather than simply attempting to grasp these buildings as independent heritage artifacts or specific museums of various kinds, we will argue that their explanatory power lies in how they collectively constitute an unwitting reading of the Dubai condition and reveal new constructs of shared meaning in a rapidly changing urban and cultural context.

MUSEUM CONCEPTS

To briefly put Dubai's house museums in context, there are basically two models by which institutions approach the problem of preservation, production and transmission of historical knowledge. The classic museum is typically expressed in a monumental architectural style that reinforces the institution's museological operations. In general, such museums emphasize the one-way delivery of expert knowledge to an audience considered to be essentially passive. The British Museum is usually taken to be the canonical example of the type. For our purposes, what is most important about this type is that artifacts in the collections of such museums are normally displayed in conjunction with graphic, textual or audio-visual explanations, without which the artifacts are presumed to be unintelligible. Occasionally, docents are also present to answer questions and guide understanding of the artifacts on display. Despite many critiques of this form of artifact-centered knowledge transmission, it remains the standard approach to museum display.[2]

The other principal type of museum includes newer, less formal, and relatively more theatrical outdoor venues and heritage villages that attempt to reconstruct historical environments and reenact historical activities. The roots of such heritage venues can be traced to nineteenth-century open-air museums, in which mock villages of ethnographic "difference" were constructed for the edification and entertainment of the citizens of colonizing nations. In practice, this meant gathering items considered representative of a particular culture, and then peopling these settings with performers from distant locales or from "traditional" populations.[3] Paul Oliver has noted that in terms of their built environments these outdoor museums either attempted to conserve buildings within a larger existing compound or relocate them to a newly defined and controlled landscape.[4]

Generally, historical environments such as the outdoor museum or the period room represented a reaction against the classical museum's strategy of presenting historical environments through architectural casts and fragments. Like earlier ethnic villages, heritage villages also offered a wide array of "living" demonstrations involving, for example, costumed docents, live craftwork, or the preparation of traditional foods. They focused on placing and activating past expressions and ways of life in a physical context — one effect of which was to encourage anecdotal rather than systematic interpretation. However, these open-air museums, which supposedly retained and presented inherited craft techniques and products, also typically envisioned a highly idealized preindustrial life and culture.[5] And, as attempts to retrieve vanishing traditions, they were ultimately fueled by an acute sense of loss and

a deepening sense of nostalgia. This was, for example, the ideology presented at World's Fairs, and institutionalized at Henry Ford's outdoor museum of 1927, originally called The Early American Village (now known as Greenfield Village).[6]

In her classic essay "Objects of Ethnography," Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett characterized these two approaches as *in context* and *in situ*.[7] Essentially, *in-situ* approaches, typical of heritage village museums, attempt to preserve a sense of linkage between artifacts and the environments in which they were once embedded, while *in-context* approaches tend to isolate objects in order to place them in interpretive or explanatory contexts. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett noted, this emphasis on the physical object derived from the museum's origin in the "cabinet of curiosities" — constructions which understandably invested the "fragment" with special importance. In a very real sense, then, museology has deep roots in an isolated fascination with objects. Only later did the centrality of the object combine with the view that a meaningful sense of physical or interpretive context should also be provided.

Although Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's "Objects" essay was ultimately concerned with the vicissitudes of a subject group's depiction, as produced through the positioning and rendering of artifacts, her identification of the *in-situ/in-context* duality can be seen more generally to provide the core logic underlying the historico-museological enterprise. That is, in this overarching museological conceit, the necessarily missing cultural surround that once lent completeness and meaning to artifacts is swapped for either an explicitly interpretive apparatus or some plausible rendition of an environment in which the artifact might have been found. Either way, the artifact remains centrally important.

At first, the heritage house museums of Dubai might appear to be variations or elaborations of these two approaches. Surprisingly, however, as museums, they function largely in the absence of the very artifacts that would be expected to provide their raison d'être. In maintaining a museological posture without the centrality of the artifact, they effectively highlight the very feeling of loss and melancholy that accompanies the museological and physical heritage-conservation enterprise. This is a feeling that is forever ignored, suppressed or disavowed to "make sense" of, or "make whole," a history that can never be fully reconstituted. In a sense, then, the underlying urge of museology and artifact-focused heritage conservation is to provide a kind of completion that might compensate for just this sense of loss. And the most important contribution of the Dubai heritage house museums is perhaps to draw attention precisely to this disavowal at the heart of the enterprise. Without their dual status as both museums and historical artifacts, this would not be possible — just as without their double role as heritage objects and heritage containers, the larger cultural and ideological operations involved might not be as evident.

To help conceptualize these issues, it is useful to reemphasize that Kirchenblatt-Gimblett's model properly put the curatorial "object" at the center of the *in-context/in-situ* schema. In *Tradition*, Edward Shils noted that "physical artifacts and intellectual things stand at diametrically opposed corners of a square."[8] For Shils, these "intellectual things" included knowledge, interpretation, and other symbolic constructs. Although Shils was not explicit about the exact appearance of such a square, his observation aligns broadly with Kirchenblatt-Gimblett's — and, in fact, her schema suggests how a diagrammatic expansion of Shils's "square" might be accomplished.

By pushing Shils's insight and Kirchenblatt-Gimblett's model in directions not pursued by either author, it is possible to unify these observations in the form of a semiotic square, a powerful tool for mapping sets of terms with similar constraints and contradictions. Particularly in the form developed by Fredric Jameson, the device can be understood as a way to map thought constraints expressible at any particular moment only very indirectly in cultural production.[9] If Dubai's house museums are essentially unconscious symptomatic constructs, it should then be possible to map their underlying conceptual structure using this semiotic device. This should in turn provide a sense of what these museums, taken together, structurally imply — although, it must be said, not necessarily what is more broadly possible for museums of this type.

To this end, we can position Kirchenblatt-Gimblett's *in-situ* and *in-context* approaches as an initial pair forming two legs of a semiotic rectangle centered on object presence (FIG. 1). In this formation, the meaning of the object is assumed to be provided, on the one hand, by curatorial interpretation (a specific form of Shils's "symbolic construction"), and on the other by integration into the object's proper physical environment. This is, after all, the pairing that Kirshenblatt-Gimblett rightly identified as fundamental to the museum enterprise. The lower (so-called "neuter") axis (which we claim summarizes the core condition of the house museums in Dubai) then would comprise the derivative terms *not-interpretation* and *not-object*. Following the logic of the semiotic square, these four corners would also represent the fundamental conceptual poles of the museological enterprise.

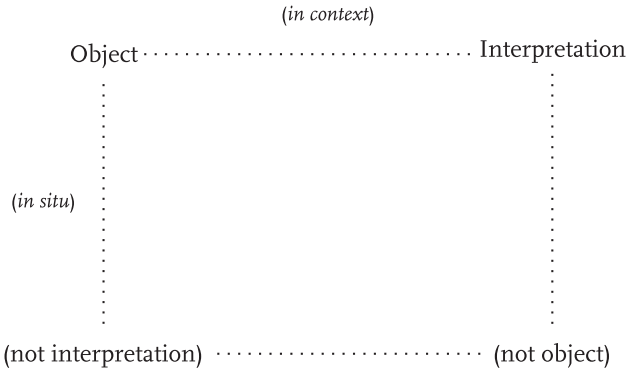

FIGURE 1. *Basic semiotic logic:* in-context *and* in-situ *approaches.*

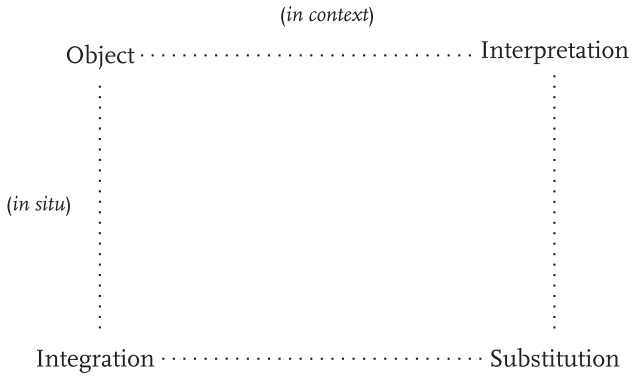

FIGURE 2. *Basic semiotic square: development of* integration-substitution *axis.*

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has already described what we are calling (in this more semiotic approach) *not-interpretation* as simply *integration* (into a site). Thus it is possible to label the three corners implicitly described by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett as *object*, *interpretation*, and *integration*. The semiotic square can then be completed with a term that recognizes the importance of object absence in the house museum. As we will point out, what characterizes the loss of the object in the house museum is a "filling" of that absence with copies, representations and replacements, all of which, for simplicity, we will call *substitutions*. This allows us to complete the rectangle — with debts to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Shils, and Jameson — as shown (FIG. 2).

We will leave a fuller development of this mapping for another time. It should, however, be clear that what we are concerned with in this article is the *integration-substitution* axis at the bottom, which may be interpreted as the defining semiotic opposition of Dubai's house museums. As we will show, examples of house museums in Dubai variously elaborate the attendant conditions of site embedment and object loss (integration and substitution) into a unique but related semiotic structure.[10] For this reason, we will find it necessary toward the end of this article to produce another semiotic rectangle that captures these conditions more specifically.

Doubtless without the intention to do so, Dubai's heritage house museums tend to register a profound sense of regret at the passing of events, objects and persons that no museological or conservation magic can return to the fullness of presence. As will become evident from our discussion of specific examples, the very structural conditions of their sites, programs, geneses, and institutional missions make this almost inevitable. First as *buildings*, and only later as *institutions* and *examples* (that is, initially as houses, conceived for entirely nonmuseological and nonexemplary purposes, and only later as museums and heritage objects), they seem uniquely positioned to mark the passing of time. Constrained by location, they must abide in place as cultural, political, economic and urban changes occur around them. Initially "built" (which suggests some kind of action), they are now "immobilized," fixed in a condition of passive endurance, which the French term *immeuble* captures perfectly.

The heritage house museum is clearly also overdetermined as a type, in the sense that it carries the burden of being both a museum and a historical artifact. The examples we discuss here have all been identified and documented by the local authorities as important elements in Dubai's heritage fabric, while each additionally must maintain some sense of "museum-being" in its contemporary contents and functions.[11] In each case, the mutual reinforcement of museological intent or strategy and identification with and significance as a historic building cannot be overemphasized. Hilde Hein has commented that institutions of this type typically attempt to restore a unique sense of meaning rooted in specific people and places.[12] Such museums are thus generally expected to give visitors an understanding of both living conditions and important local events. Normally, this is accomplished through the display of objects reflecting a particular time and place. However, unlike historic sites marking important battles or political events, house museums have a very particular "antecedent material life," which is crucial to the ways they can be understood in the context of a city like Dubai.

Michele Lamprakos has noted that the family home is a "fundamental institution" in Arab culture, representing the "unity and permanence of a lineage."[13] Although her discussion focused on Yemen and "the south of the Arabian Peninsula," the notion of family, lineage, and the centrality of the home can surely be extended to the south coast of the Arabian Gulf. In such a viewer-reception context there will clearly be an expectation that the heritage house museum remain in some way sensitive to the lives of those who occupied it, as well as to the artifacts that supported the family life that unfolded there. It is therefore not only their location as heritage artifacts in an urban field that lends these house museums a potentially meaningful sense of stability and continuity, but also the expectation that they will offer connections back into time for a life that continues to center around the family home. Raban was certainly right to note that the Arab household is in some way "inward-looking" — and indeed to connect this directly with the physical home and its walls, doors, and other "essential ingredients." It also follows that a deeply interwoven sense of family, home and house, within a broader urge for heritage continuity, puts a special burden on the house museums.

Beyond site emplacement and positional continuity in a rapidly evolving urban context, then, these museums might be expected to display artifacts and material traces linked directly to the family lives the buildings once supported. However, these museums tend toward the use of secondary visual renderings, ambiguous support materials, and nonspecific artifacts that bear little relation to the buildings themselves,

their histories, or the lives of their former occupants. In fact, radically new urban contexts and prospects resulting from the transformation of Dubai in recent decades as well as the intentional use of general cultural artifacts (stamps, coins, etc.) combine to give these house museums a highly contrived sense of physical *in-situ* embedment. At the same time, the copious collections of photographs, letters and mementos in many of them stand as *in-context* substitutions or reproductions that seek to compensate for fundamentally missing objects — a life, a biography, a living presence, an organically integrated urban object — all now adrift in a new world.

Such strategies, essentially comprising embedment in an original and real but now radically transformed environment, coupled with persuasive substitution and simulation through secondary reproductions, reenactments, and physical traces, create unwitting vehicles for melancholic lament. It is this very surfeit of evidence that unintentionally introduces the evidential doubt on which our "case" will be made.

DUBAI'S RESIDENTIAL HERITAGE

Dubai is sometimes admired, more often vilified, for its contemporary urban landscape. The city has certainly changed since the time of Raban's visit in the 1970s. Among other things, his *Arabia* documented a moment when it still seemed possible to appreciate the place without irony.[14] As the title of his memoir suggests, Raban was interested in the culture of the Gulf in general, but the courtyard houses of Dubai Creek made a special impression on him. His brief insights into these mansions also captured poetically what we might call an analytic truth not only about them, but also about their iconic status in the present-day city and their transformation into local museums and heritage objects.

Formally, the Dubai heritage mansions are characterized by linked series of spaces gathered around courtyards, with both interior and exterior areas largely screened from the public realm. While these merchant mansions were largely ignored until the mid-1990s (with some falling into a state of disrepair so serious they had to be demolished in the 1980s), many of their general features have been mimicked in the new resorts and shopping malls for which Dubai is famous. These developments have appropriated the wind towers (*barjeel*), adobe-like textures, and surface treatments of the mansions as architectural symbols of tradition and authenticity. Indeed, Dubai's luxury tourist venues — Meena al-Salam, Al-Qasr in Jumeirah, the Miraj Hotel, and the Palm Islands, for example — offer entertainment and diversion within faux-historical environments successfully built upon images of cultural authenticity and a superficial sense of local immersion. The most extreme of these spectacles is, of course, Dubai Mall, which includes one of the largest aquariums in the world, large bookstores, neotraditional gold bazaars, and a complete re-created "streetscape" under a retractable roof.

Characteristically, these developments bypass and separate themselves from real public space to sanitize cultural experience and facilitate its uncritical consumption. Festival City Mall and the Al-Jumeirah resort go so far as to incorporate waterways and offer tourist boat rides in a fully artificial context that seeks to replicate the look and activity of Dubai Creek. By contrast, the actual historical waterway retains a lively, if messy and potentially alienating, commercial vitality and sense of connection to past mercantile practices. The Creek registers this past through the remains of built heritage along its banks — some of it carefully restored, as in the case of the textile souq (FIG. 3). The persistence of traditional mercantile and supply activities along Dubai Creek avoids both the artificial quasi-historical reconstruction intended to appeal to holiday

FIGURE 3. *Dubai's textile bazaar.*

tourists as well as the lifeless aesthetic preservation of interest to a more limited audience of well-informed cultural tourists.

THE HOUSE MUSEUM IN DUBAI

Despite popular perceptions, Dubai's built heritage includes a residential fabric that was intertwined over many generations with the mercantile activities of Arabian Gulf trading families. The textile souq and the various commercial activities that remain along Dubai Creek were thus once complemented by limited areas of residential fabric whose history stretches back to the mid-nineteenth century. Deira, where many of Dubai's courtyard mansions are located, still retains something of this original character. It once comprised an intricate and densely populated social geography overlaid by a network of narrow, intertwining passages facilitating pedestrian movement. Within this context, Dubai's historic mansions functioned both as mercantile spaces and as residences for tight-knit families, where the residential upper floors were virtually sealed off both from the noisy bazaar areas on the ground floor and the public life of the street outside.

In *Arabia*, Raban described the presence of an Indo-Persian merchant community, and he identified their architectural culture both with the wind towers (*barjeel*) used to cool interior spaces in the summer and with the floral and vegetal ornamentation used to adorn stucco walls. Raban also noted that surrounding areas of Deira were characterized by restaurants and advertisements for merchandise and films that appealed to Indians, Iranians, Pakistanis, and non-Gulf Arabs. His descriptions thus reflect how Deira was historically home to a complex multicultural community, of a type that the contemporary simulacra of Jumeirah, Festival City, and the Miraj effectively erase in favor of simplified faux-historical re-creations.

As did the Dubai Creek textile souq, Deira's remaining merchant residences attracted the interest of heritage-minded citizens and government departments, especially the Historic Buildings Section of Dubai Municipality. The Al-Shindagha and Deira quarters in which these residences are located have been slowly transformed over the past two decades into museum districts. Yet, while the physical heritage has thus been at least partially preserved by government-sponsored renovation, the districts themselves and the new museums established in their restored houses remain largely unvisited. This has had much to do with the lack of attention paid to the contents of the museums; it has also had to do with competition from the city's flashier quasi-historical faux-heritage complexes. However, in contrast to both these types of environment, Dubai's historic textile bazaar retains much more of the authentic sense of activity and social importance described by Raban in *Arabia*. Indeed, it remains a multiethnic, multilingual indoor-outdoor space of social and commercial exchange. It also remains vibrant into the night, long after much of the rest of the city has retired.

As mentioned already, the mansions in the Al-Shindagha and Deira districts were originally built for merchant families requiring commercial outposts on the Dubai coast. But as part of their transformation into small museums documenting Dubai's history and culture, they have typically been stripped down to their foundations and very substantially rebuilt. This work has tended to carefully incorporate and expose fragments of their original coral/stone walls, doorways, and access stairs — giving a visual suggestion of authenticity without the need to maintain much of the original building fabric. Meanwhile, their interiors have been decorated without much regard to original furnishings, period tastes, or other material supports for the preservation of tradition and historical memory.

Largely devoid of ornament, practical, simple and elegant, these renovated buildings are indeed attractive urban objects. Isolated from the hectic city, their interiors are typically warm and inviting, with surface colorings that tend to reinforce the sense of their residential past. At the same time, they have often been entirely reconfigured to suit contemporary needs, their spatial redesign constrained only by their original structural patterns. For example, windows to the outside have frequently been filled in to produce blind display niches, while neon lighting has been used to highlight overall building form while throwing their surrounding context into shadow. Such modifications substantially limit a visitor's sense of the environment in which these houses once stood, as well as any feeling for the relation between the former interior life of the house and the city outside. Even where a traditional *majlis* with low-rise cushioned seating may still be present (where visitors may sample Arabic coffee with dates), no audio-visual narration or other information is provided to give a sense of the social life or official events that may once have taken place there. As presented in its house museums, Dubai's vernacular heritage is essentially flattened, reduced to a collection of structural envelopes inside which familiarity, comfort and entertainment trump history, memory and tradition.

On one level, these conditions are perhaps only another variation of the strategy of entertainment and artificiality seen in Dubai's faux-historical shopping malls and theme resorts. However, when the effect of Dubai's house museums is considered as a whole, they may be seen to constitute something like a closed conceptual system at odds with the exuberance and optimism of Dubai's high-profile commercial developments. Before we make this argument, however, we will first describe the specific features of a few of the most important of these house museums. As we mentioned, our interest here is not to criticize the houses or castigate their renovators for some purposeful "failure" to be true to the past. Rather, it is to see how the treatment of these houses and the experiential effects they produce offer insights into Dubai that would be difficult to arrive at otherwise.

FIGURE 4. *Sheikh Saeed heritage house.*

SHEIKH SAEED BIN MAKTOUM MUSEUM

The museum of Sheikh Saeed bin Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai between 1912 and 1958, is a classic example of a reconstructed heritage house transformed into a local museum (FIG. 4). Inside, chronological displays of archival photographs, primarily from the oeuvres of Ronald Codrai and Wilfred Thesiger, depict both official meetings involving Sheikh Saeed and typical social events of the times. The images impart a tone of authenticity and seriousness to the museum. Various curatorial themes are then developed against the images, divided by spatial zone within the house. These include the history of Dubai between 1948 and 1953; the marine life of the local waters; pearl-diving and coastal trade; ethnic dress; and coins, stamps, maps and jewelry typical of Dubai and its environs.

The museum presents a broad and multifaceted vision of life in Dubai, impressing upon visitors the richness and variety of its heritage. This is reinforced by glimpses of the city from upper-floor terraces that overlook Dubai Creek. In this sense, the museum "prepares" visitors to see the city as a contemporary and living correlate of its curated collections. However, even as the diversity of Dubai's architectural heritage and cultural and ethnic mix "appears" here, a quiet form of "disappearance" is also at work. Specifically, at the same time that the Sheikh Saeed Museum reinforces a general historical and cultural sensibility, the person of Sheikh Saeed recedes from view. The emphasis on the general view inevitably draws attention away from the biographical details of the museum's benefactor and namesake. And this sense of faded attention is reinforced by the explicit curatorial strategy of limiting explanation to copper labels that briefly identify key facts related to objects displayed and the names of the people depicted in photographs. The foreclosure of personal and biographical context embodied in the decision not to elaborate on the photographic framing or the situations depicted creates a mode of reception characterized by loss and incompleteness, a sense that is essentially melancholic. Museum visitors are thus initially offered a heightened sense of the availability of the objects and people that form the subjects of display, but this intimation of presence is immediately undercut by a sense of unmooring or loss. The sense of presence and availability visitors come away with is thus sufficient only to point to what remains absent and apparently unrecoverable.

This steady erosion of the sense of personal biography — a focus which might otherwise be expected in such a museum (and, indeed, which is announced in the museum's name itself) — is furthered by the architectural treatment undertaken to renovate the house into a museum. The most obvious feature of this building are the varying shapes of niches, solid walls, and wind towers that function aesthetically to break up the monotony of solid facades. But these devices also once created specific qualities within a living residence — that is, views out, daylight in, and the circulation of fresh air. These original uses have been largely supplanted in the restoration by museological ones, in which object display is the paramount value (for example, using blind niches to display items from the museum's collections). Proper understanding of the original functions of these building elements is also suppressed by a formal strategy of dramatic interior and exterior lighting, which presents the house as an object of aesthetic contemplation rather than a setting for personal, familial and official life.

In the courtyard of the Sheikh Saeed Museum, exterior flood and spot lighting focuses attention on the beauty of the seven arched stucco panels in the blind niches of an otherwise plain structure. Indeed, the general quality of the illumination, combined with the effects of paint and wall surface, frequently makes it appear as if the light were emerging from within windows, niches and *barjeel*, rather than being projected on them from outside. This so-called boutique lighting, which has recently become popular with heritage-restoration committees, tends to heighten the visitor's sense of the raw physicality of a building as an object. Stephan Greenblatt has argued that this form of lighting suggests the building as a form of "wonder."[15] Such a strategy, which sets the building apart from its context, history, and everyday reality, are typical of the Dubai heritage house museums.

Core circulation patterns in the house now occupied by the Sheikh Saeed Museum were the result of unplanned growth and spatial adaptation over the many years that it served as a residence. Typically, a labyrinthine spatial pattern emerged as families grew and more rooms were added. In this instance, corridors, pathways and staircases leading to upper rooms were typically accompanied by colonnades (*liwans*) originally adapted for use as meeting spaces. Overall, this produced an effect of continuous commerce between exterior and interior space. These *liwans* today typically open to rectangular rooms that house displays of pictures, stamps, local jewelry, and documents, with contemporary models of traditional dhows positioned as spatial centerpieces. But many of the original openings from these rooms to the outside have been blocked to create interior niches that recall and complement the blind niches that appear on the building's exterior (FIG.5).

Where openings remain unblocked, objects displayed near windows appear against relatively bright backgrounds, a strategy that tends to increase ambient reflection and suppress much of the objects' detail and color.[16] As with the cryptic copper labels used to identify, but not explain, objects and images, such lighting decisions bleed specificity out of the displayed collection — just as the exterior lighting and renovation at once highlight the presence of the architectural object while downplaying its genesis and historical use. The overall effect is a sense of abstraction and loss, as attention is focused on collected objects, depicted events, and building fabrics, and away from the social, personal and cultural meanings of these very things. The final effect of this strategy is to render the ostensible object of the museum — the life, being and times of Sheikh Saeed bin Maktoum — present, after a fashion, but only as a specter glimpsed in the washed-out spaces, objects, and relics of a life now gone.

This dual appearance and disappearance is perhaps unsurprising in biographical museums, where the institutional need is to paint a picture of museological fullness, but in the context of primary loss (in this case the irredeemable disappearance of the biographical subject himself). In this case, precisely because the museum is housed in Sheikh Saeed's "house" and carries his name, the abundance of general cultural artifacts and images related to Dubai and the Emirates are never enough to dispel the sense of absence that pervades the museum and the artifacts and images of its collections. In the end, Sheikh Saeed remains something like a *revenant* — indicated, simulated and substituted though the objects of "his" collections — neither fully present nor completely gone. In the same way, the house museum remains embedded in its local urban context, but now renovated beyond recognition as a piece of living architectural history.

FIGURE 5. *Coin collection in blind niches at the Sheikh Saeed Museum.*

AL-SIRAAJ GALLERY, OBAID AND JUMAA BIN THANI HOUSE

A more oblique mode of dealing with restored heritage is evident at the Al-Siraaj Gallery, located in the former house of Obaid and Jumaa bin Thani. This institution displays specific interpretations of Islam via graphic representations that transcend local and cultural boundaries. The gallery is popular, its success relying in part on the building's location in a busy area with significant foot traffic. On its first floor visitors are taken through a series of rooms that form what is essentially an Islamic pilgrimage route. These open with what are considered the scientific miracles of the *Qur'an*, then move through retellings of the creation of the universe, the messages and messengers of Islam, and the meaning and importance of the "last message." The second floor of the courtyard house continues this narrative, through exhibitions entitled "Judgment," "Eternal Bliss," and "Eternal Damnation." It is important to note that both the message delivered and the media used to do so are alien to the physical envelope of the Emirati house and to local Islamic tradition. The gal-

lery instead promotes a very particular and codified expression of Islam through its graphics and brochures, as well as through seminars delivered on a temporary stage in the center of the courtyard. The original function of the house as a vernacular setting for domestic life has been changed to that of a center for religious teaching, whose message is overwhelmingly shaped by curatorial intent.

The view of Arabian culture and Islam presented in the gallery also surely never existed in Dubai in anything like the pure form suggested. In a multiethnic port city, which relied for centuries for commercial survival on the practical accommodation of multiple cultures and various religious traditions, this was simply not possible. Nevertheless, to produce its message, the gallery employs many of the same effects relied upon in Dubai's other heritage mansions. This includes wrapping the house and covering its wall surfaces with overpowering multimedia displays that effectively erode any sense of it as a material object with its own presence and meaning (FIG. 6). Local history is thus scrubbed off, whitewashed and overwritten, and the house becomes a fresh billboard on which a new visual narrative, and not the historical substrate or support space around which it unfolds, is dominant.

In fact, the house of Obaid and Jumaa bin Thani, built in 1917, is historically important as one of the first houses to reflect the prosperity of the Al Shindagha area at a time when the local pearl trade was flourishing. But in its repurposing not only have specific references to such a local culture been suppressed, but all traces of a life, a family, a social reality, the vicissitudes of economic fortune, the drama of political intrigue, and the simple evidence of everyday use have been relentlessly erased. Together, these qualities underwrite the practical meaning and historical importance of such a house, particularly in this cultural context. But the gallery's powerful media, images, and reproduced textures crowd out any sense of collective memory that might have been triggered by less intrusive insertions, and the displays fatally obscure the intrinsic architectural character and original function of the house.

The setting of the house is also crucial to understanding its meaning, both now and in the past. Local people, their shops, crafts, customs, and the commercial activities of the bazaar nearby are all part of its site context. But these, too, are overpowered by the display function of the exhibition, and its site appears as little more than scaffold and catchment for the ideological efforts of the gallery. In other words, the Al-Siraaj Gallery utilizes the physical integration of the house with its context to support visitor traffic, but it refuses any recognition that its physical setting is a large part of what gives it both historical and contemporary meaning.

In this example, then, the house remains embedded as a physical object within its context, but no effort is expended to link it in meaningful and particular ways to the urban fabric around it. At the same time, the original uses of the building as a dwelling, as well as all signs of domestic occupancy and

FIGURE 6. *The Al-Siraaj Gallery in the house of Obaid and Jumaa bin Thani.*

local importance, have been suppressed. As a consequence, the house, as an object, suffers an extraordinary erosion of historical meaning. Indeed, this erasure of historical traces is more thorough than in the case of the Sheikh Saeed Museum — even if both houses remain in different ways embedded in the urban fabric.

DUBAI NATIONAL MUSEUM

The popular Dubai National Museum complex is built around one of the oldest structures in Dubai, the Al-Fahidi fort. Dating to 1787, the fort was first restored in 1971, and then again 1995. The present museum is divided into two sections — the historical fort above ground and a more recent underground structure designed by the British architectural firm Makiya Associates. Above ground, the interior walls of the Al-Fahidi fort are used to display artifacts from life in Dubai before the petroleum era, including examples of historical weaponry. The fort's courtyard also contains a tra-

ditional dhow, old cannons, a reed wind tower (*barjeel*), and a reconstructed palm-frond room (*areej*). By contrast, the new halls of the underground section lead visitors through a carefully orchestrated history of Dubai. First comes a display of wooden doors and stucco molds similar to those at the Sheikh Saeed Museum. But these are soon followed by digital projections illustrating Dubai's extraordinary urban expansion between 1960 and 1980. The goal is to allow visitors to compare the past and present and gain a feeling for the growth of the city over time. While not strictly a "house museum," this area is in every sense a museum of domesticity, just as the fort above retains its original scale and character as the fortified residence of an extended family.

One of the most remarkable features of the darkened underground rooms (in addition to their sophisticated audiovisual displays) is the use of mannequins dressed in local garments to present a sense of past social life. These figures are frequently deployed as part of full-size dioramas that replicate typical historical scenes — such as girls with local hairstyles and jewelry reciting the *Qur'an*, pearl traders at work, desert vistas with real sand, and water canals (*falaj*). The dioramas are complemented by short films, recorded music, period rooms, and archeological fragments. Many of Ronald Codrai's mid-century period photos have been used as references.[17] For example, the diorama of girls celebrating their graduation from a *Qur'an* school provides a faithful three-dimensional reproduction of one of his most well-known photos. Together, these displays provide a selective and highly romantic image of past life in the Emirates.

The co-presence under low light conditions of mannequins and museum visitors — many themselves dressed in traditional clothing — has the additional effect of "animating" the otherwise static displays and suggesting a merging of identity (FIG.7). This powerful effect is reinforced by the absence of spatial separation between visitors and displays (FIG.8). Here, both "audience" and "actors" share the same stage. Perhaps partly because of the reliance on Codrai's photographs, the exhibition tends to focus exclusively, however, on local Arab culture, and specifically that of the Bedouins. Other ethnic communities that have coexisted in the area for centuries, such as Indians and Persians, as well as representatives of other Islamic traditions, such as Sufis, are largely ignored.

The effect of intermixing display figures and real visitors in the darkened exhibition spaces further obscures the histories that have been edited out. As such, it provides another reminder, if one were necessary, of the extraordinary ideological power of representation and displacement. Thus, while the National Museum uses similar strategies as those employed at the Sheikh Saeed Museum, its underground chambers and the production of a new aboveground display space suggest something more like "extraction" from an authentic site than the embedment and integration evident both at the Sheikh Saeed Museum and the Al-Siraaj Gallery. Effectively, the museum has been figuratively lifted out of (and, more literally, dropped below) its nominal site to become a theatrical realm all its own.

MAJLIS GALLERY, MIR ABDULLAH AMIRI HOUSE

The house of Mir Abdullah Amiri, now the "Majlis Gallery," is considered to be the oldest art gallery in Dubai, and both the house itself and its walled garden, planted with bougainvillea and henna, have undergone several restorations. The original house was built in 1945 by Abdullah Hassan Awadhi, and for a number of years it served as a caravanserai for guests from Oman, Bahrain, Lingeh and Qatar, including the Sheikh of Dibba and his entourage. However, in 1957 Abdullah Hassan Awadhi sold it to Mir Abdullah Amiri, who later partnered with Alison Collins to transform it into the Majlis Gallery.

FIGURE 7. *Mannequins and visitors at the Dubai National Museum.*

FIGURE 8. *Bedouin life exhibition with visitors at the Dubai Museum.*

The Amiri family moved out in 1973, and the house became a rental property. Following an eviction order from the Dubai Municipality in 1988, a restoration was then carried out by the architect Dariush Zandi in the spring of 1989. The gallery was open between 1989 and 1998, before the house was again renovated in 1999 and reopened that same year.[18]

In its reincarnation as a gallery, the Mir Abdullah Amiri house is perhaps the most extreme example of a heritage house treated almost purely as an object without history, context or meaning beyond its function as a scaffold for the display of collectible objects. This quality is reinforced by the gallery's location in a tourist district that no longer supports the specific activities from which the original house drew its public presence. Exterior lighting is an important aspect of this strategy of objectification in the Majlis Gallery. The effects described with regard to the Sheikh Saeed Museum are all compounded. Indeed, at night it seems the goal is to suggest a magical or unearthly object with little relation to the quotidian world (FIG.9).

Inside, meanwhile, house features have become little more than supports or frames for the display of artwork on sale. And what were once openings out of which family members could glimpse the surrounding street life, and through which sunlight could flood the house, have been filled in and converted to display niches (FIG.10). Virtually all the interior walls, which would originally have been mostly bare, have been used to display areas for paintings and other two-dimensional works, deeply compromising any sense of spatial articulation or structural support in the process (FIG.11). Even the wind tower, perhaps the single most important heritage element in a classic Dubai mansion, has been appropriated for lighting, obscuring its original purpose as a ventilation device (FIG.12). No longer is there even a pretense that original spatial uses, historical events, or period objects have a place in the restored structure. And the constant rotation of artwork on temporary display only reinforces the sense that this house is no longer a place with a meaningful residential heritage.

FIGURE 9. *Boutique lighting at the Majlis Gallery.*

FIGURE 10. *Walls with display niches at the Majlis Gallery.*

The combined effect of the erosion of historical meanings (as at the Al-Siraaj Gallery) and the overshadowing of location by means of lighting effects (as described by Greenblatt) effectively extracts the Mir Abdullah Amiri house from its site — particularly at night when it seems completely removed from everyday life. In this sense, the effect is similar

FIGURE 11. *Walls with picture display at the Majlis Gallery.*

FIGURE 12. *Wind tower used for gallery lighting at the Majlis Gallery.*

to that of the Dubai National Museum, which was isolated from its surroundings by being sited largely underground. Indeed, the changes wrought by the Majlis Gallery have turned the Mir Abdullah Amiri house into something closer to an independent cabinet or chest for the storage and display of precious objects. It is more a box made up of surfaces and compartments than a historical dwelling.

Perhaps, given the commercial and practical demands that accompany a business like that of the Majlis Gallery, none of this should be surprising. What should be surprising, however, is that the Mir Abdullah Amiri house, even in its new use, is still considered meaningful — in fact, exemplary — as a piece of heritage conservation. As such, it surely comprises an essential element in how heritage is construed and presented in Dubai.[19]

HERITAGE HOUSES AND THE MEANING OF TRADITION

It should be clear by now that the senses of history, tradition and meaning embodied in the Dubai heritage house museums are not as straightforward as those portrayed by the restoration of the textile souq. As mentioned earlier, the souq both preserves a feature of the city's historic built fabric and sustains contemporary versions of bartering and provisioning from the city's past. The most obvious difference between this approach and that of the heritage house museums is the predominance in the latter of various substitutions, simulations and distractions that stand in for real objects and traces of past life. Seen in a larger historical context, this movement from authentic trace and artifact toward replacement, simulation and fabrication is wholly consistent with the third stage of Nezar AlSayyad's periodization of heritage and tradition, in which under conditions of globalization the manufacture and consumption of history is now dominant.[20] What is interesting in the heritage house museums, however, is that what Khaled Adham has called "an industry of 'authenticity'," present most obviously in Dubai theme resorts and malls, is almost entirely missing.[21] There is very little drive toward a sustained reinvention of tradition in the heritage house museums. This is perhaps the first indication that these houses cannot be dismissed simply as failed museums or flawed reconstructions.

Howayda Al-Harithy has suggested that the preservation of heritage should both be engaged with local populations in meaningful ways and be integrally linked to contemporary cultural, social and economic contexts.[22] In this light, it is essential to ask whether a "failure" to reinforce a sense of tradition is necessarily a failure to provide an authentic link to the "context of [the] living city" and its "present dynamics." In other words, are the losses and absences evident in Dubai's heritage house museums simply failures of purpose and execution? Or are they authentic "symptomatic" renderings of a living condition that can be expressed in no other way? We are, of course, suggesting the latter.

Al-Harithy has suggested that a city's monuments be understood as Derridean "open texts," as vehicles for the "creative regeneration of meaning."[23] This view effectively radicalizes Edward Shils's belief that what is most characteristic of tradition is its reinvention and rearticulation.[24] Dubai's heritage house museums may thus be best understood as oblique readings of Dubai's contemporary condition — heritage elements of present importance and unexpected new meaning. But they are also material indicators of a transhistorical condition peculiar to the museum, and to heritage enterprises generally; and, as such, they are perhaps not unique. But it is largely because of their appearance in the context of a city such as Dubai that their implications can be seen so clearly.

SEMIOTICS OF THE HERITAGE HOUSE

At this point, it is convenient to reframe our observation that Dubai's heritage houses are characterized by site embedment and secondary substitutional or representational strategies. These characteristics may be identified as core terms in the pairing introduced earlier (following Kirshenblatt-Gimblett,

Shils, and Jameson) as *integration-substitution*. In combination, we believe this captures the essential features of these heritage house museums. The implication of this, of course, is that the house museum is fundamentally conditioned by *loss* (of an original object) and *compensation* (via substitution, replication or representation). All this takes place in the context of embedment in an originary site.

To put this another way, the expanded institutional term "house museum" is necessarily characterized by the simultaneous recognition of and resistance to a primary loss, in this case the absence of the "object" of its historiography, its very raison d'être. In the example of the Dubai heritage house, this takes the form of the life events and personal qualities of the historical figure that the museum seeks to preserve and explain. This is essentially an institutional instance of the melancholy typical of any historical understanding, predicated on objects or traces displayed in a context of limited explanation. Such melancholy is compounded here with a sense of irrecoverable loss of any authentic fullness, and its compensation through simulation, representation and substitution.

Without the possibility of a primary object embedded in a fully recoverable context, any such historical understanding must avail itself of what Donald Preziosi has called "rememberment." This essentially involves the production of meaning through various strategies of compensation and replacement for the "dis-memberment" of meaning that inevitably accompanies temporal change and the partial set of artifacts, fragments and traces it leaves in its wake.[25] Indeed, this sense of melancholy in the face of loss is pervasive and all consuming in the house museums of Dubai — a point we will come back to shortly.

In order to make this a little clearer, the four key Dubai local/house museums discussed above can be grouped in a single conceptual structure, elaborated from the basic diagram of museum types introduced earlier. The second semiotic square can be used to map and relate together the heritage house variations evident in Dubai. In particular, it can help make sense of house museum variations that might otherwise remain puzzling, such as the Dubai National Museum extension, which at first hardly appears to be a "house." It is also useful in understanding display-oriented heritage mansions such as the Majlis Gallery, which appear at best only weakly related to museum types.

This extension recognizes that the examples here are best understood as varying ways of addressing the loss and melancholy initially implied in the *integration-substitution* axis of a basic semiotic square. In a similar operation to that outlined earlier (by which the Kirshenblatt-Gimblett *in-context/in-situ* schema was elaborated into a semiotic rectangle, producing *integration-substitution* on its neuter axis), the new square may be constituted by using the *integration-substitution* pairing as the primary opposition of a new but related structure. Indeed, the museological strategies seen in these various house museums all derive from this core pairing. Specifically, the initial oppositions deriving from *integration* and *substitution* generate two further terms along the neuter axis: *extraction* (not-integration — in this case a "pure" building object independent of site); and *erosion* (not-substitution — in this case the suppression or removal of object/contents rather than their simulation or replacement). This basic logic can be mapped as shown (FIG. 13).

It should be noted that this semiotic tool can be used only loosely to map the specific heritage house museums. While this approach allows a general mapping of the basic terms at play, the specific examples can be placed in the diagram only indicatively. In other words, none of the house museums discussed here can be seen to neatly or definitively occupy a single pair of vertex terms, but each does tend to emphasize one pairing over another. What will be clear, however, is that the basic semiotic structure accommodates the overall house museum dynamic extremely well. The real question is, why?

In a general sense, the Dubai house museums discussed here can be understood as approximate examples of four general types, or approaches, comprising the expanded field of this basic conceptual structure. On the *integration-substitution* axis, the Sheikh Saeed bin Maktoum Museum is a form of "biographical museum." This provides an essentially "affirmative" recognition of the loss that characterizes both the disappearance of a subject and a secondary rendering through representations of a "life." On the *integration-erosion* axis, the Al-Siraaj Gallery takes the form of an explicitly "evacuated house." This represents an essentially "opportunistic," often ideological, and sometimes violent approach to an architectural object embedded in a site context, where all evidence of the object's original function, use and occupancy are removed or suppressed. On the *substitution-extraction* axis, the underground extension of the Dubai National museum makes use of new, "siteless" construction. This is essentially a "realistic" approach to the loss of meaningful historical sites, but one which accommodates the internal representation of previous moments in time. On the *erosion-extraction* axis, the Majlis Gallery in the Mir Abdullah Amiri house is

FIGURE 13. *Basic semiotic square:* integration, substitution, erosion, extraction.

what we might call a "treasure chest," which, once emptied, betrays little evidence of what it previously held. This is essentially a "compensatory" approach to the loss of, or strategic separation from, a meaningful context. It highlights the house as an independent object at the same time that it suppresses its original contents. These museum approaches can together be related in an expanded semiotic square as shown in the accompanying diagram (FIG.14).

The foregoing analysis shows how what may initially appear to be disparate, even arbitrary, manifestations of the house museum and heritage house ideas are in fact part of a structure of affect centering on melancholy at the loss of history and urban context in Dubai. The examples not only extend the basic historico-museological types expressed as extensions of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's *in-situ/in-context* model, via Shils and Jameson, but they also richly articulate a range of responses to the dilemma of heritage continuity in an urban field that is characterized both by extremely rapid development and by a political-economic context emphasizing the instrumental use of constructed heritage. Each of these heritage house museum types, in its own way, at once registers, compensates for, and brings to visibility the impermanence as well as the reality or threat of loss manifested in the urban condition of contemporary Dubai.

Jameson has forcefully pointed out that where no other forms of resolution are possible, the effort to resolve structural tensions symbolically or rhetorically is where cultural works often demonstrate the most extraordinary interpretive power.[26] But if these heritage house museums expose and interpret a condition of pervasive loss, and do so in the very moments they display an abundance of fullness and presence, exactly what does their melancholic discourse tell us?

DUBAI'S OWN MELANCHOLY

In his beautiful memoir *Istanbul*, Orhan Pamuk noted that although Istanbul might be the most melancholic city of all, each city can be expected to experience melancholy in its own way.[27] For Pamuk, Istanbul is characterized by *huzun*, a unique sense of spiritual loss at the passing of greatness, coupled with a preservation of hope shared by everyone in the city. Pamuk characterized *huzun* as a "steamy window" through which is faintly revealed the existential essence of Istanbul itself.[28] Pamuk's memoir, heavily influenced by his own experience of ruined mansions along the Bosphorus, suggests that we ask after the losses and absences mapped out in Dubai's own mansion museums as constituents of a melancholic window unique to, or at least characteristic of, Dubai.

We have shown that a necessary drive toward meaning and integration — into a life, a moment, a place, a context, and a history — has frequently been thwarted in the recent, and still emerging, reality of Dubai. In this regard, Max Pensky noted that melancholy lends a "mode of insight into the structure of the real," but does so while producing "mournfulness, misery and despair."[29] No museological distraction or entertainment is sufficient to fully erase the losses and absences that effectively constitute the heritage houses of Dubai. This failure moves relentlessly forward from the very origins of these houses, through to their historical uses and contemporary contexts.

Ultimately, these house museums offer deeply unsettling insights into the impossibility of recovering what has been lost. But what may perhaps be most unsettling is that, by their very charges and mandates, they must seek to do just the opposite. As Pensky pointed out, however, the mournful "brooding" necessarily provoked by such tensions effectively

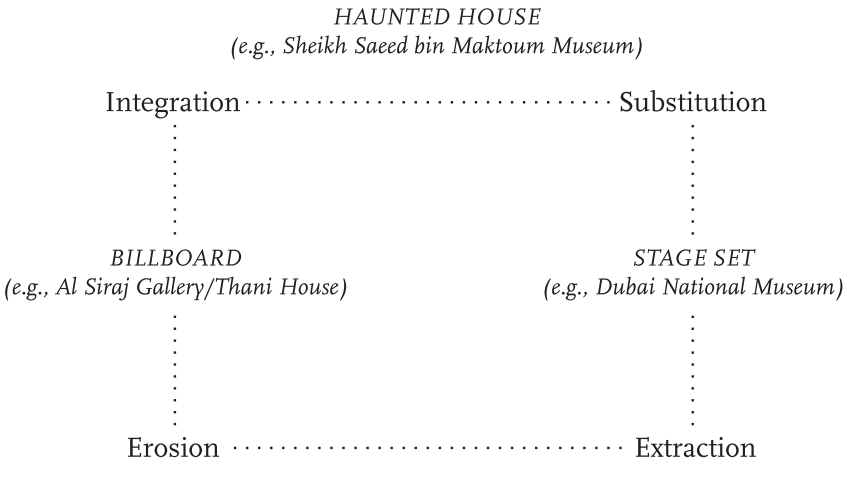

FIGURE 14. *Expanded field:* Haunted House, Billboard, Stage Set, and Treasure Chest.

refocuses attention on the "world that melancholia perceives as fragmented and ruined."[30] But isn't this precisely the condition the residents and visitors to Dubai encounter, albeit much less explicitly, in the malls, resorts, and entertainment venues that dominate the city? Paul Gilroy's identification of the "unkempt, unruly and unplanned multiculture" of contemporary life and its attendant cross-contamination and loss of identity suggests that in a city such as Dubai, characterized by an extraordinarily diverse and fluid population, any tendency to melancholy would only be intensified.[31] For Pensky, however, it is precisely when it is possible to "harness the historical and personal forces that define [one's] sorrow," that it is possible to render oneself whole. He identified such a revelation as a "victory" over melancholia. But, of course, such a victory requires that the conditions to which melancholy is so closely attuned be made unmistakably apparent. In her 1989 book *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholy*, Julia Kristeva quoted the French novelist Louis-Ferdinand Céline: "We need the greatest possible sorrow precisely to become fully ourselves."[32] In the end, this is the power of Dubai's heritage house museums.

The conditions of loss that constitute these houses are lived in various ways by everyone who visits them. Tourists, expatriate workers, and local citizens all experience physical and social dislocations, linguistic and cultural displacements, and various senses of diaspora and dispossession. We can all recognize that we are not alone in this, as loss and absence inevitably accompany the passage of time under modernity. But these conditions are extreme in a city like Dubai. Dubai's heritage house museums at once acknowledge, expose and redeem this general condition, offering the possibility of facing it and "rendering ourselves whole." If, as Kristeva noted, melancholy is beholden to the dream of a "past that does not pass by," the melancholic houses of Dubai demonstrate just how futile this dream of stasis must be. Kristeva's book took its title from the poet Gerard de Nerval. In his poem "The Disinherited," Nerval's own melancholy was no less than a terrible new sun, "bright and black at the same time."[33] As might be expected, however, even when its light is black, this star provides a uniquely fitting form of illumination.

In its own way, Jonathan Raban's description of the Dubai Creek houses from decades ago beautifully captures this condition and its most profound implications. As he anticipated in *Arabia*, the decay and erosion of individual examples of house heritage in Dubai open onto a deeply troubling matrix of historico-museological approaches characterized equally by melancholy and violence. These are the local fruits, it might be said, of an implicit recognition of irretrievable loss coupled with the broadly pervasive instrumentality typical of Dubai's urban and architectural development. This is indeed a logic of "passing glimpses," as Raban noted — not only in the sense of sights (and sites) barely seen, but also in the sense that even these few glimpses have begun to pass, as Dubai's urban fabric continues to be relentlessly developed, and redeveloped, under political and capital forces largely unresponsive to demands for civic or corporate responsibility to history, heritage, and cultural continuity. We could say that the evident scopofilia driving Raban's description of Dubai's ruined houses has now been augmented by an organized "praxifilia" of incessant urban change.

This is not the melancholy of ruin and remembrance that Pamuk found in Istanbul — although when Raban saw the traditional courtyard houses of Dubai as "cubes of burnt pastry," he explicitly remarked on the ruin wrought by the passage of time and the desert sun. Raban also appears to have sensed in these houses the emptiness and fading of meaning now recognizable as the shadows of a black sun all Dubai's own. The reconstructed house museums of Dubai together map a melancholy of hollowing out, erasure and loss, of "restoration" serving various heritage, historical and hagiographic agendas, but one largely bereft of so much of the meaning they promise in their completeness and fullness of content. Paradoxically, the presence of these heritage objects has become the very ground against which loss, emptiness and absence can now be registered. Indeed, just as for Pamuk the Bosphorus mansions figured the special melancholy of Istanbul, the heritage mansions of Dubai — in restoration, reconstruction and reuse — capture that city's own melancholy, rooted in rapid structural change, but also in the personal experiences of diaspora, distance, loss and dislocation experienced by Dubai's current residents.

Lest it be thought that this sense of anomie and rootedness is the problem of migrant workers and temporary residents alone — for whom it is certainly acute — the obvious weakening of local varieties of Arabic, increasing encroachment of cultural norms imported from abroad, a flattening of local identity, and other symptoms of heritage lost are keenly felt by much of the Emirati population. As we have seen, Dubai's house museums perform complex and sometimes contradictory roles involving the simultaneous conservation and homogenization of identity. They also involve the expression and legitimization of standing political rule, as well as more general instantiations and disavowals of intrinsic variation and imposed cultural change. But they seemingly cannot do these things without implicitly remarking on the losses entailed in this process and the sorrows that follow from it.

Obliquely and symptomatically, then, Dubai's heritage houses bring this melancholy to light as it accompanies heritage conservation and urban development in the city's contemporary political, ideological, economic and social contexts. By drawing attention to what has faded, disappeared or suffered excision, they invite, as radically open texts, the very creative regeneration and reinvention that Al-Harithy and Shils have both felt to be crucial for any meaning to history and heritage that can claim to be both contemporary and authentic. These heritage houses suggest not only that the effort to construct such meaning is possible, but also that it is likely to remain as incomplete as it is necessary. In this, perhaps, Dubai has a message for other rapidly developing cities.

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The Paradox of Representation and Practice in the Auburn University Rural Studio

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This article evaluates the Auburn University Rural Studio, a design-build community-outreach program located in Hale County, Alabama. As humanitarian architecture, the program has received significant attention in the architectural and popular media. Little attention has been paid, however, to the representational strategies that shape Rural Studio participants' self-understanding, the public's appreciation of its practices, and ultimately, the program's ethical premise. Through an examination of a series of representations surrounding the program, this article concludes that institutional and economic systems that require conflict-free depictions of the poor and their environments limit the program's critical function.

When attempting to analyze the humanitarian impulses of the profession of architecture, one is faced with a crisis of representation. Still, the idea of architects who hope to "do good" in the world has gained momentum in the last decade, whether described as "pubic interest," "community," "humanitarian," or "activist" design. In the United States, the Auburn University Rural Studio is one program that unquestionably defines discussions on contemporary architects' responsibility to the underprivileged. Its canonical status is demonstrated by its inclusion in almost all major publications on this subject in the last decade, including *Good Deeds, Good Design: Community Service through Architecture*; *Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism*; *Design Like You Give a Damn*; and MoMA's *Small Scale, Big Change*.[1] This status makes it an excellent case through which to consider the types of representation that organize humanitarian engagements in the field of architecture today. Contemporary representations are not the first attempts to capture the social and built fabric of Hale County for a national audience. After providing a brief background on the founding of the Rural Studio, the article will use previous representations as points of comparison, read in relation to social questions and vernacular building, to demonstrate that current representations of the Rural Studio eschew the self-criticality exhibited in previous efforts.

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The Rural Studio is a design-build community-outreach program founded by Samuel "Sambo" Mockbee and D.K. Ruth. In the spring semester of 1992 Ruth and Mockbee found themselves in a rented house near Auburn's campus discussing the possibility of a venue for Mockbee's interest in crossing professional and cultural boundaries.[2] A year later they received a start-up grant sponsored by the energy company Alabama Power and administered by the university's outreach program. Mockbee later stated that his interest in social justice was an outgrowth of his admiration for civil rights advocates, including James Chaney, a young African-American man from Mockbee's hometown of Meridian, Mississippi, who was killed by the Klu Klux Klan in 1964.[3] In the 1980s Mockbee had begun playing with the idea of building for the poor in a proposed project for a Catholic charity organization near his home in Canton, Mississippi. While that project never found funding, it planted the seed of an idea.[4]

At the end of a turbulent decade personally and a rough period for his private architectural practice, Mockbee accepted a position at Auburn to improve his financial security. However, conflicts with other faculty members and distance from family soon made the idea of having a studio in a location mid-way between Auburn and his home in Canton appealing. The idea of a hands-on studio also fit well with Auburn's identity. As a land-grant institution, a mission of service is embedded in its charter. Auburn's architecture school already had students constructing buildings in the city of Auburn. This activity had been brought to it in the 1970s by the architect and professor Robert Faust. As a student at the University of Oklahoma, Faust had supervised and participated in construction projects for Bruce Goff. Soon after being hired by Auburn, he had acquired land in the city and begun several for-profit construction projects. Auburn's administration allowed students to spend one term building for Faust as a substitute for a study-abroad option in the curriculum.[5] Faust's studios provided a precedent at Auburn for the type of student participation Mockbee envisioned. Though the Rural Studio began with only a dozen students, over the next ten years excitement around the effort swelled.

Today the program takes third- and fifth-year architecture students from the university into rural Alabama to design and construct projects for poor residents. Students, working in teams, engage with real-life clients while experimenting with construction techniques. The Rural Studio is based out of the town of Newbern, which lies three and a half hours to the west of Auburn's main campus and two hours from the closest metropolitan area. The program serves only the population of Hale County, a 644-square-mile area in western Alabama's Black Belt region. The Black Belt was historically a rich agricultural area, including many cotton plantations, but the decline of agricultural productivity in the area has left few jobs outside a struggling catfish-farming industry. According to the latest census, 15,388 people live in Hale County. Of these, 58 percent are African Americans, and 25.9 percent live below the poverty line (though in 1992 the number was much higher).[6] The area's sparse population means it lacks building inspectors and unions. This makes the prospect of student architects working on construction sites less challenging than in most urban areas.

Generally, design-build education, as a pedagogical practice, shifts architecture students' focus from representation to making, experience and service. It does so through a combination of hands-on learning and community engagement. Hands-on education for architects has a history that long predates the Rural Studio. The first cited example is John Ruskin's "Hinksey Diggers," a group of Oxford students who built a road to a slum near their campus in 1874.[7] In the United States, the earliest examples occurred in the 1930s, including a program at Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University) in which students built small houses of plywood and other newly available standardized materials.[8] The practice has gained and lost popularity according to shifts in professional agendas, social-welfare policy, views on volunteerism, and dominant educational philosophies, but scholars of the subject generally agree that since the early 1990s it has grown in popularity, especially as a method of teaching social or ethical agendas.[9]

Today the Rural Studio is the most highly visible and iconic example of community design-build education. This is partially due to the popularity of Mockbee himself. He was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2000, and many exhibitions, books, news articles, and documentaries have captured his colorful personality and unique wit. Mockbee's death in late 2001 further cemented his legacy as a visionary. The large amount of publicity given the program (especially through the circulation of images of its projects, students and beneficiaries) has been a staple of the architectural press for the last two decades. The 2013–2014 academic year marked the program's twentieth anniversary, an occasion for a redoubling of publicity and fundraising. The studio's influence has continued to unfold not only through hundreds of program alumni, some of whom have continued this type of work, but also through countless young designers whose only contact with the work is through representations in the media.[10]

Though the Rural Studio is iconic within the American architecture profession, some disagree about its positive impact. Critics typically question whether it allows designers to profit from the poor without bringing real change to the social structures that cause impoverished conditions. For example, in 2009 Patricio del Real offered a trenchant critique of the studio's practices in his article "'Ye Shall Receive': The Rural Studio and the Gift of Architecture." As he wrote, "The Rural Studio does not go beyond a mere instrumental use of the belief in the transformative power of aesthetics, hiding disciplinary power behind good intentions."[11] By forcing the inhabitants of Hale County to accept the value-laden gift of design, this line of thinking goes, the Rural Studio supplants local agency while reproducing existing power relations.

Though del Real's critique offers some insights, it provides only a partial analysis of the dynamics at work in Hale. Such a critique, based on outsider/insider designations, replays the assumption that Rural Studio clients are an intact and coherent community set apart from and antagonistic toward "experts" who build in their midst. More importantly, it leaves little room for further development and debate, merely rehearsing existing views of both professionals and the poor. This article argues that both the celebratory view commonly promoted in design publications and the hard-line critique by those such as del Real have thus far been very limited in their analytic power. The goal of this article, then, is to bring to light more productive questions about the relationship between architects, representation, and economies of practice in order to break the stalemate between practitioners eager for action and academics set on critique.

The article addresses this standoff by unpacking the representations and practices produced by and about Mockbee and the Rural Studio. It starts from the premise that Mockbee's own narrative and artistic representations were intended to reposition the architect in society. To understand Mockbee's views on this topic, the materials examined here include works of art he produced, his writing and lectures, and Rural Studio projects built under his direction. The article then takes the reader through existing depictions of Hale County by artists and others in order to demonstrate existing patterns of representation in the region. Finally, the article considers representation and practice in the Rural Studio since Mockbee's death, when it has continued under the leadership of Andrew Freear. The goal here is to understand the transformations that have been required for the Rural Studio to continue to function in an environment of changing institutional and economic conditions.

Considering these artifacts in light of literature on vernacular architecture, especially that produced at the same time as the Rural Studio's founding, offers a fresh perspective into the premises and evolution of the program. This literature helps demonstrate how the studio's founders used representations of poor people and their environments to articulate an ethical position. Better understanding this position reveals a paradox inherent to the Rural Studio, and ultimately to the practice of community design-build education. As with humanitarian architecture more generally, balancing social goals with the need to sustain ongoing sources of funding creates a constant tension. In particular, the Rural Studio's existence today relies on donations, grants, and university fees. This economy requires demonstrable "feel good" outputs, bled of conflict and complexity. While the agenda of such programs is to present alternative models of ethics and practice, the requirement to represent only the good limits the critical positions that engagements with the poor inevitably awaken.

REPRESENTATION AND THE PRACTICE OF A CORRUPT VERNACULAR

The question of representation in architecture — from the details of Beaux Arts renderings to the model-making of Rem Koolhass's OMA — has its own literature and history.[12] While the whole question is fascinating, I am primarily concerned here with the relationship between representation and the physical construction of buildings by their designers. The representing/building question defines what is "alternative" about design-build education. Educators typically argue that students learn better (or at least differently) how to "be architects" when they are exposed to the challenges of physically constructing a building. The contrast between drawing a hypothetical building in a typical studio course and constructing a real one at a specific time and place is one of the purest critiques of the division of labor that many see as the profession's Achilles heal.[13]

My concern for the relationship between representation and building/builders gains insight from scholarship on vernacular architecture. In 1990 Henry Glassie defined the "true" vernacular as occurring when "divisions in architectural work — design, construction and use — are brought into unity in a single individual," or at least when a constant and intimate connection exists between user, builder and designer. Any form of representation beyond face-to-face exchange demonstrated for Glassie a step toward stratification and economic exploitation. As he stated plainly, "the existence of plans is an indicator of cultural weakening."[14] And this weakening contributes to the loss of an "egalitarian political ethic."[15] While other scholars have gone on to unsettle Glassie's narrative of loss and his idealized version of traditional culture, his understanding of vernacular ethics reflected the historic moment in which he wrote.

It is not coincidental that renewed interest in the vernacular and in community-based design-build pedagogy emerged side by side in the early 1990s. The emphasis on elaborate representational strategies in postmodern architecture and postmodern theory's separation from day-to-day life pushed scholars and architects alike to reinvest in what they considered an opposite condition. Community design-build teaching shares the premise of Glassie's vernacular: if students are responsible for designing, building, and directly interacting with users, the results will be empowerment, reinforcement of culture, and an egalitarian ethic. Notably, D.K. Ruth, the Rural Studio's less well-known founder, originally intended it to be a preservation studio focused on restoring historic structures in Hale County.[16] While the studio evolved in other directions, appreciation for the vernacular is at the heart of the Rural Studio's ethical premise.[17] Under Mockbee, students were encouraged to produce only schematic plans and to then adjust designs in the construction process.

The noblesse of the vernacular also became a platform for the emergence of debates around aesthetic politics. Lisa

R. Peattie demonstrated this concept in a 1992 article, "Aesthetic Politics: Shantytown or New Vernacular?"[18] Peattie's main interest was in how economically depressed areas are "seen" by academics and policymakers. She outlined how the perceptions of beauty in the landscapes of the poor — which she defined as simple, irregular and perishable — become positive symbols when appropriated by those living "non-traditional lives."[19] She pointed out that as an outsider to a squatter settlement, she could appreciate aesthetic qualities that were, for inhabitants, "violated by a sense of social inferiority."[20] Peattie rightfully pointed out how her historical moment, the early 1990s, was characterized by growing respect for and protection of historic buildings in the wake of decades of urban renewal.[21] Reflecting this moment, she proposed that the recognition of the aesthetics of "humane architecture" (as opposed to the "aesthetics of corporate power"[22]) could lead to public recognition of the rights of the poor.

The Rural Studio's founders similarly believed that such an aesthetic revolution could change the way students and the public saw Alabama's rural poor. As Mockbee wrote:

> *If architecture is going to inspire community, or stimulate the status quo in making responsible environmental and social structural changes now and in the future, it will take what I call the "subversive leadership" of academicians and practitioners to remind the student of architecture that theory and practice are not only interwoven with one's culture but with the responsibility of shaping the environment, of breaking up social complacency, and challenging the power of the status quo.*[23]

The main strategy in this provocation was aesthetic. Mockbee often argued that poor people deserved aesthetically interesting buildings as much as the rich. In contrast to other programs such as Habitat for Humanity, which provided standardized homes for the poor with little or no design innovation, Mockbee felt that respecting the poor meant offering "architecture for the soul."[24] Scholars have argued that this reinvestment in aesthetics is largely responsible for the program's popularity and influence.[25] Community design in the 1960s and 1970s intentionally downplayed architectural achievement in favor of community participation. In the process, many argued, architects eliminated their own position as relevant players in society.[26] Mockbee posited that aesthetics could be its own terrain of struggle, not opposed to community interests but in support of them. He thus reasserted the architect's claim to political efficacy.

By 2001, when Ananya Roy wrote her influential piece "Traditions of the Modern: A Corrupt View," the dichotomous opposition of tradition and modernity had pretty well been put to bed. In this work, Roy examined the construction of modernity through the trope of tradition and the selective celebration of some so-called traditions by those with the power to represent. To freeze the environments of the poor and celebrate them as inherently anti-modern, Roy argued, is to deny the poor participation in the modern condition. Discarding simple notions of the authentic, she argued that the "articulation of the traditional and the modern acts as an axis of identity and power." This axis can be expanded on and subverted by a "surplus" of meaning that does not conform to predetermined categories. This surplus corrupts both the modern and the traditional — but in a productive manner that opens new directions for analysis and practice.[27]

My premise in this article is that the crisis of representation in the field of humanitarian architecture can be just such an opportunity for productive new directions. To date, critics and proponents alike have focused their attention on the question of whether or not architects are in fact "doing good," as they claim. Instead, representation must be understood as its own practice and as part of a complex system that supports some actors and geographies and hides others. If one considers the multiple narratives about the Rural Studio simultaneously — including those that describe it as authentic, postmodern, developmental, local and national — even more productive questions emerge.

To summarize, the Rural Studio's founders originally understood its social interventions through the view that, first, the unification of the design, construction and use leads to "egalitarian political ethic," and, second, that reforms to aesthetic representations lead to recognition of underrepresented populations politically. These ideas corresponded with thinking on the subject of representation and construction in "traditional" communities in the early 1990s. However, the limitations of these positions revealed themselves over the following decade, not just to critics, but also to those in charge of organizing the studio. The qualities for which the studio was initially praised have thus been the same elements that have destabilized its legitimacy over time. Currently, the Rural Studio's work is vulnerable to critique for both its representations of the poor and its implications with regard to the practical possibility of architecture to address inequality and prejudice.

To better understand these critiques and their relationship to humanitarian architecture, the remainder of this essay explores how the types of representation produced by and about Samuel Mockbee and the Rural Studio relate to the practice of implementing designs.

REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION: A PERSONAL MYTHOLOGY

Mockbee's art, architecture and lectures are different parts of a strategy he hoped would affect not just conditions in Hale County, but also the values and practices of architects and other professionals in the United States. While best known for his architectural and educational contributions, Mockbee saw his extensive body of painting and sculpture as central to

his work and mission. He wrote, "For me, drawing and painting are the initial influences for the making of architecture. The sketch is always out front. It sees ahead and deeper."[28]

Beginning in the mid-1990s, Mockbee produced a body of work that meditated on the poverty, place and people of Hale County. These works allowed him to express what he called a "personal mythology," a visual narrative that included fantastical characters based on his clients and on anthropomorphized aspects of the natural environment. The liberal use of color and a sketchy looseness, which may be compared to the work of Expressionists like Wassily Kandinsky, characterized his artistic style.[29] Mockbee's use of nontraditional material and found objects also referenced artists like Robert Rauschenberg.[30] While literally incorporating elements from the local landscape including dried gourds, found wood, tires, beaver sticks, and red dirt, his paintings tried to capture both the aura of the landscape and the people who inhabited it.

For example, in his painting *The Black Warrior*, named for the river that winds through Hale County, Mockbee depicted a goddess-like figure riding aback a giant turtle. The work employs such materials as rusted metal, sticks, and dried gourds (FIG. 1). By Mockbee's account, the turtle represented one Rural Studio client, Shepherd Bryant, while the hand-woman-goddess represented Bryant's granddaughter, Apple. The rope that lashes the figures together symbolized the ties that bind all beings through fate.[31]

In another painting, *Lizquina: Mother Goddess* (later renamed *Lucy's Paramour*), a female deity rises diagonally across the canvas on wings of flame. Her head is comprised of painted tree bark and shredded tire (FIG. 2). Beaver sticks attached to the painting's surface indicate dynamism and movement. A tangled rope suspended from thin wires circles the neck of a male figure uncomfortably dangling at the right edge of the composition.[32] Mockbee described this painting

FIGURE 1. The Black Warrior. *Samuel Mockbee, 1996. Materials: oil on canvas mounted on plywood with wood, found wood, metal and corrugated metal, beaver sticks, bottles, gourds, garden clipper, string, and tape. Courtesy of Jackie Mockbee and family.*

FIGURE 2. Lizquina: The Mother Goddess *(later renamed Lucy's Paramour). Samuel Mockbee, 1995. Installed in Canton, Mississippi. Materials: oil on wood with rubber tires, tree bark, found wood, metal lawn-mower chain, rope, beaver sticks, and gourds. Courtesy of Jackie Mockbee and family.*

FIGURE 3. *Cover of Le Corbusier's* Poésie sur Alger. *Written 1942, published 1950.*

as part of a process of understanding one family with whom he worked at the Rural Studio. The winged figure represented the spirit of the family's matriarch, while the suspended male figure depicted the mostly absent father of her five children. Through art, Mockbee hoped to consider both mother and father in their historical and cultural contexts, rather than imposing a preconceived morality on their situation.[33]

Architects have a troubled history of objectifying representations of the Other. In this regard, Mockbee's representation of poor African-American women, especially in *Lizquina*, demands comparison to Le Corbusier's highly problematic depiction of Muslim women in *Le Poésie sur Alger* **(FIG.3)**. Zeynep Celik famously dismantled Le Corbusier's sexism and his metaphorical possession and "saving" of Algiers and its inhabitants.[34] Yet, while Le Corbusier's designs for Algiers separated the colonized from the colonizing, Mockbee's work attempted to cross cultural boundaries through the evocation of a common human experience. As he wrote:

> *The paintings which began the work of the Rural Studio try to establish a discourse between those of us who have become mentally and morally stalled in modern obligations and these families who have no prospect of such obligations. The paintings are by no means an attempt to aestheticise poverty. It's about stepping across a social impasse into an honesty that refuses to gloss over inescapable facts. It's an honesty that permits differences to exist side by side with great tolerance and respect.*[35]

Mockbee saw the Other as apart and different. Yet his goal was not to preserve or eliminate this difference, but to understand and celebrate it. This desire to cross boundaries comes from an attitude toward history common among modern Southern artists. The layering of real and fictive histories colors many Southerners' understanding of the region's troubled past. "Sadly," Mockbee wrote, "for the most part, the South's past has more affection for fiction and false values than it does for facing the truth. Fortunately, in my lifetime, the suffering and brutality attached to those false values have been challenged by people with the courage to accept responsibility."[36] Influenced by William Faulkner, Mockbee believed the past always haunts the present, and he left the modernist teleology behind in search of a different kind of architectural humanism. The difference between Le Corbusier's and Mockbee's representations provides a fertile starting point for considering the unique qualities of humanitarian architecture today.

To understand Mockbee's position on representation and participation requires understanding his earlier attempts to represent regional and national values. Prior to his work at Auburn, Mockbee helped design two major exhibitions: the Mississippi Pavilion at the 1984 Louisiana World Expo in New Orleans, and the Design USA exhibit, which traveled to the Soviet Union as propaganda for the United States Information Agency in 1989.[37] Descriptions of Mockbee in books and exhibitions rarely emphasize this portion of his pre-Rural Studio experience, perhaps because it is difficult to understand its significance in relation to the "folksy" aesthetic of early Rural Studio projects.

The Mississippi Exhibition used space frames and two-dimensional facades to suggest a small town. The virtual environment was supplemented by real elements like live plants (Mockbee wanted kudzu, but it would not grow inside the venue) and handcrafts. The lively hybrid between traditional forms and modern (or perhaps postmodern) references made the pavilion one of the most popular in the Expo **(FIG.4)**. The Design USA exhibit used a more abstract space frame to organize circulation and display cutting-edge graphic design, products, and technologies **(FIG.5)**.

The group of graphic designers and architects behind these exhibits called themselves the Yoknapatawpha Exhibit Group after the fictitious county in which all of Faulkner's novels unfold. Mockbee's involvement in these meditations on regional and American values provides an interesting addition to literature on the place of exhibits in shaping identity and values.[38] These interactive environments allowed him to consider regional pride, national values, postmodern aesthetics, and the display of culture for public consumption. All of these elements, though differently configured, resurface in his Rural Studio work.

Mockbee translated these lessons on representation and participation to Hale County with the help of a Graham Foundation grant. In 1993 he applied for and was awarded a grant for a film, never released, entitled "The Nurturing of Culture in the Rural South: An Architectonic Documentary." He later wrote that he used the money to produce a set of large murals. The resulting work, *Children of Eutaw before Their Ancient Cabins*, is a mythical landscape that children participated in building and could occupy **(FIG.6)**. As Mockbee described it, this

FIGURE 4. *Mississippi Pavilion, New Orleans World Expo, 1984. Design by Mockbee Coker Howorth Architects, 3D International, and Communication Arts Company. Courtesy of Hap Owen of Communication Arts Company.*

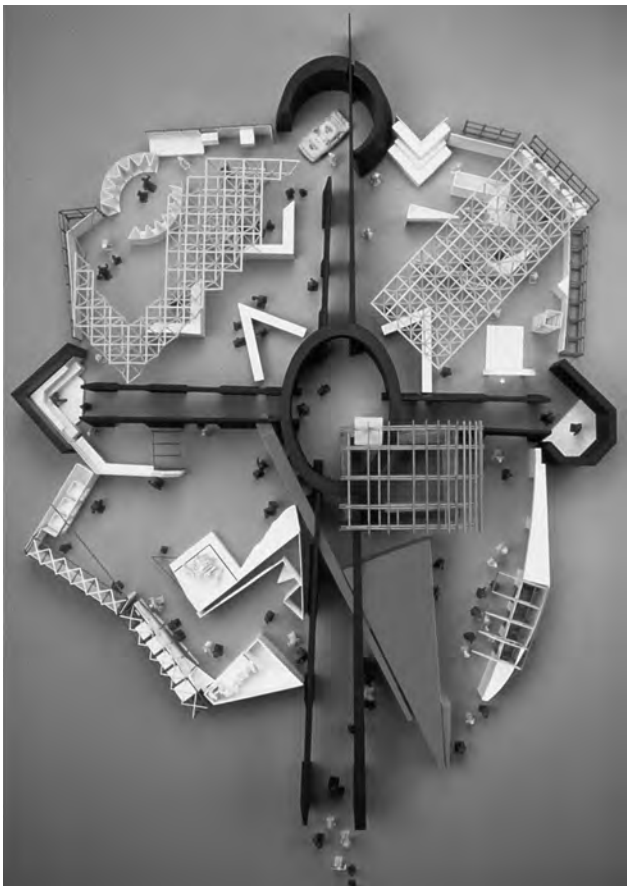

FIGURE 5. *Design USA Exhibit. Model of exhibit, 1989. Design by Samuel Mockbee, Bud Holloman, and Communication Arts Company with the United States Department of Information. Courtesy Hap Owen of Communication Arts Company.*

FIGURE 6. *Mockbee and his artwork* The Children of Eutaw before Their Ancient Cabins, *1992. Photo by Timothy Hursley, 2001.*

FIGURE 7. *Mason's Bend Community Center/"Glass Chapel," Samuel Mockbee (studio director) and students of the Rural Studio, 2000. Mason's Bend, Hale County, Alabama. Built with recycled windshields and rammed earth. Photo by author, summer 2010.*

was "an attempt to extend the study of architecture into what I hoped would be a wider human landscape. I am interested in what might prompt and make possible a process of entering a taboo landscape, in my case, the economic poverty of the Deep South."[39] Using art as a gateway, Mockbee's body of work continued to explore the people and environment of Hale County through participatory projects and representations focused on crossing boundaries. The idea that these actions "nurture culture" also continued to align with Glassie's reading of the relationship between participation and culture in traditional societies.

Beyond organizational principles — appreciation of the vernacular, understanding of clients, graphic impact, and participation — the aesthetic quality of Rural Studio work under Mockbee's direction had its own special character. Like any design studio, students have ultimate control over the design of each Rural Studio structure. The studio director and other instructors only guide them to use their own creative ideas to satisfy the needs of clients. Yet, despite the diversity of authors, trends in the overall "look" of projects were apparent. During the period when Mockbee was director, the projects reflected the aesthetic he had developed in his private practice. These early projects combined a Southern rural vernacular with more modern and sculptural forms. Due to the scarce resources available to the program at first, they often employed reused rather than standard building materials. For example, students built a community meeting space, called informally the "glass chapel," of reused car windshields and compacted red earth (FIG. 7). In another project, students designed a home for an elderly woman using walls of stacked carpet tiles. The nature of the materials required a certain amount of experimentation, which students embraced as conceptually interesting features. While the architectural press perceived these projects as ingeniously creative, the unusual aesthetic and an association with "trashiness" among some locals also speaks to the varied perception of aesthetic quality among differently positioned individuals. As Peattie has noted, what one group may see as fragile and culturally valuable, another may see as cheap and unmodern.

Third-year Rural Studio students themselves continue to live in small "pods" built of recycled materials like cardboard and licenses plates (FIG. 8). This rough and makeshift setting is a practical solution to the need for student housing, but it also establishes a practice meant to close the space between students and their poor clients. That students must occupy their own creations before trying out building techniques in clients' homes is a symbolic but still significant gesture. The modest residences require students to sleep under mosquito netting and deal with the damp walls and heat that result from previous students failed experiments.[40] Students thus learn first-hand the dangers of experimenting on the environments of the poor. Taking students outside their comfortable lives is one main purpose of the studio.

In a discussion at SCI-Arc in 1996, Mockbee said that his main goal was to help students shed their preconceptions about the people of Hale, about poverty, and about the role of the architect in society.[41] According to Mockbee, this can only occur through immersion in an unfamiliar landscape, accompanied by a commitment to represent and interact with its unfamiliar inhabitants through art and architecture.[42] Through his art and direction of the Rural Studio, he pushed students to consider the region and people viscerally, instead of distancing themselves from experience through abstract representations.

Mockbee communicated his position toward region and experience as a new type of authenticity. As he wrote, "We

FIGURE 8. *Student-built supershed and "pods." Samuel Mockbee (studio director) and students of the Rural Studio, 1997–2001. Newbern, Hale County, Alabama. Built with recycled and salvaged materials. Photo by Timothy Hursley.*

don't try to be Southern, we just end up that way because we try to be authentic."[43] If one reads Mockbee's work from a postmodern perspective rather than as part of a modernist tradition, this pursuit of authenticity yields interesting insights. As postmodern art, Mockbee's paintings demonstrated a conflicted position with regard to their subjects. As postmodern architecture, the exhibitions synthesized tradition and technology. And as a postmodern version of humanitarian engagement, the Rural Studio under his direction undermined subject positions, but also reinforced the position of the interpreter as someone with the power to cross boundaries and unsettle norms.

Consistent with thinking in the early 1990s about the ethics of participation in construction in traditional societies, Mockbee emphasized the process of engagement over its products. He combined this with an idea of aesthetic politics that sought to represent in new and challenging ways a heretofore unrepresented aspect of reality. Better understanding architects' emphasis on process and their problem with properly representing practice can help clarify some of the paradoxes that continue to define the practice of humanitarian architecture today.

TRADITIONS OF REPRESENTATION IN HALE COUNTY

To clarify Mockbee's position, it is helpful to consider past representations of Hale County. Mockbee was not the first artist to use aesthetic experiences to create empathy for the poor of Hale County. One of the great genre-defying works of twentieth-century America, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* by James Agee and Walker Evans, took place within Hale County. *Fortune* magazine and the Farm Security Administration originally funded this work in the summer of 1936, with the goal of depicting rural poverty in America. The work brought Agee and Evans into the landscapes and homes of three white tenant families (FIG. 9). In its final book form, a text by Agee is accompanied by Evans's black-and-white photos of people, buildings and landscapes. The book has been vastly influential for its combination of photojournalism and experimental narrative techniques. One scholar called it a "'representative anecdote' for the problem of representing social and political consciousness in the age of mechanical reproduction."[44] The Great Depression provoked artists and scholars to rethink the meaning of poverty and human dignity within an unequal nation. Agee and Evans combined text and image to articulate their struggle to go beyond simple representation to "recognize the stature of a portion of unimagined existence, and to contrive techniques proper to its recording, communicating, analysis and defense."[45]

While Evans's photos are still and staid, Agee's portrayal of the tenant families is active and wandering. In tension with photos that appear only to capture the families in their everyday state, Agee's text places the two young men inside

FIGURE 9. *Schoolhouse, Alabama, N.D. (likely 1936) Walker Evans, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA-OWI Collection, LC-USF342-T01-008257-A.*

the narrative.[46] Indeed, it focuses not on capturing the truth of the families' lives, but on how Agee and Evans experienced a different way of life, and in turn came to question their own privilege. Ultimately, a loss of critical distance, demonstrated by the frantic, overly descriptive quality of the narrative, undermines the authority of the work. In one scene, Agee admires the beauty of a pair of African-American youths walking peacefully down a dirt road. He runs after them to ask for a photograph, only to frighten them and shatter their calm — "because," he later wrote, "in that country no negro safely walks away from a white man, or even appears not to listen when he is talking."[47] After the incident, Agee felt shame and self-hatred, aware that his very presence, despite good intentions, was dangerous and disruptive given the histories of violence that haunted the region.

Scholars have suggested that, in its time, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* was a critique of photojournalism. It contradicted the "realist" approach promoted by the federal government as part of the publicity campaign behind the New Deal.[48] Agee and Evans resisted the trend among many American artists who hoped to use technology and storytelling to document the "real" America. After eight weeks of research, the two found the project of representing the reality of these poor families far from simple. Interestingly, the book enjoyed renewed popularity in the 1960s when many young people, driven by social impulse, volunteered in Appalachia and other poor areas.[49] The book gives the reader a window onto Agee and Evans's experiences of rural poverty in all its complexity. No matter how hard they tried to record, analyze and defend, their efforts always fell short.

In the late 1960s another young man began his quest to represent Hale County. William Christenberry grew up in the northern part of Hale. Trained in fine arts and photogra-

FIGURE 10. *Facade of Warehouse, Newbern, Alabama, 1981.* © *William Christenberry; courtesy of Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York and Hemphill Fine Arts, Washington, D.C. Since 2003 this building has been the headquarters of the Rural Studio in Newbern, Alabama. The building holds design studios and accommodates reviews during the early stages of the design process.*

phy at the University of Alabama, he is now best known for his stunning photographs of decaying vernacular structures, including reshooting scenes originally shot by Evans in 1936 (FIG.10).[50] In fact, his entire body of work since 1968 has concerned vernacular structures in Hale County. Christenberry's photographs usually feature individual buildings in bright light, saturated colors, and high contrast. He achieves this effect with a Kodak Brownie camera he has owned since childhood.[51] The structures are always abandoned, often covered in kudzu, and show the effects of time, neglect, and harsh climate. His most famous sculptural works also focus on Hale County buildings. These are replications in exact detail, at a tiny scale, that mimic the patina and form of the original, set on a bed of red dirt. While the structures Christenberry photographs and sculpts seem frozen in time, his pilgrimages to rephotograph the same scenes again and again indicate a ritual aspect to his art.

Christenberry has defined his relationship to Hale as "possessing in the positive sense. It's all encompassing. It's emotional, spiritual, and in an actual, physical sense sums up what I am about."[52] This connection between experience of place and production of self is especially interesting considering how Agee and Evans also used Hale to consider their identities. In his *Southern Monument* series, Christenberry constructs fantastical buildings that reference vernacular forms that evoke the histories of racial violence below the surface of the picturesque vernacular (FIG.11). One *Southern Monument* replicates a rural shack made of corrugated metal, but with a pointed roof so exaggerated as to mimic the tall hats of Klan members. Such disturbing imagery disrupts the viewer's attempt to see Hale as a static and peaceful place. "Although my work is largely celebratory," Christenberry said in an interview, "there is this dark side that permeates the South. How could I avoid the issues of the civil rights period and the terrible evil that manifests itself in the Ku Klux Klan (KKK)? . . . I think it is important to have an artist of my background attempt to come to grips with these issues."[53] On the surface, Christenberry's work could be read as romanticizing the past, but it is a romanticism that cannot settle with a troubled past.

The aesthetic similarities between the *Southern Monument* series and Mockbee's work are striking (COMPARE FIGS.6 AND 11). They each feature overhanging roofs, dried gourds, rusted metal, sticks, red dirt, and bowling balls (which may be a reference to the folk art environments of Joe Minter). Whether or not Mockbee intentionally referenced Christenberry is unclear. Each may have drawn independently from the vernacular vocabulary of the region. On the other hand, Mockbee and Christenberry knew each other and were planning a collaboration when Mockbee passed away.[54] Through repetitive engagement and personal myth, both have defined themselves in relation to place and notions of time that aestheticize while challenging static readings.

FIGURE 11. *William Christenberry,* Southern Monument XX, *1983–1994. Courtesy of the artist and Hemphill Fine Arts.*

Contemporary representations of Hale are less self-reflective. This quality results from the purpose of the images — which mostly document Rural Studio projects for publications and exhibitions. National visibility came to Mockbee and the Rural Studio through exhibitions at the Max Protetch Gallery, New York; the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; the 2002 Whitney Biennial, New York; and in an exhibition in 2004 at the National Building Museum entitled "Samuel Mockbee and the Rural Studio: Community Architecture." Since Mockbee's death, two full-length documentaries have celebrated his life and work, and profiles of him have appeared on ABC News and the Oprah Winfrey Show.[55] In addition, the *New York Times* and *Time* magazine have run stories about the program. More recently, MoMA included Rural Studio projects in its "Small Scale, Big Change" exhibition, while monographs on public-interest design have featured many of its projects.[56]

Photographs by Timothy Hursley illustrate almost all published work on the Rural Studio. Hursley is an internationally known architectural photographer who follows the conventions of architectural photography by emphasizing the play of light and material. His compositions portray the families involved in the projects posed on the porches or in the living rooms of their new homes. In many of these images, subjects gaze straight into the camera unsmiling, perhaps a reference to Evans's work. Yet these representations do not ask very challenging questions. As is typical with architectural photography, the structures are photographed soon after their completion, when their paint and colors are still fresh. The message is: These are decent houses for decent people. Everyone is happy with a job well done.

The display of these images in high-culture institutions like MoMA begs questions about an economy where glossy photos mounted in galleries allow distant audiences to consume images of the poor and their environments. Also interesting is that although Mockbee's pre-Rural Studio work achieved some regional success and several national design awards, it never reached the level of exposure or enthusiasm that Rural Studio projects have received. The fact that Mockbee's house designs offer a similar aesthetic to early Rural Studio projects makes this significant. Why are images of buildings in a regional and expressionist style especially celebrated when they are built for poor African-American families? Clearly, poor clients add a value associated with humanitarianism that houses for wealthy clients lack. The Rural Studio's projects thus derive meaning not despite, but directly from their clients' position at the margins of normal society. As a structural part of humanitarian architecture, images of projects must also reflect a confident and apolitical position. This demonstrates to the public, and especially to potential donors, that the program and its proponents deserve their attention.

REPRESENTATION AFTER MOCKBEE: THE FREEAR STUDIO

After Mockbee's death in late 2001, the Rural Studio evolved in several new directions. David Hinson, the head of the School of Architecture at Auburn University, has explained these changes as twofold. First, the scale of projects shifted from single-family homes to larger programs. These have required more work in order to gain "buy-in" from the community, and they have also required more accountability. Second, the Studio has shifted to a more iterative process, in which instructors maintain focus on one issue over several years and classes of students.[57]

The first shift resulted from institutional and cultural changes within the university. After Mockbee's death, the University finally committed permanent funding to the Rural Studio — not just for instructors' salaries, but also for materials and supplies.[58] This means the program can now build with more typical materials. In addition, fifth-year, or "thesis" students now make longer time commitments. Indeed, they may stay one to two years in Hale County after graduation to complete their projects. With more time, students have more control over the design and execution of projects; instead, they may spend up to a year on research, planning, community engagement, and drawing before beginning construction. Many articulate the experience as analogous to an unpaid architectural internship. They are rewarded with the likelihood of publication of their designs, association with a well-known design studio, and the personal satisfaction of having contributed to the lives of locals.

The second shift is the product of a change in the program's structure. Around 2001 the studio began to accept "outreach" students. These are individuals who are not enrolled in any Auburn program but who pay tuition to join the studio for a year. Early on, the outreach students took on the idea of the 20K house. The students hoped to build homes for less than $20,000, a figure based on the Rural Development loan for which one early Rural Studio client qualified. For the last twelve years, teams of students have constructed one prototype per year, each building on the lessons of past models **(FIG. 12)**. Interestingly, the original loan program has not funded any of these houses, because pathways to that source of funding have been blocked by credit, land tenure, and infrastructural issues.[59]

To mark its twentieth anniversary, the studio managed to raise more than $250,000 to build eight homes in one year. However, the success of this campaign (and the resonance of the affordable-home project with the media and with students) rested on the dubious premise that these are prototypes that will allow the systematic dissemination of quality housing in the area. Even though there is no evidence that housing equality will result from these experiments, the project fits well within an academic schedule and is well scaled to the abilities of young designers.

FIGURE 12. *20K House IX. Built by "outreach" students at the Auburn University Rural Studio under the direction of Andrew Freear (studio director) and Danny Wicke (20K instructor), 2009–2010. Photo by author, summer 2010.*

Another multiyear project, Rural Studio Farm, has considered local economic and environmental sustainability.[60] Under this umbrella, students began a greenhouse and community garden on their own property in Newbern and helped organize a farmers market in a nearby town **(FIG. 13)**. According to Freear, the initiative is in part a reaction to some of the assumptions that had been layered onto the Rural Studio — namely, that it was a sustainable practice, locally focused, and in tune with the land.[61] In fact, despite being a farming area, Hale County is a food desert, where diabetes and other poverty-related health issues are prevalent. In addition, the dispersed nature of the population requires that studio members constantly drive long distances and bring in material from outside the area. Conscious of the contradiction between images and reality, Freear and the students are now attempting to bring a more environmentally conscious perspective to their work.

During the biggest television event of 2013 in Alabama, the annual Auburn-Alabama football game, Auburn University aired an advertisement featuring Freear and the most recent 20K house. While video footage of students building it and Freear hugging an African-American woman on a porch played in the background, Freear obediently recited the line that "This is affordable, innovative and beautiful housing for families in rural communities."[62]

Numerous Rural Studio insiders will speak of their frustration with how the work is portrayed in the media. They emphasize that even the label of social or humanitarian architecture is one that has been pushed upon them.[63] Program administrators, too, emphasize that the main purpose of the program is to educate architects, not to "fight poverty." Yet, representations like the Auburn commercial imply something much different. Today the studio's continued funding depends on this disconnect between program goals and public perceptions.

FIGURE 13. *Rural Studio greenhouse (under construction), 2011–2013. Photo by author, fall 2014.*

PARADOX AND POTENTIAL

Compared to when it was run by Mockbee, the Rural Studio today holds firmly to professional boundaries, concentrating on growing students' expertise and solidifying their position as designers of good buildings. This can be seen in Freear's insistence on preplanning and documentation in drawings prior to the start of construction.

Whether Mockbee's or Freear's strategy is more justified is less important than understanding that both are part of a system that encourages certain patterns of representation and, in turn, practice. Rather than unsettling norms of the profession, these patterns mirror many of those that organize architectural practice more generally. These include the deployment of knowingly simplified or romantic representations, use of unpaid labor, and a constant need to engage in marketing to attract future work and funding. The representation of humanitarian architecture — be it on an organization's website, in exhibitions, or in books or journals — must conform to the economy that sustains its practice. The success of representations directly correlates to the amount of funding available for a program and for the architects and students involved in it. In this image economy, one quickly encounters the limits of architectural design practice as it meets humanitarian aid.

Mockbee and Freear have successfully produced and then maintained a model of practice that has excited a generation of young designers. The question is whether the studio fulfills its original objectives. The layering of representations of Hale County demonstrates that social engagement and aesthetics provide fertile ground for self-critique and reflection on positionality and history. Yet simply associating vernacular building processes with "egalitarian politics" will not yield political or social progress. Nor will aesthetic politics that shine light onto the underrepresented create lasting change. Instead, I suggest that what is needed is a closer examination of the institutions that support these programs, and specifically their relationships to local and national political economies. Getting away from a view that focuses on whether or not architects decide to "do good" means asking what types of governmental and institutional configurations enable design professionals to actualize their ethical visions. Though Mockbee intended the Rural Studio to be critical and disruptive, institutional and economic systems that require conflict-free depictions of the poor and their environments ultimately obscure this critical function.

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"Transplanting" Yin Yu Tang to America: Preservation, Value, and Cultural Heritage

HAN LI

In 1997 the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) purchased Yin Yu Tang (Hall of Plentiful Shelter), a historic Huizhou residence in the town of Huang Cun in China's east-central Anhui Province. It then dismantled the structure, shipped it to the United States, and rebuilt it on the grounds of the museum in Salem, Massachusetts. The transplantation of Yin Yu Tang provides a unique vantage point from which to reconsider the appropriation of Chinese architectural heritage by institutions in the U.S. This article examines a series of issues related to the relocation and exhibition of Yin Yu Tang in a new geocultural context. It also looks into changes in Huang Cun in the aftermath of the Yin Yu Tang project to understand the challenges of heritage preservation in the Huizhou area.

In the spring of 1997, in what she recalls as a moment of "serendipity," Nancy Berliner, then curator of Chinese art at the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM), arrived at Yin Yu Tang (Hall of Plentiful Shelter) in China's Anhui Province during a gathering that the Huang family had called to decide its fate.[1] Following the meeting, the museum agreed to purchase the 200-year-old house, which it considered representative of Huizhou residential traditions.[2] Yin Yu Tang was subsequently dismantled, shipped to the U.S., and rebuilt at PEM in Salem, Massachusetts, eventually opening to the public in June 2003.

Strictly speaking, the exhibition of a full-scale example of classical Chinese architecture in the U.S. is not rare. Since the completion of Astor Court (a classical Chinese garden court) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1980, more than sixteen Chinese gardens have been built in the U.S.[3] However, because these were never meant to be inhabited, they may be considered largely asocial and ahistorical spaces. Conversely, as the residence of eight generations of the Huang family, Yin Yu Tang was the setting for human activities through a number of historical periods, and these activities left real traces

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on the building. As the only example of historic vernacular Chinese architecture in North America, therefore, Yin Yu Tang provides an invaluable crosscultural opportunity to examine the domestic life of a Chinese family and understand its interplay with larger social, economic and political circumstances.

In addition to being a palimpsest of lived history, Yin Yu Tang provides fertile ground to examine the appropriation of Chinese architectural heritage in the U.S., especially as this pertains to the cardinal precepts of historic preservation: value and authenticity. Over the past decade the theory of historic preservation has shifted from a fabric-centered approach to a more value-centered paradigm. Thus, according to a recent Getty Institute report, "Objects, collections, buildings, and places become recognized as 'heritage' through *conscious decisions* and *unspoken values of particular people and institutions*"; and this heritage value, "at its core, is politicized and contested" (emphasis added).[4] What, then, constitutes the value of Yin Yu Tang? How has its value and authenticity been transferred and transformed during the relocation process? Where does the "success" of "transplantation" belong? And, ultimately, how might this project help clarify the philosophy and practices of preservation in Huizhou, China?[5]

In this article I reflect on the transplantation of heritage values involved in the Yin Yu Tang project and the interplay of involved individuals and institutes. I begin by discussing the various parties and interests engaged in the project and by examining how the multiplicity of Yin Yu Tang's identity complicates its value as a historic house. This is followed by close scrutiny of how the house has been physically reerected at PEM and conceptually recontextualized in a new social-cultural environment that reflects PEM's longstanding interest in Asian art and its mission to interpret historic environments. In addition, the article offers a close reading of the pluralistic and competing discourses in PEM's multigenre interpretive message regarding Yin Yu Tang. This message integrates understanding of Huizhou architectural heritage, a reimagination of Huang family domestic life, and an explanation of the interaction between the family and larger socio-historical changes in Chinese society over the past two centuries. Last, the article situates the Yin Yu Tang project, as well as PEM's other interactions with Huang Cun, in terms of the overall effort to preserve Huizhou heritage in order to shed light on other potential issues that have emerged in the area. Through consideration of these three disparate yet closely related concerns, I will show how the "transplantation" of Yin Yu Tang offers a useful crosscultural vantage point from which to consider how values in historic preservation are contextual, conservational, and continuously changing.

REERECTING AND RECONTEXTUALIZING YIN YU TANG: VALUE, AUTHENTICITY AND NEGOTIATION

The Yin Yu Tang project may have started with a serendipitous encounter between Berliner and the Huang family, but it soon materialized into a transnational social-cultural endeavor, entangling personal, economic, cultural, institutional and even political interests. Members of the 28th generation of the Huang family had succeeded as pawnbrokers in Shanghai and Hankou during the Kangxi reign (1662–1722), and the family built Yin Yu Tang around 1800 with their accumulated fortune. A 4,500-square-foot, two-story, five-bay Huizhou merchant house, it subsequently sheltered eight generations of the Huang family (FIG. 1). In the repertoire of historic Huizhou houses, Yin Yu Tang is probably not that valuable in terms of antiquity. In fact, according to Berliner, PEM was only able to purchase it because it was not "old" compared to other houses that were classified as protected relics.

For a nonregistered historic house like this, however, the cost of maintenance was the sole responsibility of the Huang clan, who had scattered to other places and could no longer keep it up. Yet, even though Yin Yu Tang had become a financial burden, its value as a symbol of ancestral glory and family legacy remained intact and undiminished. Therefore, as far as the Huang family was concerned, in addition to the compensation they would receive for "selling" the house to PEM, its physical relocation would save it from the foreseeable fate of deterioration followed by eventual demolition.[6] In other words, the family saw the relocation as crucial to the house's continued existence. Indeed, a 36th-generation descendant of the Huang family, Huang Qiuhua, was later invited to visit the reerected Yin Yu Tang in Salem, and his statement of appreciation for the preservation of his family

FIGURE 1. *The lime-plastered Yin Yu Tang house (center) in its original setting in Huang Cun. Source: N. Berliner,* Yin Yu Tang: The Architecture and Daily Life of a Chinese House *(North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2003), p.32.*

FIGURE 2. *The Yin Yu Tang house exhibition at PEM as seen from the second floor of the museum. Photo by author.*

heritage was appropriated by PEM as an endorsement for the project **(FIG.2)**.

Although Yin Yu Tang was not initially classified as a protected relic, its value certainly changed when PEM launched the Yin Yu Tang project. For the local authorities of Xiuning County, Yin Yu Tang went from being an ordinary old residence to being a symbol of Huizhou architectural heritage. Just as importantly, it provided an opportunity to connect Xiuning with the rest of the world. In May 1997, when the Xiuning County Cultural Relics Administration and PEM agreed to transfer Yin Yu Tang to the museum, the nature of the transaction was therefore defined as a cultural exchange that would promote international awareness of traditional Huizhou heritage. As I will discuss, this transaction led to a series of follow-up activities between Salem and Xiuning County that had socioeconomic implications for both locales. These activities included publishing educational materials, hosting international forums, organizing and promoting a "Xiuning-Salem" tourist route, and supporting other conservation works in Huang Cun. For local officials in Xiuning, "exporting" Yin Yu Tang has proven to be more than just a cultural exchange; it has represented a significant political and economic achievement.

Meanwhile, for PEM, the Yin Yu Tang project was important because it allowed the intersection of its general mission with its curator's longstanding personal academic passion. Nancy Berliner had studied Chinese art history at the Central Academy of Art in Beijing, and had become fascinated with Huizhou culture during her first visit to Xiuning in 1985. The decision to bring Yin Yu Tang to the U.S. also coincided with an extensive expansion of PEM in 2003. With accompanying galleries dedicated to the house and to Chinese art, Yin Yu Tang is now a major element in the renovated museum. Yet it has also mainly fallen on PEM to justify the meaningfulness of the transaction. The relocation has thus not only involved physically reerecting the structure in new geophysical circumstances but also conceptually rationalizing the effort. At both levels, authenticity and heritage have been constantly contested and negotiated.

The actual reerection of Yin Yu Tang on the PEM campus began in June 2002 following extensive research conducted during the conserving process in an off-site warehouse in Massachusetts.[7] Appropriating the authenticity of the architecture was deemed crucial to the success of the project. This not only meant conserving and restoring the existing contents of the house to their original and traditional state, but also negotiating between authenticity and reality, and between tradition and innovation.

Conservation of the timber frame provides a good case in point. To strengthen the deteriorated pieces, architects called for supporting the original wood planks with new boards made from a species of American wood with similar character and strength. Thus, while the new planks provide structural support, the original planks retain their role in the structure's historic fabric. Appropriating the authority of native craftsmen is another strategy commonly used by American museums to construct a sense of authenticity for their Chinese structures.[8] PEM invited Huizhou carpenters, masons, and other craftsmen to demonstrate and apply traditional techniques to the reconstruction of Yin Yu Tang, and, rather than using nails, components were connected using dovetail tenons, a traditional method of Chinese joinery. By deliberately foregrounding these activities in its documentary film about Yin Yu Tang, PEM was able to successfully construct this aura of authenticity **(FIG.3)**.

The roof was another feature of Yin Yu Tang that required a creative solution, since the house was moved from the relatively warm climate of eastern China to a coastal town in the northern U.S. To protect the interior of Yin Yu

FIGURE 3. *A close-up from the documentary film* Yin Yu Tang: A Chinese Home *showing how two boards are joined using a traditional dovetail tenon. Courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum.*

Tang from harsh winter weather in its new location, a clear-paneled skylight is lifted by crane onto the roof in the fall, and removed each spring. The clear shield enables natural daylight to permeate Yin Yu Tang's central courtyard all year round so visitors can appreciate it as the outdoor space it was designed to be. Other than its interior courtyard, Yin Yu Tang's unglazed ceramic roof tiles were also exposed to winter weather in its new location. In this case, the conservation team replaced the base tiles with more durable, newly manufactured ones, while retaining the original cap tiles. Thus, the original appearance of Yin Yu Tang's roof has been maintained while it has also been modified to withstand harsh new winter conditions.[9]

Along with these measures, new features ensuring visitor safety and accessibility were needed to comply with Massachusetts building codes. These include a comprehensive fire detection and suppression system, heating and ventilation for visitor comfort and building conservation, new plumbing for drainage and water supply for the two skywell pools, and wiring for lighting and other purposes. These new elements were installed in the most inconspicuous and reversible fashion possible so as not to preclude future preservation efforts.[10] Further, in order to meet seismic requirements, electrical conduits, mechanical ductwork, and piping were fabricated using structural-grade stainless steel.[11] And thresholds were reinstalled with electric screw jacks to allow disabled visitors to access interior spaces, while preserving the original look of the house.[12] All things considered, then, the Yin Yu Tang that now stands at PEM, with its "authentic" Huizhou characteristics, is not simply a physical entity transported intact from Huang Cun. It is a living reflection of a particular understanding of Huizhou architectural heritage and a negotiation with contemporary American culture to re-present this in a new physical environment.

In addition to physically reerecting the structure in Salem, PEM has had to justify the *relevance* of its effort, especially in relation to its existing collection of historic houses. PEM today preserves 23 historic structures, including four designated as National Historic Landmarks and six that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.[13] Ranging from First Period New England structures to those representing the Victorian Eclectic style, these bear witness to the architectural, cultural and social changes in Salem from the early settlement era to the mid-Victorian period. For PEM, the value of Yin Yu Tang is not singularly determined by the physical property, but also by the dynamic interplay between Yin Yu Tang and the interpretative possibilities of this new geosocial context. In other words, if the physical relocation makes the preservation possible, it is the conceptual recontextualization that essentially makes the preservation meaningful.

In this regard, one important strategy PEM employs is to juxtapose Yin Yu Tang with one of Salem's most well-known houses — the Gardner-Pingree House (1804). Despite clear differences between the circumstances behind the origins of displayed objects, this comparative approach is often employed by museums.[14] In addition to the individual tour of Yin Yu Tang, PEM features a special and separate tour focusing on these two homes.[15] Arbitrarily constructing a sense of comparability between them, this emphasizes how both were built around 1800 by merchants.

There are several difficulties with this crosscultural, comparative approach. First is the fundamental dilemma and controversy pertinent to the entire Yin Yu Tang project. To a certain extent, the purchase and relocation of Yin Yu Tang as an architectural artifact is consistent with PEM's acquisition of other Asian artifacts, which PEM justifies as part of a continuing effort to embrace artistic achievements from around the world. However, no matter how delicately PEM's rhetoric manages to describe the significance of the project, uprooting Yin Yu Tang from its historic location and turning it into a museum exhibition can hardly be said to be devoid of "a collector's instinct."[16] The juxtaposition of Yin Yu Tang with the Gardner-Pingree House is also not an equal comparison. Not only is the latter intact in its original location, but it also stands as part of a clear lineage with the other historic dwellings in Salem. In contrast, Yin Yu Tang was uprooted from its original environment and artificially replanted at PEM. Therefore, while visitors can experience the geocultural landscape of the Gardner-Pingree house firsthand, they have to use their imaginations to reconstruct that of Yin Yu Tang.

A second issue with the comparative approach is that it creates an inherent paradox of "paralleling" and "othering." Studies of museums have consistently pointed out how the very act of juxtaposing two items "others" the differences between them with regard to race, gender, class, etc.[17] Apart from the obvious parallels in terms of class and business activity between the owners of the two houses, the differences between them — e.g., the unique lives and careers of merchants in the East and West and the dramatic differences between their respective cultures and levels of economic prosperity — inevitably create the trap of "exoticizing" the other. Realistically, while visitors may appreciate the furnishings as well as the manners and domestic spatial politics in these two houses, how can their juxtaposition not result in "exoticizing" Yin Yu Tang as a representation of the East? Or is reckoning with the unavoidability of this dilemma the only solution? Interestingly, while each PEM docent infuses the tour with his or her own understanding and personality, the institutional agenda is also in a constant interplay with the individual craft of curation.

My purpose here is not to question every step in the process of the project, but to reveal the politics of decision-making involved in it. The Yin Yu Tang project involves multivalent elements such as the personal, the institutional, the economic, and the cultural that dynamically interact and should not go unscrutinized. Although seemingly as intact as it was in Huang Cun, the Yin Yu Tang now standing at PEM has had its authenticity contested, its identity refash-

ioned, and its values pluralized. Its identity has been transformed from being a relatively simple expression of the Huang family's ancestral legacy to being an exhibited object that is supposed to represent Huizhou heritage, serve as an unwitting cultural ambassador, and provide evidence of PEM's crosscultural relationship with Asia and its continuing efforts to maintain a place at the forefront of heritage preservation. Each facet of this multilayered identity comes further into play in PEM's interpretive plan.

INTERPRETING YIN YU TANG: EXHIBITION AND ITS COMPETING NARRATIVES

In addition to providing a referential context for Yin Yu Tang, PEM resorts to the power of interpretation to demonstrate the significance of the relocation. To enhance the visitor experience, PEM employs traditional means such as a (self-)guided house tour, a gallery, brochures, and documentary films. Meanwhile, new media (such as online 3D models) reach out to make history meaningful in less traditional ways. I would now like to briefly demonstrate the dynamics between the various interpretative strategies. While PEM's multigenre interpretations seek to emphasize a central theme, "House, Family and History," that integrates the house's architecture with the lives of its generations of inhabitants and their interaction with larger social conditions, different parties involved in the project also voice their own agency.

Prior to embarking on the tour, initial visitor impressions of Yin Yu Tang come from PEM's general brochure describing its renowned collection of historic houses. Here, Yin Yu Tang is juxtaposed with three other houses of different periods: the John Ward House, the Crowninshield-Bentley House, and the Gardner-Pingree House. Interestingly, while pictures of the three New England houses show their facades, the photo of Yin Yu Tang shows only a typical corner of its wall and roof (FIG. 4). Consequently, visitors are immediately directed to a distinctive feature of Huizhou houses — their horsehead walls. This is a type of stepped wall that rises above the roof, creating a distinctive architectural profile with both ornamental and practical purposes.

Traditional Huizhou dwellings resemble fortresses from the outside, with tall, solid, whitewashed walls and small windows for ventilation and safety. Closed to the outside and open to the inside, such a house stands as a self-sufficient microcosm.

FIGURE 4. *The PEM brochure juxtaposes Yin Yu Tang with three other historic houses. Courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum.*

Since the austere facade and white exterior walls do not immediately reveal as much about the house as do the pictures of the other three houses, PEM's choice to emphasize Yin Yu Tang's horsehead walls effectively heightens the importance of this characteristic feature of the Huizhou dwelling. The importance of the horsehead wall to Huizhou architecture is also demonstrated in a separate Yin Yu Tang brochure. Here the image of the whitewashed exterior not only stands alone as the signature element of Yin Yu Tang, but it provides a background for four other pictures (FIG. 5). These show Huang Cun, an old photo of an earlier generation in the Huang family, the second story of the house structure, and the interior of one room. Together, these photos attempt to provide a snippet preview of the environment where Yin Yu Tang originated, of the Huang family, and of the architecture and everyday life of the house.

Before or after visitors enter the house, they may also visit the galleries related to it. In the Yin Yu Tang gallery's video room three short documentary films play in a loop: *Yin Yu Tang: A Chinese Home*; Guo *Nian: Passage into a New Year*; and *Guo Men: A Village Wedding*.[18] *Yin Yu Tang: A Chinese Home* captures the important moments during the transplantation effort and reflects on the revival of cultural legacy. Interestingly, discrepancies between macro and micro perspectives emerge throughout the narrative. A good case in point is the recording of a series of ceremonies conducted for Yin Yu Tang. In an early section, the filmmakers present a traditional Huizhou beam-raising ceremony, a practice which took place when the wood frame of a house was ready for the installation of the final ridge pole. The documentary shows a group of craftsmen burning incense and chanting auspicious words in dialect as they seek blessings from Lu Ban, the patron saint of Chinese contractors. To ensure smooth construction and blessings for future residents, the beam to be raised is partially covered with a red cloth and carries a few small "fortune bags" (*fudai*). During the ceremony, the chief craftsman measures and hammers the beam in a stylized fashion, asserting the suitability of the beam and offering thanks for the blessing of the deity.

On July 22, 2002, as the timber frame of Yin Yu Tang was being reerected, PEM conducted its own beam-raising ceremony to pay respect to Chinese cultural tradition. This pivotal moment is also chronicled as part of Yin Yu Tang's history in *A Chinese Home*. The film describes how the Chinese craftsmen and American contractors worked together meticulously to raise the beam, in the same fashion that the ritual was traditionally performed in Huizhou (FIG. 6). The filmmakers then insert shots that echo the character-defining details of the ceremony conducted in Huizhou to abridge the differences between the two temporalities and spaces. In this gesture of reproducing the ceremony, PEM exhibitors symbolize an inheritance and continuation of the tradition in Salem and successfully borrow an aura of "authority" and "authenticity."[19]

FIGURE 5. *A whitewashed horsehead wall serves as a background for the Yin Yu Tang brochure. Courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum.*

The film also records another important ceremony — that which took place when living Huang family members bid farewell to Yin Yu Tang. In July 1997, as Yin Yu Tang was about to be dismantled, members of the 35th generation of the Huang clan, including Huang Binggen, Huang Xiqi, and

FIGURE 6. *A beam-raising ceremony is performed at PEM in the same fashion as in Huizhou, as shown in the film* Yin Yu Tang: A Chinese Home. *Courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum.*

his son Huang Zhaofang, gathered to conduct the ceremony. As with many traditional rituals, only men were present. Their rhetoric in describing the importance of relocating Yin Yu Tang is quite interesting. As if engaging in a direct dialogue with them, the men thank the ancestors for their continuous blessings and explain the predicament faced by the current generation — that they can no longer afford to keep repairing Yin Yu Tang. The men then plead to be allowed to have Yin Yu Tang moved and tell the ancestors that by doing so their work will be preserved forever. The divergence in the narratives surrounding the significance of the project could not be clearer. On the one hand, PEM argues for the value of Yin Yu Tang in terms of crosscultural awareness and communication. On the other, the film makes it clear that to the Huang family the relocation is primarily valuable as a way to preserve their ancestral glory.[20] The juxtaposition exposes the discrepancy between the grand perspective of explicating cultural heritage and the private perspective of preserving family status.

Gendered voice is also heard in the second short film (*Guo Men*), which documents local wedding customs. The film begins with 96-year-old Huang Cui'e recalling one of her most private wedding-day experiences — being carried in a sedan chair to the groom's house.[21] Compared to *A Chinese Home*, which is told from the perspective of Yin Yu Tang's male descendants, *Guo Men* captures female perspectives on the social history of the Huizhou area. The film juxtaposes two local women's experiences from different times — Huang Cui'e's wedding in the 1920s and a young Huizhou woman's wedding in 1999. On the one hand, the film purposefully emphasizes the recurrence of certain details, such as the pairing of a hen and a rooster as an auspicious symbol of fertility, to show the continuation of tradition. On the other, the remodeled wedding suite and the modern-style furniture in the traditional house in the second wedding demonstrate how custom is constantly negotiated to account for contemporary lifestyles. By contrasting the two wedding recollections, the film conveys the deeply rooted yet ever changing nature of tradition.[22]

The carefully arranged self-guided house tour also highlights this intertwining of the micro (everyday practices) and macro (social-economic changes). The rooms and items that visitors see on this timed excursion integrate characteristics of Huizhou vernacular architecture and decorative art with Huang family history and a brief explication of China's nineteenth- and twentieth-century history. Also interesting is that while the owners of the other historic houses at PEM are long gone, leaving only their legacy for others to interpret, the previous inhabitants of Yin Yu Tang become co-curators of their lives. In other words, through the audio track that visitors are provided, they become both the subject and medium of interpretation.

The description of the main hall is a telling example. When visitors arrive here, the audio track (with interpretive narration available in both English and Mandarin) includes the chanting of a memorial essay from an ancestral worship ritual and the simulated sound of daily activities such as people chatting, moving around, and relaxing.[23] Visitors are thus encouraged to see how the main hall served both as a solemn public place for important family rituals and a casual space for everyday activities. The main hall also contains items bearing the imprint of a particular era — a speaker used for broadcasting propaganda during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and the portrait of Lei Feng (1940–1962), a socialist soldier-hero — and these items are called out in the spoken narration. In addition to the explanations provided by PEM staff, the audio track contains the voices of Huang family members, who recount their memories. For instance, visitors hear Huang Xiqi's personal recollections of childhood in this room, adding a layer of miscellaneous sensibility to the grand narrative.

Such stories combine personal and private family memories with the collective memory of cultural and social values to demonstrate the perennial yet changing roles of the main reception room. Indeed, throughout the self-guided tour of selected rooms and household items, PEM helps visitors experience the physical space of Yin Yu Tang, imagine quotidian life there, and understand the ethics and social and cultural values behind the lives of Huang family members over time.[24]

The various genres and means through which PEM has restored and reimagined the Huang family's domestic life and its interaction with larger historical events ultimately transform Yin Yu Tang from a singular dwelling into a matrix of living scholarship of Huizhou architectural, cultural and social legacies. The interpretations integrate powerful and compelling micro and macro views from the past. They

also reveal the gaps and fissures in the narratives surrounding otherwise homogeneous and timeless "heritage." Together, such efforts provide a panoramic view of the architecture, inhabitants and heirlooms in the house over the course of several generations. However, this has only been made possible by stripping the house of its original social context and transforming it into an object in a museum, exposed to the gaze of outsiders. Yin Yu Tang's history, constructed through interpretative narratives, is thus presented as a "lived" history that conforms to the established grand historiography of twentieth-century Chinese history. This naturally differs from the preservation of "living" history in Yin Yu Tang's home region, Huizhou. In particular, the deliberately choreographed traditional ceremonies included in explications of the house are imbued with an ersatz performative aura bespeaking the fact that the authenticity PEM constructs is actually a perfect simulation.

THE AFTERMATH OF YIN YU TANG: CHALLENGES OF PRESERVATION IN HUANG CUN

Experiences with Yin Yu Tang in Huang Cun before and after the relocation project reveal the ongoing challenges of preservation in the Huizhou area. This region holds the largest number of historic vernacular residences in China, yet their gradual deterioration, combined with fast-paced economic growth and the emergence of new housing typologies, poses a serious threat to their continued existence as evidence of the area's rich past.

The preservation of Huizhou houses can roughly be divided into two stages. In the 1980s the Anhui Province cultural authorities established the Qiankou Vernacular House Museum and relocated a number of severely endangered Huizhou houses from the Ming and Qing dynasties there. This practice, seemingly similar to PEM's, faced several difficulties, however. First, unlike the houses collected at PEM, which generally have only had to be moved a short distance and which blend well into Salem's natural landscape, the houses in the Qiankou Museum are walled in and disconnected from their context. Second, due to inadequate professional oversight and lack of financial assistance, the interpretative component of the Qiankou House Museum is extremely limited. Visitors may only benefit from the services of prearranged tour guides, with no other interpretative materials available. As Daniel Bluestone has noted, "material heritage is not understood and valued apart from an act of education and interpretation."[25] To visitors, therefore, especially those with no prior knowledge of Huizhou culture, the mere preservation of old houses in the Qiankou Museum offers no more than evidence of the physical existence of heritage, whose value is not effectively conveyed.

The preservation philosophy and strategy applied to Huizhou houses has significantly changed in the new millennium. Compared to the 1980s, the present conceptual framework emphasizes protecting and preserving the environmental and cultural ecology of material heritage. This has had two major outcomes. First, instead of the closed-in museum paradigm that focuses on saving individual houses, the new model emphasizes preserving the entirety of villages. Therefore, compared to previous state-led, elitist conservation practices, which arbitrarily determined what was (and what was not) worthy of preservation, the new model preserves a significantly larger range of houses and villages. Second, in addition to conserving the physical structures, the new model seeks to preserve and revive the intangible heritage.[26] In other words, instead of preserving selected houses as witnesses of a "lived" history, the new paradigm seeks to preserve integrated village-communities where not only the "bones and flesh" but also the "spirit and vigor" of a "living" history is inherited and revived.[27]

In November 2009 the Huangshan Municipality launched a Baicun Qianzhuang [Hundred Villages, Thousand Structures] project, aimed at identifying, conserving and reutilizing 1,065 Huizhou vernacular houses in 101 villages in two phases over five years.[28] In addition to top-down municipal investment, this project brought in funding from various nongovernmental sources (e.g., professional organizations, business associations, international funds, and private investors). It also aimed to change the scope of action from a singular state-led, short-term salvage campaign to a long-term effort to utilize village resources to ensure that future preservation becomes self-sustaining.

As part of the Baicun Qianzhuang campaign, the Huangshang Municipality initiated a new "adoptive-renting" mode of preservation assistance. Previously, benefactors could only assist the preservation effort by "donating" (financially contributing to the conservation of particular houses) or "purchasing" (obtaining title to a house or houses). The new mode allows an investor to contribute to the maintenance of a house together with its current owners according to a predetermined ratio (the investor usually pays the majority of the cost). This arrangement enables the owners to retain legal title to the conserved and renovated house, while it gives the investor certain rights of inhabitation and use. This mode has motivated more groups to participate in the campaign. Furthermore, the multiple use of houses encouraged by this program has gradually transformed a solely tourism-oriented activity into a more wide-ranging social-cultural program in keeping with the revitalization of entire villages.

Due to the Yin Yu Tang project, the Huang Cun preservation work during the Baicun Qianzhuang campaign has witnessed both general and unique achievements and challenges. Since it dates back to the Song dynasty, Huang Cun has a historicity comparable to that of other Huizhou villages. But the Yin Yu Tang project has bestowed it with certain characteristics that distinguish it from its peers. Huang Cun is also the site of Huang Cun Elementary School (1910) and

FIGURE 7. *After the relocation of Yin Yu Tang, a modern two-story house with horsehead walls was built on its original site in Huang Cun. New constructions like this are gradually changing the appearance of rural Huizhou villages. Photo by author.*

Jin Shi Di (1531).[29] Consequently, the village now advertises itself as "a thousand-year-old village, a hundred-year-old school, the home to Jin Shi Di, an international community" — a slogan that laudably connects the traditional with the modern, and the local with the international, by encapsulating the village's highlights.

However, the actual preservation and reutilization campaign has been far more complicated than suggested by the grand slogan. Huang Cun is caught in a dilemma similar to that faced by preservationists across rural China, where the conservation of the historic houses sometimes conflicts with their residents' desire to pursue the comfort and convenience offered by modern technology. A visit to Huang Cun a decade after the relocation is quite telling. After Yin Yu Tang was sold, a two-story modern house with horsehead walls was built on Yin Yu Tang's former site by another family **(FIG.7)**. Its faux, neotraditional detailing is a result of both the family's quest for up-to-date living conditions and the local government's mandate that new structures maintain traditional characteristics.

FIGURE 8. *The main hall of this house, similar to the hall in Yin Yu Tang, retains traces of both family and social history from the 1970s. However, the deteriorating structure has made the living condition less than desirable. Photo by author.*

My experience with a house similar to Yin Yu Tang in Huang Cun is also revealing. Built in the 1920s, this house is not considered "old" or "valuable" enough for officials to compensate the family for ceding ownership to the government. Yet, since it is part of a village under conservation, its owners are prohibited from remodeling it or replacing it with a new home. Moreover, since it is this family's only residence, they cannot let it be "adoptive-rented" by a third-party. Thus, as much as its owner sympathizes with the cause of salvaging the house and preserving its cultural heritage, its worn-down condition has made the idea of tearing it down appealing. For individual families like this, the discrepancy between the grand discourse and national cause of preservation and actual less-than-desirable living conditions is a central fact of everyday existence **(FIG.8)**.

In addition to the lack of adequate financial support for the maintenance of private houses, great difficulties have emerged in historic villages with regard to maintaining public spaces and commonly owned properties such as ancestral halls, shrines, and decorated stone archways. These structures, whose ownership is not identified with any specific

FIGURE 9. *(above). A billboard at the entrance to Huang Cun reads "Huang Cun — Famous Cultural-Historical Village of China." However, such attempts to develop a tourist economy are belied by the admission office across the street, which has been abandoned. Photo by author.*

FIGURE 10. *(below). Transportation conditions to Huizhou villages are crucial to their success as tourist destinations. The red banner and the roadside brick piles indicate that Huang Cun is working to improve its accessibility. Photo by author.*

individual or organization, have now largely been left to deteriorate. It is ironic that the deeply rooted clan culture that used to hold the village together has now become a problem for preservation efforts. Meanwhile, gaps in relevant legal frameworks have also been foregrounded through this clash between communal culture and institutional mechanisms.

As an extension of the Yin Yu Tang project, PEM has contributed significantly to the conservation of two other houses, Jin Shi Di and Zhong Xian Di, both built during the Kangxi reign. The local cultural authority in Huang Cun erected a stone plaque with a memorial inscription to commemorate the restoration of Jin Shi Di. Interestingly, instead of explicitly pointing out that the restoration was part of the Yin Yu Tang cultural exchange project, the inscription indicates that an "anonymous American friend who was enchanted with Huizhou culture" donated money for the preservation — rhetoric reminiscent of the Confucian cultural cosmopolitism of cherishing men from afar.

Work at these two houses has included remodeling bedrooms at Zhong Xian Di with modern facilities to allow the house to be used to accommodate scholars and students from the United States who come to Huang Cun as an extension of the Yin Yu Tang cultural-exchange experience.[30] The international visibility that Yin Yu Tang has brought to Huang Cun has also jumpstarted Huang Cun's tourist economy. However, this effort is largely the same as that in other Huizhou villages, and this similarity has become an issue. In particular, numerous villages in Huizhou are now trying to replicate the success of Xidi and Hong Cun at attracting international visitors since these two villages were recognized as World Heritage Sites in 2000. The relatively remote location of Huang Cun and the poor access to it by road also pose significant challenges to tourist activities there **(FIGS. 9, 10)**.

Photos capturing the visits of U.S. scholars and students to Huang Cun are today hung on the walls of Zhong Xian Di. However, long stretches of inactivity, coupled with Huang Cun's damp climate, have caused mold to grow on them. The lack of attention and sustained activity raises important sustainability issues regarding the cultural exchange program, especially after the completion of a major project **(FIG. 11)**.

A NEW DIRECTION?

Perhaps ironically, while the other Huizhou villages are known for what is there, following the transplantation of Yin Yu Tang, Huang Cun is increasingly known for what is no longer there. As resettled in PEM, Yin Yu Tang is no longer occupied. Meanwhile, many houses conserved on their original sites are still inhabited, and they are expected to continue to offer functional accommodation to their residents.

To explore a new perspective on heritage preservation where "lived" and "living" history converge, PEM has recently cooperated with scholars and architects to experiment with strategies for preserving architectural traditions that ensure that houses continue to be part of local everyday life. One

FIGURE 11. *Photos recording visits by U.S. scholars and students to Huang Cun are hung in Zhong Xian Di. Huizhou's damp climate, coupled with long stretches of inactivity has allowed mold spots to appear on the photos. Photo by author.*

such project is a continuation of the Yin Yu Tang project, a joint effort of PEM and the Xiuning County authorities called Xin Yin Yu Tang [New Yin Yu Tang]. It explores ways to combine the traditional Huizhou residence with the convenience and ecological advantages of modern technology. The model house that the Xin Yin Yu Tang project envisions in Huang Cun will not be a replica of any existing traditional dwelling; nor will it be a modern structure decorated with Huizhou architectural characteristics. Instead, it will be an "organic" combination that draws upon the Huizhou traditional view of human habitation in combination with architectural features that promote ecological sustainability.[31] As such, it may provide a new direction, one that offers both to revive heritage and give new connotations to tradition.

REFERENCE NOTES

1. This article benefitted tremendously from a July 2012 interview with Dr. Nancy Berliner at PEM. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Dr. Berliner for taking time to discuss the Yin Yu Tang project, and to PEM for their hospitality and support during my research. Dr. Berliner's recollections about her visit to Huang Cun and her encounters with the Huang family have also been recorded in the CCTV documentary film *Liang and Lin*, which details the lives and careers of Liang Sicheng (1901–1972) and Lin Huiyin (1904–1955), the famous Chinese architect and architectural historian couple.
2. Dating back to a prefecture of the Song dynasty (960–1279), Huizhou comprises the southernmost part of Anhui Province together with Wuyuan County in northeastern Jiangxi Province. But today Huizhou is as much a cultural concept as a geographical reference, just as Jiangnan is used to refer to the lower Yangtze delta.
3. Carol Brash's paper "Classical Chinese Gardens in Twenty-First Century America: Cultivating the Past" provides a detailed list of the current and proposed classical Chinese gardens in the United States. See *Asianetwork Exchange*, Vol.19.1 (Fall, 2011), pp.18–19.
4. "Report on Research," in E. Avrami, R. Mason, and M. de la Torre, eds., *Value and Heritage Conservation* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2000), p.6.
5. In her review of Berliner's book *Yin Yu Tang: The Architecture and Daily Life of a Chinese House*, Cecilia Chu pointed out that questions regarding the politics behind the Yin Yu Tang project, such as "Who does the project benefit?" are left unanswered. See *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.16 No.2 (2005), pp.93–94.
6. Even though Yin Yu Tang was the Huang family's property, the transaction of "selling" it to a foreign institute needed government approval. Reports of this project in the Chinese media have reiterated that the Huang family voluntarily "denoted" the house to the local government, only requiring a symbolic compensation. According to Nancy Berliner, the Huang family was well compensated, even though she cannot reveal the exact amount.
7. A detailed timeline of the Yin Yu Tang project is available at http://www.pem.org/sites/yinyutang/project.html.
8. From the Astor Court to the Garden of Flowing Fragrance, each classical Chinese construction project takes tremendous pride in the participation of Chinese craftsmen and the incorporation of traditional techniques. Documentary films such as *Ming Garden* (on Astor Court) and *The Creation of Portland's Classical Chinese Garden* (on Portland, Oregon's, Lan Su Garden) and books such as June Li's *Another World Lies Beyond: Creating Liu Fang Yuan, the Huntington Chinese Garden* provide valuable images and texts in this regard.
9. More details regarding the creative solutions that PEM came up with to adjust to the new circumstances can be found in N. Berliner, J. Lewandoski, and C. Palazzo, "Yin Yu Tang: A Moment in the Preservation Process of an Eighteenth Century Huizhou Residence," *Orientations*, Vol.31 No.1 (January 2000), p.58; the documentary film *Yin Yu Tang: A Chinese Home* (Salem: Peabody Essex Museum, 2003); and John G. Waite Associates, Architects, *Yin Yu Tang: Preserving Chinese Vernacular Architecture* (Albany, NY: Mount Ida Press, 2003).
10. The Yin Yu Tang project was the first of its kind to have preservation guidelines

peer-reviewed by a multidisciplinary committee prior to the reassembly. Such guidelines established project parameters and detailed how the objectives, procedures and significance of the project were envisioned and theorized. The guidelines required that all interventions be reversible so that they did not preclude future preservation efforts. The full Yin Yu Tang Re-erection and Preservation Guidelines are available at PEM's website: http://www.pem.org/sites/yinyutang/preservation.html.

11. Meeting the seismic building codes of different states has been a common challenge when re-creating traditional Chinese structures. Each project has had to come up with creative solutions. In Portland's Lan Su Garden, for instance, each column was drilled through to insert steel rods to strengthen the pillars and support the heavy roof. In Santa Monica's Liu Fang Yuan, wood was wrapped on the outside of the steel structure to simulate the look of a wood column.

12. For a picture demonstrating the structure, see Waite Associates, *Yin Yu Tang*, p.19.

13. Nowadays, these historic properties spread across three city blocks of PEM's main campus. Interestingly, because Yin Yu Tang has been dismantled and reassembled, it is considered a new building by local authorities, instead of a historic one. Hence, it has had to comply with the guidelines and regulations of the State Building Code of Massachusetts. See Waite Associates, *Yin Yu Tang*, p.5.

14. In this case, after it was built in the early 1800s, the Gardner-Pingree House was home to some of Salem's most prosperous families before being given to PEM by the Pingree family. In contrast, Yin Yu Tang remained the property of the Huang family for its entire existence before being sold to PEM.

15. In addition to these two tours, PEM features a tour of its Salem house collection titled "Shelter to Showpiece: Three Centuries of Salem Architecture and Design." Please refer to PEM's webpages for details regarding these three tours: http://www.pem.org/visit/tours.

16. Bonnie Burnham, president of the World Monuments Fund, raised this thorny preservation issue, comparing Yin Yu Tang's exhibition at the museum with the experience "when Americans disassembled huge wings of important European houses and brought them back." See T. Rozhon, "Moving House, With 2,000 Chinese Parts," *New York Times*, February 22, 2001.

17. See, for example, S. Crane, *Museums and Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), p.3.

18. The three documentary films are directed by Richard Gordon and Carma Hinton, a documentary filmmaker and Professor of Visual Culture and Chinese Studies at George Mason University. Raised by American parents in China, Hinton has the perspective of both an "outsider" and an "insider" when it comes to recording Chinese traditions. The short films are also available on the DVD, *Yin Yu Tang: A Chinese Home*.

19. The museum's appreciation of and respect for Chinese culture is displayed through the entire process of the reerection. For example, the orientation of Yin Yu Tang and the other houses in Huang Cun demonstrates both the influence of traditional *feng-shui* ideas and the compromises made for practical reasons. In Chinese tradition, it is most preferable for houses to face south to maximize sunlight and receive *yang* energy. However, Yin Yu Tang (and many other houses in Huang Cun) actually faced north to avoid the blockage caused by the hills on the south part of the village. To be faithful to its original orientation, Yin Yu Tang was erected facing north at PEM, just as it was in Huang Cun.

20. On Yin Yu Tang's website, the reflection of 35th-generation Huang family member Huang Binggen, who now lives in Shanghai, is directly juxtaposed with the museum's grand agenda. Huang Binggen concedes "[This] arrangement is the best solution for preserving the house. It's actually a big favor for us descendants. We can preserve the house forever, and it will help us to remember that our ancestors had glorious achievements and that we must keep forging ahead ourselves and make progress in our own careers."

21. Berliner's *The Architecture and Daily Life of a Chinese House* also records this interview with Huang Cui'e on pp.23–24.

22. The third short film, *Guo Nian: Passage into a New Year*, features the same theme. By demonstrating how customs related to New Year celebrations are continuous yet changing, it defies the view of Chinese cultural tradition as monolithic and timeless.

23. Other annual traditional ceremonies are also performed at Yin Yu Tang. Every year during the Chinese Spring Festival, for instance, the ancestral portraits would be hung in the main reception hall and offered tribute, just as a family member recalled in their oral history.

24. As in the *Yin Yu Tang* documentary, the selection of rooms on the tour also takes into consideration the role of women in a Chinese family. When visitors are on the first floor, their attention is directed to a faded "double happiness" (*shuangxi*) poster on a bedroom door. From there, a daughter-in-law's duty is pictured. On the second floor, visitors are introduced to the room above the reception hall, which was used by women to pay worship to Guanyin (the Buddhist deity of Great Mercy and Compassion) and play mahjong. In addition to their traditional roles, women's education is also discussed. Huang Zhenzhi's wife — Wang Yaozhen (1908–1994) was one of the very few literate women in this household. Through her and Huang Cui'e's recollections of their school experiences, visitors get to see how women's roles and spatial practices changed over time. Another aspect emphasized through the tour is the influence of the larger socioeconomic situation on Yin Yu Tang. On the second floor, visitors see the wedding room for Huang Zhenzhi (1909–1941). It was luxuriously decorated with a European mirror and multicolored, flowered wallpaper that his father, Huang Zixian (c.1878–1929), brought back for his wedding. This becomes a window for visitors to see into the interaction of a Huizhou merchant family and the socioeconomic situation of China in the early twentieth century.

25. D. Bluestone, "Challenges for Heritage Conservation and the Role of Research on Values," in Avrami, Mason, and de la Torre, eds., *Value and Heritage Conservation*, p.66.

26. One prominent demonstration of this change is that in 2008 Huizhou wenhua shengtai baohu qu [Huizhou Cultural Ecology Preservation District] was established and recognized as a national preservation zone.

27. This is what Wang Fuhong, the secretary of a municipal party committee, summarized in his report of the Baicun qianzhuang project.

28. Information on the Baicun Qianzhuang project comes from an unpublished booklet compiled by the Huangshan Municipal Government. Announcements and reports are also available on the government's website, http://www.huangshan.gov.cn/topic/Default.aspx?SpecialId=10011.

29. Originated as an old-style private school for the Huang clan in 1910, Huang Cun Elementary School later became one of the first elementary schools to adopt the standards of modern education in China, a development that is recognized as a milestone in modern Chinese education history. Jin Shi Di was built by Huang Fu, a *jinshi* (metropolitan graduate in the imperial civil service examination) from Huang Cun around 1531. It is now the most ancient and well-conserved architecture in Huang Cun.

30. The agreement between PEM and Huang Cun has brought scholars and students from American institutions such as Northeastern University and Boston University to Huang Cun for field research and cultural excursions since 2006.

31. During a visit to Huang Cun in the summer of 2012, I obtained some unpublished materials regarding the Xin Yin Yu Tang project from the local cultural authority. Most of my information about this project is derived from these materials.

Field Report

Architecture of the Adelaide Mosque: Hybridity, Resilience and Assimilation

M. MIZANUR RASHID AND KATHARINE BARTSCH

This report describes a little-known and inadequately documented facet of the Islamic diaspora in Australia: its architectural legacy. Mosques were first built in Australia by Muslim camel drivers brought there in the nineteenth century to assist in exploring and developing its vast outback. The little work that has been done on this population so far has mostly focused on socio-cultural and anthropological issues. However, by exploring the origins and early use of the Adelaide mosque, we argue that a more comprehensive study is needed of the other small mosques that were once scattered around the outback. With their diverse, hybrid forms, these structures provide the only tangible evidence of the material culture of this early immigrant group. They call attention both to its resilience and drive to assimilate and to the need for a new theoretical framework for understanding Islamic architecture.

The first group of Muslim camel drivers was brought to Australia in 1860 to help in the exploration and development of its remote central regions. In the decades that followed their number increased on a regular basis, and by the beginning of the twentieth century there were around 4,000 Muslims in Australia. This population included camel drivers and people with related professions, who came mainly from Afghanistan and different parts of British India. Although collectively referred to as "cameleers," or "Afghans," they were in fact a rather loosely defined group, representing a number of different ethnicities.

As time passed and the periods of their contracts expired, some within this population saved their money and returned to their homelands. But others remained and gradually settled down, ending their nomadic lives by mingling and intermarrying with the local population. As the first Muslims in colonial Australia, this group struggled to establish its identity by constructing structures for prayers. Currently, a handful of buildings and tombstones located widely across the vast continent are the only traces of this early "Muslim" presence. For many present-day Australians, as well as many Muslims, they provide the only evidence of this blurred and elusive phenomenon in the history of Australian civilization.

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In 1920, according to a summary of replies from Customs Authorities and from A.H. Pritchard, secretary of the Australo-Indian Society, to a query from the Department of External Affairs, there were some seven permanent mosques in Western Australia, the greatest number in any Australian state.[1] In other states the mentionable mosques were the Adelaide mosque and two mosques in Hergott Springs (Marree) in South Australia, the Broken Hill mosque in New South Wales, and the Holland Park mosque in Queensland. While little trace of many of these structures remains, some were once among the most distinguished features of early colonial settlements.

The Adelaide city mosque is a good example. While mosques (as well as other non-Christian religious buildings) have become increasingly normal features of the expanding suburbs of multicultural Australia, its construction in 1889 marked a significant achievement by Australia's early Muslim community. Yet, among many Adelaide residents of European background, this atypical building was known as the "Afghan Chapel," and its imam as the "Mohammedan Priest." Such lack of awareness of Islam indicated the marginal position of this small community, financially and politically cornered within Australian civil society.

In terms of its planning and design, the Adelaide mosque, with its hybrid features, appeared in striking contrast to the colonial townscape. For this reason it is now listed as a heritage building. Yet little work has been done to understand its architecture or that of other early Australian mosques. Such buildings represented a particular time and material culture, and reflected the value system of the people who built them, their social status, resilience, and drive to assimilate. Most importantly, they attested to these people's need to create an imaginary parallel to spaces they had known in their home countries. It is necessary to read this architecture as a text to appreciate their lives in a foreign and apparently hostile land.

THE HISTORICAL QUESTION

According to the official heritage guide to Adelaide, the city's historic mosque is "one of the few relics of Afghan immigration to South Australia and embodies in built form Afghan and Mohammedan culture which is otherwise not significantly represented."[2] Is it possible, assuming that architecture is a valid representation of a people, to reconstruct or fill in the missing cultural history of cameleers in Australia from such scant built evidence? And what does such a mosque, with its hybrid characteristics, say about Islamic culture and the spatial concepts of first-generation Muslims in an alien land?

This report attempts to interpret the transient trace of Islam in colonial Australia through its limited tangible remains. From the point of view of architecture, it attempts to discern the different historical layers that overlapped and fused to shape the design of early mosques. And, from the point of view of settlement history, it examines these mosques as evidence of qualities inherent to the Islamic diaspora. It is important to ask how the spatial concepts of Muslim migrants were realized in a non-Muslim environment. In this sense, the mosques need to be seen as a record of the resilience and compromises made by this early Muslim population.

This report also contends that such examples, which have largely been left out of the historical record, raise questions about gaps, or histories untold, as well as myths received, in histories of "Islamic" architecture. Few studies have focused on the architecture of Muslim communities in regions such as Australia where Islam was not the predominant faith. And it is in this regard that the hybridized form of the Adelaide mosque (which was recently measured and documented by the principal author[3]) provides an important counterpoint to historical confabulations that champion selective, supposedly authentic, largely Arab-centric (and possibly mythologized) forms of "Islamic" architecture, or that privilege the dynastic marvels of imperial patrons. This report argues, then, that a new theoretical framework is required to interpret architectural hybrids like the Adelaide mosque. We argue that such structures should be seen as typical rather than exceptional, and as no less important, despite their antipodean locale, than representations of the faith elsewhere.

THE HYBRID COMMUNITY AND ITS ARCHITECTURE

The celebration of hybrid design in "Islamic" architecture, or indeed the hybridity of Muslim communities, is a recent phenomenon. For example, pluralism and hybridity were key themes in the 2013 cycle of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (AKAA).[4] However, interest in this concept goes back to at least the 2007 cycle. In the opening essay to *Intervention Architecture*, which featured the winning entries in the tenth cycle of the award, the AKAA jurist and postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha identified an "ethic of global relatedness that reflects the ideals of a pluralist *umma* at the heart of Muslim societies which is repeatedly celebrated by the cycle of awards."[5]

In the same publication, the British-Iranian architect Farshid Moussavi made a case for hybrid or cosmopolitan identities with reference to the winning projects. These were perceived as expressing a postnational condition resulting from processes of globalization:

> *Through their cosmopolitan societies Cairo, Leeds, Istanbul and Kuala Lumpur are being drawn ever closer together. Hybrid identities and cultures are emerging through the "intersection and combination" of identities with other identities (Ulrich Beck), which then determines social integration. Cosmopolitanism is generated through hybridity and the transformation that arises from new and unexpected combinations of cultures and ideas. Unlike Universalist ideas that enforce one vision of reality, cosmopolitanism is avowedly pluralist.*[6]

Moussavi presented this stance as in contradistinction to the standard historiography of "Islamic" architecture:

> *As opposed to starting from an imagined whole (as is the case with stylistic approaches), the whole is grown out of the hybridisation of the parts, akin to the way hybrid identities evolve in individuals. Hybridisation transforms fixed architectural categories and unleashes possibilities for architectural experimentation.*[7]

These essays by Bhabha and Moussavi focused on contemporary buildings and landscapes located within the traditional geographical band of the Islamic world: Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Malaysia, etc. In this sense, Moussavi's perception of hybridity (also endorsed by the award committee) corresponds to a positive and celebratory discursive shift also identified by the anthropologists Deborah Kapchan and Pauline Turner Strong. As they wrote in 1999, Viktor Turner noted as early as 1982 that "what was once considered 'contaminated,' 'promiscuous,' 'impure' [was] becoming the focus of postmodern analytical attention."[8] Such derogatory appellations of hybridity had long been identified with representations of Islamic architecture from Istanbul to Lucknow.

What this report attempts to document, however, is that architectural hybridization is not limited to postcolonial cities, or, as Moussavi argued, to the postnational condition. It is a phenomenon that has gone hand in hand with the mobility characteristic of the emergence and diffusion of Islam, the submission to Islam by peoples of different cultural backgrounds, and the mobility of Muslims whether for purposes of the Hajj, fulfillment of knowledge, missionary work, ambassadorial exchange, or travel for the sake of curiosity.[9]

To make this argument, it helps to reflect on a definition of hybridity and the antecedent concept of symbiosis, and to draw parallels between architecture and language. In *The Cassell Concise Dictionary*, "hybrid" is defined as follows:

> *Hybrid* a. *1 (*Biol.*) produced by the union of two distinct species, varieties etc. 2 mongrel, cross-bred. 3 heterogeneous. 4 derived from incongruous sources.* n. *1 an animal or plant produced by the union of two distinct species, varieties etc. 2 anything composed of heterogeneous parts or elements. 3 a word compounded from elements from different languages. 4 (*offensive*) a person of mixed racial origin. 5 a mongrel.*[10]

Putting aside well-rehearsed nineteenth-century definitions of hybrid architecture as "contaminated," "promiscuous" or "impure," this report interprets the hybrid as a heterogeneous union akin to that produced when creativity or experimentation leads to a new word being compounded from elements of different languages. Importantly, we also argue that such unions may be plural.

In applying this interpretation of hybridity to architecture, Julio Bermudez and Robert Hermanson identified the human body as a hybrid whose healthy functioning depends on symbiotic relationships that defy clear-cut dualist differentiations. Architecture similarly oscillates, "between a call to express our time and a call to creatively resist it. Rather than taking a side, we suggest considering the 'hybrid' and 'symbiotic' as mutually compatible, yet paradoxical states that offer architecture further choice and evolution."[11]

Symbiosis, defined as "a mutually beneficial relationship between people, things or groups," can thus be seen as preceding hybridity.[12] According to Kisho Kurokawa, it implies a relationship where there may still be competition, opposition and struggle, but where common elements and values keep the interaction going. As the one-time Japanese metabolist further pointed out, "the concept of symbiosis is basically a dynamic pluralism. It does not seek to reconcile binomial opposites through dialectics. . . ."[13] Instead, a plural and polyvalent process emerges whereby hybridity and symbiosis can be perceived as the generators of creative and dynamic historical processes which shape diverse morphological outcomes.

From the outset, then, it is necessary to understand the underlying diversity of Afghan and Mohammedan culture referred to as singular in the City of Adelaide Heritage Study. In fact, the cameleers were tribesmen from Afghanistan and the Northwest Frontier Province of British India who belonged to four main ethnic groups: Pashtun, Baluchi, Sindhi and Punjabi. Each group was culturally and linguistically different from the others, and while Islam had been introduced into the region between the seventh and tenth centuries (and so provided a common bond), faith within each group was ". . . blended with local custom such as the Pashtun code of honour, the *Pashtunwali*."[14] The original camel men who came to Australia were also later joined by Indian hawkers and merchants. Arriving from Karachi, Peshawar, Baluchistan, the Punjab and Bengal, they traveled across the Australian countryside, offering their merchandise for sale to people living in remote transit and rest stations and mining camps. These men were in turn supplied by wholesale merchants, who opened small shops in the towns and cities.

With the progress of time, these people, coming from very different parts of British India, formed the first Muslim communities in Australia. Yet, in the eyes of Eurocentric Australian society, they were all "cameleers" or "Afghans." Such racial stereotyping should not obscure in retrospect the diverse origins of the early Muslims, or the fact that their language and customs became increasingly hybrid through cohabitation and intermarriage with indigenous women, or with European women who had been marginalized for various reasons from Anglo-Australian society.[15] Nor should it appear surprising that this group would also chose a hybridized architecture to represent their religious convictions.

MATERIALIZING SHARED VALUES

> *O People who Believe! When the call for prayer is given on [Friday] the day of congregation, rush towards the remembrance of Allah and stop buying and selling; this is better for you if you understand. And when the prayer ends, spread out in the land and seek Allah's munificence, and profusely remember Allah, in the hope of attaining success.*[16]

These verses from the holy *Qur'an* aptly describe the life a Muslim should live and how it should be integrated with religious pursuit. The majority of early camel drivers were practicing Muslims, and they never forgot the customs and religious traditions of their homelands. However, the sense of community that Islam provided in these homelands was largely absent in their early years in Australia. According to Peter Scriver,

> *. . . the men were typically engaged on limited term contracts that did not allow for women or children to accompany them to Australia. Many of them therefore worked and lived communally as a brotherhood of fellow cameleers, observing strict religious and related* halal *dietary practices that tended to discourage significant social interaction with others.*[17]

Instead, the men usually adopted an itinerant mode of dwelling. As they moved around the Australian outback, they camped along camel trails, resting between journeys in semipermanent settlements, so-called "Ghantowns," on the fringes of emerging colonial cities. Compared to white Australian society their numbers were also small, and without a permanent place to claim for themselves they could easily seem to disappear.

Initially, there were also no mosques to provide a sense of belonging. Daily prayers were performed in the desert or in empty bushland, while in more established settlements a special room might be set aside in someone's house to serve as a place of prayer. But as the number of Muslims in Australia increased, an overwhelming need arose to build mosques. Along with the formation of Ghantowns on the edges of colonial settlements, mosques in remote transit centers like Marree (Hergott Springs) and gold-mining camps such as Coolgardie were the first instances of places that concretized a sense of community for this small and isolated group **(FIG. 1)**.

Although not of any particular architectural style, these structures were the only places the cameleers could claim for themselves in this unfamiliar society. They were typically made of mud and corrugated iron, in the tradition of other self-built vernacular buildings in British India **(FIGS. 2–4)**. Yet, despite these undistinguished qualities, they provided not only space for prayers but also a focus for social life. As such, they became nodal points in the wandering culture of the cameleers, "places" for gathering and celebrating religious events together. According to Hanifa Dean,

FIGURE 1. *The earliest mosque in Marree. The different styles of turban worn by the worshippers indicate their different tribes. State Library of South Australia B15341.*

> *The highlights of the year were the celebrations for* Eid ul-Fitr*, marking the end of Ramadan (the month of fasting), and* Eid ul-Adha*, 90 days later. According to Islam, fasting should not be undertaken while travelling, so the men would cease working and join together during Ramadan. At the end of the 30 days, during which no food, water or tobacco could pass their lips from sunrise to sunset, the men would enjoy the Eid-ul-Fitr celebration. On festival days there was no loneliness, just plenty of food, laughter, smiles and stories as they lounged around, feasting and enjoying each other's company.*[18]

Although used only at certain times of the year, such as when the cameleers returned from expeditions or from supply trips to the mining camps, these mosques provided the sense of an imaginary homeland. A mosque was crucial because it was the only way for them to establish a presence of their own in an unfamiliar society. It was for this reason that community leaders in Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane went to great effort in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to secure land and raise funds to build more permanent structures.

In the late 1880s, after failing to obtain government support to secure land, Muslims in Adelaide took the initiative to build such a mosque. Haji Mullah Mehrban, the local Afghan leader, was the initial driving force behind this effort.[19] However, with the financial support of the Afghan community in Adelaide, it was another leader, Abdul Wade, who actually purchased the land at 20 Little Gilbert Street from a European settler.[20] The plot was in the far southwest corner of the Adelaide city grid. At the time there were few other buildings in the area, only large paddocks where the cameleers grazed their camels. Its location was thus further evidence of the marginal status of this group in colonial society.

Wade was the rightful owner of the mosque from 1890 to 1920, and during this time it became a place of identity for the Muslims of Adelaide and other parts of South Australia. As evidence of its importance as a place of respite for the roaming camel drivers, a residence or guest house was soon constructed beside it.

FIGURE 2. *The isolated tin mosque outside Marree town. National Archive of Australia: M914, SOUTH AUSTRALIA 3506.*

FIGURE 3. *The tin mosque of Broken Hill. Photo by Katharine Bartsch.*

FIGURE 4. *A typical house in Ghantown, showing how little difference there was with early mosques in terms of architectural expression. National Archives of Australia, M914, SOUTH AUSTRALIA 3504.*

Although there is no record of the actual process of its construction, it is highly unlikely that Afghans built the mosque themselves. Nonetheless, there must have been a considerable amount of communication with a local builder, who would have had no prior experience with such a structure.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF ASSIMILATION

The narrative of the Adelaide mosque provides tangible evidence of the gradual assimilation of Muslims. Its transformation, alteration and extension related directly to their status in Australian society. The form itself demonstrates the pluralistic and hybrid nature of the early Muslim community and their aspiration to assimilate. Situated today on a small back street in the southwest quarter of downtown Adelaide, the mosque began as a humble stone and brick structure, as shown in the accompanying drawing **(FIG. 5)**.

In terms of its architecture, the mosque was a simple rectangular building (approximately 12 by 7.5 meters in size) made of unadorned bluestone masonry with a simple hipped roof, a typical feature of Adelaide architecture. The building was thus similar in scale and construction to adjacent residential buildings. A street-facing *mihrab* and arched windows and doorways were its only distinguishing features. However, the building also provided an imaginary parallel to a typical South Asian mosque. Its main prayer hall was entered through a verandah, and its compound included a small walled garden on the east with a rectangular tank for ablution. This little prayer space clearly signaled the intention of the early Muslims to claim a place — a foothold — in an alien land.

On the Indian subcontinent (including present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh), the legacy of mosque building goes back many centuries under Mughal and pre-Mughal Muslim rule. Early Muslim migrants to Australia would thus have had preconceived ideas about appropriate forms.[21] But these would have been difficult to realize with limited funds, inexpert labor, and unfamiliar resources. Nevertheless, the Adelaide mosque did represent an attempt to maintain the basic morphology of the South Asian

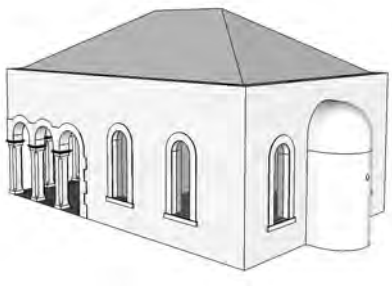

FIGURE 5. *Reconstructed image of the Adelaide mosque following its initial construction in 1891. Drawing by Mizanur Rashid.*

mosque. This included the transition of spaces from exterior to interior. A place for ablution was also provided, and strategies were employed to mitigate the extreme heat.

The description of the mosque in 1915 by a visitor, Sayed Jalal Shah, seems a bit exaggerated, but it captures the aspirations of the mosque users and their desire to emulate mosques on the subcontinent. Jalal Shah wrote that the mosque contained "a basin in the yard for ablutions and a garden with fig trees and vineyard." He further reported that "£500 was currently being raised to build a madrasa [school] for the instruction of the children of [the] growing Muslim community."[22]

For the next decade the Adelaide mosque served as a place of gathering and bonding for the loosely structured community of Muslims working throughout the central and eastern interior of Australia (FIG. 6). Visits by individual cameleers to this urban mosque were infrequent because of the distances involved and the itinerant nature of their work; however, the mosque provided a place of rest and retreat from their expeditions, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan. It gradually also became the social hub for the cameleers during intervals between journeys — as well as for Muslims who settled in the city.

With time, some Muslims became integrated into Australian society, adopting different professions, even if they were not entitled to the status of lawful citizens. And as a symbolic expression of their struggle to assimilate, attempts were constantly made to upgrade the mosque. Thus, in 1891 it was painted, and in 1903–1905 minarets were added at its four corners at the cost of £250 — quite a sum compared to the meager income of a cameleer at that time (FIGS. 7, 8). The chimney-like minarets were approximately 20 meters tall and recalled the distinctive profile of North Indian, Afghan, or even Turkish precedents. Because the cameleers had little or no experience in such construction, it is likely that mosque

FIGURE 6. *Elders of the Muslim community gather in front of the ablution tank and fountain after the prayer. State Library of South Australia B 7286.*

FIGURE 7. *A 1930 photograph of the mosque showing its verandah and four minarets. Australian National Archive, Canberra.*

FIGURE 8. *The Adelaide mosque in 1964. State Library of South Australia B 21920.*

patrons hired a local mason to build the minarets. Thus, while their distinctive profile suggests non-Australian roots, the use of customized bull-nosed brick suggests they were erected by local bricklayers experienced in the construction of freestanding industrial chimneys, many of which were being built in and around Adelaide at the time. It is perhaps for this reason that these minarets do not segregate it from its surroundings; rather, they create a dialogue between the Adelaide townscape and the mosque. It is clear the minarets were not intended to segregate the little Muslim community, but to allow it to define its identity while becoming more deeply rooted in the locale.

Until 1915 donations from the cameleers allowed the mosque grounds to be complemented with a garden, vineyard and fountains. According to Sayed Jalal Shah, the mosque cost the camel men around £3000, plus the £500 raised to build the madrasa.[23] Gradually, however, the significance of the mosque changed to reflect the changing status of local Muslims. According to Christine Stevens, the mosque no longer served only as "a meeting place for the cameleers, a place to exchange religious, economic and political views, to discuss contracts and to be with Muslim compatriots, safe for a time from prevailing spiritual and racial intolerance."[24] It also became a locus for the aspirations of local Muslims and their future as a community.

Of course, the Adelaide mosque still provided a spatial refuge for visiting cameleers and remained a place where they did not have to endure the degradation and inconvenience of being "colored" in colonial society. The erection of a high, fortress-like boundary wall might thus be seen as an effort to provide additional security and safety. But the mosque was also a place that expressed the hope of being settled in local society. Many of the old cameleers left the dispersed Ghantowns toward the end of their lives and retreated to cottages near the mosque to pass the rest of their lives near this symbol of their homeland. This might be one reason the Muslim community managed to gather enough money from their meager incomes to build it. Regardless of its small size and hybrid features, the Adelaide mosque provided a multivalent space and institution for Muslim society.

FIGURE 9. *The transformation of the Adelaide mosque through time. Drawing by the authors.*

CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS

The camel era eventually ended between the World Wars with the arrival of trucks and improved roads, and most of the cameleers were forced to return to their original lands. Those few who remained mostly clung to the margins of white society, living humble, impecunious lives in Ghantowns or near the mosque.[25] For a number of years thereafter, the mosque was only sparsely used, until a new wave of Muslim migrants began to arrive in Australia after 1950. Faced with the need to serve this increasing population, the Adelaide mosque received another major renovation in 1978. This involved the integration of the verandah and the main chamber to create a larger prayer hall and the addition of an interior mezzanine over the verandah for women (FIGS. 9, 10).

With the original Afghan or cameleer population having died out, the mosque and its neighborhood are now the center for new groups of Muslim migrants. Most patrons of the mosque today are either students, who have come to the

FIGURE 10. *The Adelaide mosque in its current state, showing its bluestone masonry,* mihrab, *arched windows, and four minarets. Photo by Mizanur Rashid, 2012.*

city from a variety of countries, or migrants who have come to Australia as skilled workers.

Today Little Gilbert Street and the surrounding neighborhood is again home to many Muslim residents who prefer to stay near the mosque. The presence of this community is evident in the opening of a Halal shop, a Sunday school for Muslim children, and an increasing number of worshippers at daily prayers. In recollection of past times when a marginal community of Muslims clung to the mosque to establish a sense of belonging, the mosque neighborhood is also now known to some locals as "Little Beirut" **(FIG.11,12)**.[26] The building and its street have even been marketed to the film industry for location shoots — for example, the 1997 *Heaven's Burning*, directed by Craig Lahiff, with Russell Crowe in the lead role, in which these buildings suggest a present-day Muslim-Australian neighborhood that is home to a gang of stereotypically unsavory villains of Afghan origin.

Despite such portrayals, Muslims are generally no longer marginalized in Australian society. And a camaraderie similar to that which once tied the heterogeneous ethnic groups of British India together can be observed in the everyday activities of new groups of Muslims at the mosque. The mosque is currently looked after by the Islamic Society of South Australia, and it has received official recognition as a place of worship.

Most recently, the increase in the local Muslim population has allowed for another major renovation. This has included covering the large courtyard with modern steel vaults to shelter the large number of worshippers at Friday prayers. The new covered area also provides space for gathering and feasting during Ramadan and at Eid festivals **(FIG.13)**.

FIGURE 11. *A typical bluestone masonry building in the neighborhood of the mosque. Photo by Mizanur Rashid, 2012.*

A

B

FIGURE 12A,B. *The Adelaide mosque and its neighborhood. The mosque building can hardly be distinguished in terms of scale except for its four minarets. Photo by Mizanur Rashid, 2012.*

PURPOSEFUL CREATION

The writings of Jacques Berque have enduring resonance when it come to interpreting the architecture of Muslim communities.[27] Berque argued that the Islamic built environment can be understood using a linguistic model. As in a language, elements of building (its rhetoric) may be shared between cultures, regions and contexts. But the morphology that combines these elements into a system should be consistent with-

FIGURE 13. *A community gathering under the recently completed vaulted glass and steel structure. Source: About Time; South Australia History Festival 2013.*

in a particular architectural tradition. Islamic thought has expressed the idea of morphology as a system of invariables (in Arabic, *thawābit*), while it has identified the variables (rhetoric) as *mutahawilat*. As long as the invariables remain expressed as in the original system, a sense of identity persists.

In other words, Islamic architecture must have a morphology that goes beyond the specifics of history, geography, culture, etc. However, unlike other building traditions, this morphology is not materialized. Rather, what makes architecture "Islamic" are invisible aspects, which may or may not completely translate into the physical or built environment.[28] The inherent morphology of Islamic architecture is thus always the same, due to the permanence of its philosophy and values; what changes are the ways and means that different groups use to materialize these.

As discussed earlier, the Adelaide mosque is an architecturally conspicuous representation of the Muslim presence in Australia. Yet the structure's apparently nondescript character (other than its four chimney-like minarets) has also led it to be excluded from mainstream study of "Islamic" architecture. However, it is time to reexamine the importance of such buildings according to a new framework.

Architecture has played an instrumental role in recording the facets of the Islamic diaspora through time and space. The character of Islamic architecture in a given place thus depends on the emergence of Islam there and its subsequent impact on the social, political and cultural life of local people. There are two general aspects of this process. At an explicit level, it involves the conscious attempt to create a particular place with a religious and symbolic meaning. But it also involves a vernacular mode of understanding centered on the worldview of a particular culture, its values, and attitudes toward space. Thus, while an overt, religious consciousness may shape the "visible" superstructure, underlying vernacular ideas define the "true" nature of space. This has led to the production of architecture throughout the Muslim world that is diverse and enriched with different varieties of forms, articulations and morphologies.

What this means is that the Adelaide mosque should primarily be examined from the perspective of settlement history and the Islamic diaspora: in particular, how were its spatial concepts realized in a non-Muslim environment? As architecture, any mosque represents a particular time and material culture. In this case, the Adelaide mosque reflected the value system, social status, resilience, and desire to assimilate of its early patrons. And it expressed their imagination of a space in a foreign land that would parallel that they remembered from their homelands.[29] It is thus not the mosque as object that we must assess today; rather, it is the means through which it was realized and its impact on contemporaneous Muslim society.

In this sense, the hybridized forms and shared architectural narratives that arose among the minority Afghan group established the mosque as more than just a space for worship. Indeed, it was a socio-political "place." This is commensurate with the teachings of the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith*, which describe a mosque as a complete institution for Muslims, not just a sacred or sanctified space for ritual worship. By examining the Prophet's mosques in Madinah, it is evident that a mosque can be a social, political and religious center. It may serve as a place for political discussions, communal celebrations, guest residence — even to hold prisoners of war. Just as Islam is a holistic religion that encompasses every aspect of life, so should the mosque cater to all activities Muslims perform. Its basic purpose, then, is to provide a sense of identity for a Muslim community.

From its conception to its current position and architectural expression, the Adelaide mosque could be described as contested terrain — a place of perpetual struggle by Muslims to assimilate into broader Australian society. It might not be a distinguished piece of architecture in terms of its exterior appearance, but it is distinguished in the way it blends subtly with the urban fabric. The building and its four minarets were constructed using simple load-bearing masonry techniques common to its time and place. But its sequence of spaces responded to traditional notions familiar to early users from their experiences in their South Asian homelands. Rather than mimicking their own images of a mosque, mosque patrons relied on a local builder to interpret these qualities in the setting of colonial Adelaide. Unlike other contemporary urban mosques in Australia (for example, the Perth mosque or the Auburn mosque in Sydney) the images of homeland, the aspirations of the user, the fabric and the scale of the neighborhood, and the available technology were hybridized here to create Australia's first urban mosque.

As Islamic architecture, the Adelaide mosque should be examined as a hybrid, rather than attempting to categorize it according to the elemental domain of forms and styles based on dynasty, local tradition, and building typology. These presuppositions about Islamic influence, artifacts and cultures are largely irrelevant in a situation where supposedly "Islamic" elements have no precedent. Hybridized forms and shared architectural narratives that arose during the Islamic period in a particular region and which are unique to the material culture of that place sometimes remain elusive due to the myopic but popular perspective that there are "correct" forms of "Islamic identity." Such stereotypical conceptions of Islamic architecture obscure historical processes of hybridization and its diverse morphological outcomes. They also diminish the value of buildings like the Adelaide mosque.

Examination of the built environment of Muslim communities must put aside formal concerns, to instead concentrate on codes of conduct outlined in and interpreted by the *Qur'an*, *Hadith*, and other sources, especially in situations where Muslims were a marginal community. Islamic architecture should be evaluated according to morphological elements that facilitate these codes within the multiple regional and historical contexts of the Islamic world. This necessitates a close observation of the process by which minority Muslim

peoples across the world integrate and assimilate cultural-historical contexts, regional styles, functional needs, and environmental possibilities within that system.

This report has examined the Adelaide mosque with an emphasis on the process of assimilation to connect the microcosm of architecture to the macrocosm of society. It has not focused on elements, motifs or decorations (rhetoric) that may or may not exemplify typical representations — fabulations — of "Islamic" design. It has focused on how religious beliefs, social and economic structures, political motives, and aesthetic sensibility were articulated through the long and tenuous process by which a marginal religious and cultural group sought to claim a place of its own. The report is not concerned with the beauty of the mosque, although beauty and utility are never separated in the Islamic perspective. Its focus has been to discern the process — the complete narrative — through which this architecture was shaped and materialized.

In the case of the Adelaide mosque, respect for the needs of the users should be paramount. The structure fulfilled the purpose and aspirations of early Muslims in a local and regional context by providing both a sense of relevance and authenticity. It is thus a true example of hybrid or symbiotic architecture that encompasses Islamic values as well as local and regional particularities.

Three major concepts were materialized in the Adelaide mosque. First was the concept of the mosque as a religious and social center — and, thus, a locus of identity for the early Muslim community. Second was the use of available technology and local architectural practice. Third was the evocation of underlying imagery from its patrons' homelands, evident in its articulation of spaces and the later addition of minarets. Most importantly, this building elucidates a process of continuous dialogue between these three concepts. In summary, then, it could be said that the architecture of the Adelaide mosque is the result of a process of hybridization where the Qur'anic tenet of communal prayer, the local architectural language, and imported values were fused into a purposeful creation that served the needs of a hybrid community.

REFERENCE NOTES

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2. City of Adelaide Heritage Study Item No. 159, Adelaide Mosque file, Heritage South Australia.

3. This project was funded by the International Islamic University Malaysia. As part of this project, Mizanur Rashid traveled to Australia in January 2012 to conduct measured drawings of the Adelaide mosque, with the permission of the Mosque Secretariat, and undertook archival research.

4. Founded in 1977, this program celebrates the built environment of Muslim communities, past and present. It presents awards in three-year cycles.

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16. *Qur'an*, 62:9, 62:10.
17. P. Scriver, "Mosques, Ghantowns and Cameleers in the Settlement History of Colonial Australia," *Fabrications*, Vol.13 No.2 (May 2004), pp.19–41.
18. Dean, "Muslim Journeys."
19. Mehrban, of the Afghan Tarin tribe, was born in 1801. He was the caretaker of Adelaide mosque in the 1890s, and "Chief among the Adelaide Muslims." In the Adelaide mosque he conducted the Eid-Ul-Adha services from 1890 to 94 (in 1890 for "eighty Afghan and one Hindu," in 1894 for "67 turbaned residents of Adelaide"). Mehrban lived in Coolgardie from 1894 to 1897 (SA register, July 30, 1890).
20. Abdul Wade was originally an Afghan native of Quetta. He arrived in Australia in 1879. He was a merchant, and a cameleer for the Bourke Expedition. Wade was fluent in English and was the trustee of the Adelaide mosque.
21. Most early mosques in Afghanistan were highly influenced by Persian types. A typical Persian mosque (for example, the Blue Mosque of Mazar E Sharif) was built following the concept of "Charbagh," a rendition of paradise in the earth, containing water bodies and gardens.
22. C. Stevens, *Tin Mosques & Ghantowns: A History of Afghan Cameldrivers in Australia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
23. Ibid.
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27. Berque was a professor of sociology at College de France and a scholar and writer on traditional and modern Muslim societies. This model of an Islamic city was discussed during the seminar on "Architectural Transformations in the Islamic World" held at Aiglemont, Gouvieux, France, in April 1978, organized by the Aga Khan Foundation. See J. Berque, "An Islamic Heliopolis?" in R. Holod, ed., *Toward an Architecture in The Spirit of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978). pp.19–31.
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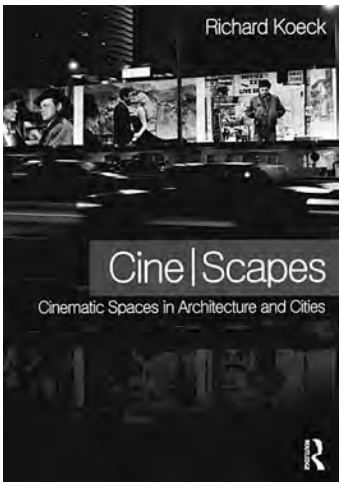
Book Reviews



Cine-scapes: Cinematic Spaces in Architecture and Cities. Richard Koeck. New York and London: Routledge, 2013. 224 pp., b&w illus.

As Richard Koeck correctly points out at the start of this book, "a considerable amount of critical thought has been dedicated to the exploration of the *architectural significance* of film" (p.3). Indeed, from Dietrich Neumann's *Film Architecture* (1999) to Nezar Al-Sayyad's *Cinematic Urbanism* (2006) to Merrill Schleier's *Skyscraper Cinema* (2009), the scholarly field has been well populated with insightful accounts of how architecture and cities have been designed, depicted, criticized, and otherwise handled in the hundred-plus years of cinematic history. Even Koeck has, in the past five years, published three essays and an edited volume on the topic. What sets his past and present work apart, however, is that he is not only a professor of architecture but also a filmmaker, producing and directing mostly small, independent films for a myriad of purposes. *Cine-scapes*, Koeck's first monograph, fulfills the promise of his earlier work by inverting the polarity of the dominant discourse: instead of asking how architectural design, theory and history have been manifested in film, Koeck asks the reader to consider how cinematic culture has shaped, and could further shape, real architecture and its reception.

The core argument of *Cine-scapes* is twofold. First, Koeck attempts to demonstrate the existence of conceptual and formal commonalities and links between the medium of film and the brick and mortar of urban space. Second, he argues that these commonalities resonate in the architectural experiences of a visually savvy, cinema-saturated public which dwells in and around cities while voraciously consuming moving pictures not only in theaters and at home but, increasingly, on streetcars, in school, in cafés, and just about everywhere. The audience is ready and willing; architects need only grasp and wield the tools of the filmmaker. Koeck makes an ambitious and impassioned case that is consistently thought provoking and at times convincing. There are, however, some problematic aspects of history and theory that he rallies in support of his two-fold argument.

The first part of the book, "Film, Mind and Body," is a search for common ground between the filmic and architectural experiences of space and time. Virtual film space is inherently tied to narrative, but the real spaces of cities are also capable of telling stories, Koeck argues, partly because of the diverse building fabric present in most urban areas. This is partly a result of cities being animated both by singular, situational events and by repetitive, episodic ones — all of which weigh upon our cumulative, ongoing reading of architecture. Koeck also offers a compelling, if frustratingly brief, account of the practical ways in which cinematic memories can cross-pollinate the experiences of cities. Movies can, of course, shape our expectations of urban locations before we visit them. But more subtly, visual cues in architectural space can summon emotional and intellectual associations implanted in our minds by films containing similar spaces.

For this reader, Koeck could have dug a little deeper into aesthetic theory in his discussion of these issues. If he had, he might have confronted the picturesque — that Enlightenment obsession with the ways in which landscapes, architecture, and even other people can be experienced *like a picture*, cuing mental associations absorbed from literature and paintings. This might have substantially enlarged and enriched his fruitful analysis of the conscious and unconscious processes by which humans link real architectural

experiences with remembered virtual counterparts. The silvery veins of provocative, stimulating concepts in this part of the book are instead embedded in an impressively broad, if occasionally dense, exegesis of the past century's output of philosophical speculation on cognitive processes.

"Cinema, Architecture and the Everyday" provides the second portion of the book. Here Koeck seeks to demonstrate how "certain cinematic techniques and terms, such as *'sequences and events, movements and passages'* can be used to think about architecture and urban spaces" (p.26). Essentially, filmmaking and film-viewing are presented as metaphors for the design and experience of cities. Koeck thus compares urban fabric that displays historic and spatial continuity (say, medieval buildings next to Renaissance buildings, all working together to define the same square) to filmic continuity, wherein time and space are conveyed in a naturalistic flow as opposed to being dramatically chopped up by the film editor. A contrasting juxtaposition of misaligned buildings is described as an "urban montage" generated by "urban cuts." These comparative analogies are interesting, but as Koeck himself reveals, they are problematic because one can use them to draw wildly different lessons. If one was a fan of Italian Neorealist cinema, for example, one might argue in favor of urban continuity and reject any sensational, Hollywoodesque "urban editing" that privileges the superficially exceptional over the quotidian and common: no Gehry interventions, please. On the other hand, if one was a fan of exuberant science fiction, one might — as Koeck vehemently does — demand that all new buildings, especially those in historic districts, respond to their context with the tried-and-true *shock of the new* to generate maximum narrative dynamic. The question is, even if the reader agrees that an architect's prime aesthetic imperative is to self-consciously weave historical narratives (and this reader does not), which of the countless possible stories should be acted out for the public? Should architecture portray the unbroken continuity of human hope and struggle, the violent glory of technological progress, or something else entirely?

In the conclusion to *Cine-scapes*, Koeck transcends his previous assertions and confesses that there is a big difference between a set designer and a screenwriter. Postwar attempts by modernists to orchestrate human behavior "failed spectacularly," and we should perhaps revisit the Renaissance belief that "it is the work of a designer to *set the stage* for social interactions," rather than vaingloriously strive to direct human lives (p.158). A stage will, of course, lend meaning to the activities that it frames and supports, but it cannot master the puppets. Cinema's resistance to improvised performance, on the other hand, makes it a problematic metaphor for civic life, and as Koeck demonstrates in a variety of fascinating ways, emerging screen technologies are enabling cinema to invade our urban stages with uncertain consequences. The creative possibilities are limitless, but so are the threats. How will human dramas maintain their dignity in the face of constant commercial breaks? How will social events transpire at all when our minds are plugged into individual, hand-held virtual spaces, even as we bodily inhabit spaces that are ostensibly shared? These are important questions, and not only for architects. Koeck does our field a service by asking them in this innovative, if incomplete and somewhat inconsistent, book.

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The Peranakan Chinese Home: Art and Culture in Daily Life. Ronald G. Knapp; photography by A. Chester Ong. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle, 2013. 160 pp., b&w and color illus.

The many qualities of the Peranakan Chinese home and house form, a true hybrid of Chinese, Malay and colonial architecture, are well captured in this new book by Ronald G. Knapp, which includes the most beautiful photography by A. Chester Ong. Fortunately, many of these old homes have stayed within individual families over the years and have been kept in relatively good shape or renovated with sensitivity. This book captures the rich color and texture of these old homes as well as the complexity of the union of Chinese and Malay culture. It is most refreshing to see so many examples of the interiors, furnishings, and material culture of houses, which are not typically represented in architectural books.

These homes were the product of the wedding of Chinese men to Malay women in colonial Malaya. Unlike Chinese sojourners in other parts of the world, these men frequently adopted the local culture and expressed their cross-cultural union in their homes. Generally, Chinese men did not adopt foreign cultures and integrate them with their own. Chinese men who migrated to work abroad much more typically intended to return to their home villages in China. Therefore, the sheer act of establishing such a commitment and integrating with the local culture to create these Peranakan homes reflected a certain progressive change of attitude.

The photography, in addition to being very rich in color, captures the essence of the spaces as well as the feeling of the homes. For example, it shows unusual details such as Chinese motifs in the plaster around windows and doors, local flora depicted on column capitals, and the use of decorative tiles on exterior walls. Every page demonstrates the fine craftsmanship that was typical in southern China.

The exteriors of the buildings, meanwhile, exhibited Western architectural motifs designed to allow the buildings to blend in with other colonial structures. Such cultural ambiguity was present inside as well, where the interior layouts included both Western and Chinese reception and dining rooms. For successful Chinese men, this doubling of spaces served as both a gesture toward Westerners and a source of pride. The traditional Chinese reception hall, found in almost all old homes in the southeastern provinces of China and in Southeast Asia after World War II, was lined with chairs on both sides and a tall table in the middle facing the entryway. On or above the table were ancestral tablatures or a deity flanked by scrolls of couplets hanging from the wall. The use of metal railings and the circular metal stairs, originally imported from Scotland, were very much in mode among these grand homes. Later, similar circular wood stairs were introduced.

What makes this book so compelling is that the fine examples of carvings and workmanship, typically found in traditional homes in China of this period, are now mostly destroyed. Young people growing up in China today have no idea what their grandparents' homes were like. This book may help restore a sense of these spaces. For Chinese scholars interested ancestral homes and architecture, it also provides an excellent visual document of the material culture of the Peranakan home — as well as (by extension) traditional homes in China in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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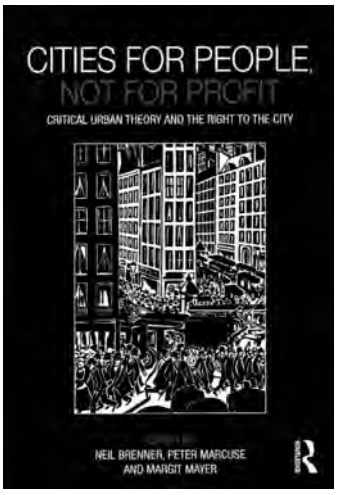
Cities for People, Not for Profit: Critical Urban Theory and the Right to the City. Edited by Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse, and Margit Mayer. London: Routledge, 2012. Xii + 284 pp., b&w ills.



Early in my doctoral studies, I was sternly admonished by a fellow seminar student for critiquing a text because it failed to be what I wished it to be, rather than evaluating it on its own merits. It is a useful point which I have struggled to keep in mind ever since. This struggle is epitomized in many ways by my reading of Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse, and Margit Mayer's anthologized collection *Cities for People, Not for Profit.*

The book, published in 2012 by Routledge, is a spiced-up collection of articles that originally appeared in a special issue of the U.K. journal *City* in 2009. The special issue was designed to explore the increasing commodification of urban environments in cities of the global North and the role of a "critical urban theory" in challenging the current status quo (in the spirit of full disclosure, I am now a member of the editorial board of *City*, but was not at the time of the special issue). Most of the core articles and authors remain, including Margit Mayer on the "right to the city" in urban social movements, Oren Yiftachel on "grey space" and critical theory, and Kanishka Goonewardena's fascinatingly erudite "eight theses" on space and revolution. The collection includes two of my favorite pieces by two of my favorite young(ish) urban writers: Justus Uitermark's skeptical yet heartfelt exploration of Amsterdam as a supposedly "actually existing just city," and Tom Slater's brave and breathtakingly honest critical examination of the life's work of the London-gentrification scholar Chris Hamnett. Both the Uitermark and Slater pieces are fantastic works of urban criticism — one aimed at an often idealized city, the other at a noted and prolific scholar (who would reply in the pages of the same journal).

The new pieces that were added to the original journal issue are a true smorgasbord. They include an interview with David Harvey, an attempt to connect theory to practice from long-time U.S. community organizer Jon Liss, and a detailed analysis by Neil Brenner, David Wachsmuth, and David Madden of the potential contributions of actor-network theory to critical urban theory. The result is an erudite compendium which makes for a fantastic teaching text for a doctoral seminar. Even though the articles are now five years old (some are even older), they remain an excellent introduction to key aspects of our trade, from how to write a critique, to how to incorporate disparate ideas from the depths of social theory or a variety of subdisciplines (see, for instance, Katherine Rankin's fusion of urban theory and development studies). Key aspects of the subject — gentrification, displacement, "creative cities," housing rights, social movements, etc. — have also not lost importance, and these contributions by some of the leading scholars in the field should hold their value for years to come.

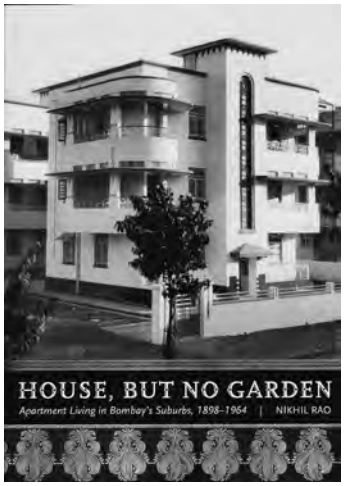
A more complex issue surfaces, however, when one considers the text as a political contribution; and it is here that the terrain becomes more rocky and the aforementioned admonishment more relevant. In a series of articles in *City* ("Cities for People, Not for Profit — From a Radical-Libertarian and Latin American Perspective," 2009; and "Marxists, Libertarians and the City: A Necessary Debate," 2012), Marcelo Lopez de Souza excoriated the editors for two key failings: a narrow and heavily Marxist reading of the history of urban theory, and a limited and highly Northern focus. The latter critique was to certain extent addressed by Mayer in a rebuttal ("Moving beyond 'Cities for People, Not for Profit,'" 2012). It should also not come as a surprise to *TDSR* readers, given the current

and much-needed focus on the geography of theory described by Ananya Roy in her 2009 *Regional Studies* piece "The 21st-Century Metropolis: New Geographies of Theory." But it is de Souza's former critique, having to do with ideological intent, which I found surprisingly spot-on. This involves not simply the focus on commodification, but a telling of the history of "critical" urban theory which is too much Frankfurt School and Harvey/Castells/Lefebvre, and not enough everything else.

Perhaps this is the problem with turning a special issue into a book. In the journal, the work was fresh and provocative, and the neo-Marxist leanings of the editors were simply a part of what made it exciting. The initial series helped provoke years of further writings and additional debates. But, as a book, this material feels a tad uninspiring, overly erudite, and "academic." Its density and obsession with the Frankfurt school push the text further from the stated goal of "developing the relationship between practice and theory" (as Mayer wrote in her 2012 rebuttal), despite the presence of the Liss piece. Instead, the book seems content to educate and theorize more than provoke and inspire. Alas, perhaps I am being unfair, criticizing a smart, well-edited, and solidly crafted collection for not being the kick in the pants critical urban studies needs to produce. But that is a subject for another article entirely.

Alex Schafran
University of Leeds

House, but No Garden: Apartment Living in Bombay's Suburbs, 1898–1964. Nikhil Rao. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. 312 pp., 53 b&w photos, 2 tables.



Nikhil Rao's *House, but No Garden: Apartment Living in Bombay's Suburbs, 1898–1964* is a welcome addition to the growing body of work chronicling Bombay's development in the twentieth century. This now includes Gyan Prakash's *Mumbai Fables*; Thomas Hansen's *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay*; Prashant Kidambi's *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890–1920*; Sandip Hazareesingh's *The Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies and Civic Contestations in Bombay City, 1905–1925*; and Mariam Dossal's *Theatre of Conflict, City of hope: Mumbai, 1660 to Present Times*.

Through its examination of Bombay from 1898 to the postcolonial period, Rao's book fills a void in the historiography of the colonial city, which to date has been overwhelmingly focused on the nineteenth century. By departing from this standard periodization, it adds value to our understanding of the modernization of the colonial city. And by analyzing the suburban experiences of South-Indian migrants, it departs from older colonial scholarship, which is largely focused on the European experience.

The book also challenges the Eurocentricity of canonical histories of suburbanization, which are mostly histories of American and European suburbs. It employs a careful analysis of land, housing and communities to extend understanding on this topic to include the suburbanization of Bombay. In particular, Rao claims that the growth of apartment living was the dominant cultural, architectural and urban attribute of Bombay's expansion from 1918 to 1960. Her work here provides nuanced insight into Bombay's cosmopolitanism by substantiating how suburbs became socio-spatial sites for the reshaping of migrant identities through a delicate negotiation between caste, ethnicity, language and class.

Rao's first chapter, "An Indian Suburb," explores the Bombay Improvement Trust's (BIT) formation in 1898, its slow and difficult process of land acquisition, and its subsequent regulation of new development and street layout. The BIT's activities eventually expanded the urban periphery to create new suburbs such as Matunga, Sion, Dharavi, Mahim and Worli in areas once considered the rural fringe. Rao chronicles how the BIT established new forms of land tenure and standardized leaseholds in these areas, and in the process created a new system of land valuation. This was based on proximity to the city, rather than *toka* — an older system based on revenue from agricultural production. Rao underscores how this important transformation unhinged the previous relationship between agricultural productivity and land value. As the BIT shaped new suburbs through land consolidation, street layout, and standardized leaseholds, the market price of land became increasingly dependent on location and connection to the city.

In chapter 2, "Peopling the Suburbs," Rao addresses how South-Indian migrants began moving into the buildings in Matunga from the 1920s on. These migrants had no ties to older Bombay neighborhoods, and were therefore open to moving to the new suburbs, a choice the more established residents of the city resisted. This chapter dwells on how Matunga became a South-Indian hotspot and developed a distinct identity as a politicized ethnic community in the 1930s.

With the growth of the Dadar-Matunga suburb, the Bombay flat became synonymous with middle-class life. The third chapter, "The Rise of the Bombay Flat," illustrates how this architectural type was domesticated as a marker of identity. What distinguished the flat from earlier typologies was its self-contained design and attached toilet. Yet, while the toilet undoubtedly enabled new regimes of personal hy-

giene, it occupied a conflicted position in the middle-class cultural imagination. It was perceived simultaneously as a source of pollution, which needed to be segregated from food preparation and the kitchen, and a site where the body could be cleansed of impurities. Rao claims that the cultural inclusion of the toilet within the home was the definitive attribute that established the flat as a normative middle-class dwelling.

Continuing with the theme of indigenizing the flat, the fourth chapter, "The Spread of Apartment Living," recounts how the residents of Dadar-Matunga ascribed new meanings, functions and definitions to the spaces of the apartment building. The interior of the Bombay flat was adapted to its residents' lifestyle through a set of practices that included ascribing multifunctionality to spaces originally designated as monofunctional. The fluid use of interior spaces, the disaggregated bathroom, and the sharing of lobby space between neighboring flats were all ways the Bombay flat was adapted from its English origins to migrant life. The Bombay flat was also distinct from its English counterpart on the outside, where a compound mediated the relationship of building to street.

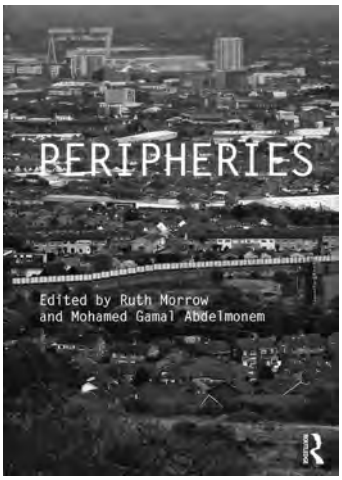
Chapter 5, "Southern Indians to 'South Indians'," examines how immigrants from the south negotiated regional, caste and linguistic differences to identify themselves with a larger group — that of the "South Indian" — which Rao calls a "metacategory." While the migrants still asserted caste and linguistic differences in domains of marriage and dining, expedience dictated that they transcend their differences to form metacaste cooperative housing societies.

The replication of the suburbanization process that was inaugurated in Dader-Matunga in Salsette provides the topic for the sixth chapter, "Towards Greater Mumbai." This registers the fundamental changes in the formative and operative mechanism of the cooperative society, which began as a caste-based institution. In particular, the cooperative society was transformed by the arrival of new migrant communities, particularly Sindhis and Punjabis.

The book is a remarkable history of the processes through which migrant ethic communities may recalibrate their sense of self and community — in this case through their encounter with a new building type, the modern apartment block. It also gives the reader insight into how urban communities were shaped through suburbanization. *House, but No Garden* is extremely valuable for urban and architectural historians, especially those interested in colonial cities, South Asian cities, and South Asia.

Vandana Baweja
University of Florida, Gainesville

Peripheries. Edited by Ruth Morrow and Mohamed Gamal Abdelmonem. London: Routledge, 2013. Xiv + 277 pp., b&w illus.



The idea of periphery figuratively or conceptually evokes at once two interwoven conditions: first, an outward boundary condition; and second, a relational condition of something distinguished from its internal, dominant, center. When conceived as the former, the idea conjures other semantically related concepts such as fringe, edge and margin. Being peripheral in this sense is equal to being excluded and limited in significance and importance. However, when conceived as a relational concept, the idea brings to mind issues of dominance and subordination, of resistance, and of limit and frontier. It also solicits questions such as, What is a limit? What lies beyond the frontier? What role does the core play in the framing of the limit? And, what role does the limit play in the transformation or subversion of the center?

Born out of an academic conference that took place in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 2011, the edited volume *Peripheries* brings all these questions and concepts to light, particularly as they relate to architecture and urban studies. From this perspective, the book falls within a growing genre premised on exploring the various fluid concepts and paradoxes inherent in boundary conditions. Yet, unlike many other writings on the topic which frequently present these ideas in the abstract, the various chapters that make up this volume do not prolong theoretical discussions unduly. Rather, they present an excellent collection of well-researched, concrete case studies netted together both by an emphasis on examining the very nature and function of boundary positions, and by an insistence on interrogating the dichotomy between center and periphery, where some alternative means of reading, inquiry and debate are offered.

Like all edited volumes, the challenge for the editors of *Peripheries* was to find threads and themes that run through the publication and allow its various essays cohere, and then to draw out conclusions that move imagination and understanding forward. From this perspective, the editors have been to a great extent successful. In addition to its introduction and epilogue, the volume consists of fifteen research essays organized into four theme sections, each preceded by what the editors call "askant views," or "interventions."

Contributors to the first section examine the fluidity and binary relationship of center and periphery in selected spatial and temporal conditions. In each of the four essays the meaning of "periphery" is different — from being a conceptual topic related to place-identity to being an overlooked topic in architectural discourse. One essay looks at how the identity of an ordinary peripheral place, Barking, east of London, is constructed in relation to that city, one of the most central locations on the globe. The author of another uncovers the spatial manifestation of a common place at the periphery of the architectural gaze but at the very center of everyday life — the supermarket.

The authors of work in part two examine case studies derived from architectural practice. Overall, these consider how architects have dealt with overlooked, obsolete spaces at the edge of cities: from sprawl and new forms of urbanity, to obsolete and neglected industrial and heritage sites. It is in this section of the book in particular that contributors beautifully single out creative ways to revalorize urban edges and architectural peripheries in design imagination and practice.

Part three turns to people's experiences, practices and responses to marginal positions. "Peripheral" here is understood as illustrating the more semantically slippery nature of the term: people at the margin of social power, prevailing social norms, or their historical time.

The last section is titled "Edge Readings" and is composed of four essays. The first two return to the theme of a binary relation between center and periphery. Using local archives and original sources, they chart how architectural ideas and practices move from the dominant center to the subordinate periphery. Perhaps my favorite two essays in the whole book are the last two here. Both offer unorthodox forms of spatial readings and representations. One examines murder scenes in Nordic and Tartan Noir novels. With the act of criminality at the edge of society, these literary murder scenes, it turns out, disclose much about contemporary society — and within this, lessons specific to architecture. The other essay charts how and where often-neglected sonic qualities territorialize sectarian spaces in the contested city of Beirut.

To ponder such complex issues related to peripheries at this historical moment is to give new urgency to the search for innovative design ideas. In this sense, the questions and ideas raised here revolve around fundamental issues that go beyond the specificities of the cases discussed. Do these emerging investigations of peripheral conditions signal an upsurge that will extend our epistemological frontiers (i.e., extend our ways of knowing the world and our field)? Are we actively seeking to redefine new boundaries while simultaneously transgressing them? Are these investigations and discussions merely intellectual fences that we must erect to make sense of an increasingly complex world?

Whether the issues related to peripheries explored here are simply intellectual, navigational devices or embody essential truths about the world, this volume carries a conviction that might never be provable. This is that peripheries are fundamental to human conditions; they can lead to a state of apathy and submission, but they equally serve as strategic sites for challenging dominant forms through innovative and creative methods of investigation.

Overall, this is a valuable volume and worthy of closer reading. I hope it will spur others to deepen the interrogation of other boundary and peripheral cases, pushing the limits of architecture and imagination to new frontiers.

Khaled Adham
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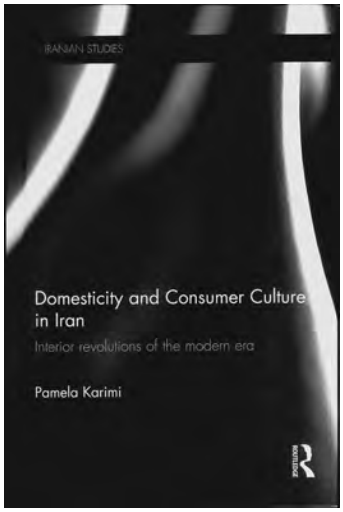
Domesticity and Consumer Culture in Iran: Interior Revolutions of the Modern Era. Pamela Karimi. London and New York: Routledge, 2013. 262 pp., b&w illus.



Pamela Karimi's *Domesticity and Consumer Culture in Iran* is a thought-provoking examination of the intersection of domestic architecture, consumerism, and the social transformation of taste in twentieth-century Iran. An associate professor of Art at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, Karimi earned a Ph.D. in the history and theory of art and architecture from MIT in 2009. As a result of her training there as well as her pre-doctoral education in Iran, she is well situated to explore these diverse fields and produce a comprehensive, insightful work. Revolving around the development and transformation of domestic space, primarily in the major cities of Iran, the narrative moves forward chronologically from the late Qajar period to the end of the Pahlavi period, with an epilogue touching on some practices in the Islamic Republic.

The subject matter the book explores is well researched in different institutions and localities within Iran and in various collections and archives in the United States. It thus provides a new perspective on architecture, one that pulls into the discussion debates developed in other fields — for instance, cinema, economy, sociology, and the many interpretations and implementations of Shi'ism in modern Iran. These connections have rarely been explored in the field of Iranian studies. This book does this by looking not only at what court nobility did in terms of high culture (as has been the tradition in past

studies of Iranian architecture), but also at what the people did despite of, in resistance to, or in mimicry of high culture.

We thus read an architectural history of agency, of how the forces of modernity and rapid economic transformation were mediated by the active choices of ordinary people: middle-class housewives, merchant homeowners, prostitutes, street vendors, and bureaucrats of the British oil company. Still, it is telling that this bottom-up socio-spatial history cannot be completely divorced from how Iran's kings built, either historically and in contemporary times. Shah Abbas's Ali Qapu palace serves as an outstanding example. It speaks to the status of the monarchical tradition and the systematic ways that class structure has affected Iranian design and taste-formation for centuries.

In reading the story of ordinary people's architecture, one remains curious how exactly domestic spaces were used, how they were modified, and how housing was deployed as a means of protest. This became particularly relevant after the Iranian Revolution. Public lifestyles changed so radically at that time that they affected the very design and management of private spaces. For example, vestibules were needed to allow for the transformation of female appearance from public to private realms; new systems were required to police the privacy of domestic life; and spaces were needed to mediate gender relations in public. Yet, in the same vein, one might ask which, specifically, were the "traditional" spaces and practices that had once been modernized? This narrative need not depend on a teleology of progress from the "traditional" through "modernization." One could likewise ask why, in a historically hierarchical society like Iran, where modernization occurred primarily as a heavy-handed nation-building project, it should not be equally important to write an independent, bottom-up history of taste.

Karimi's excellent and multidisciplinary examination of Iranian architecture reveals another pressing concern in the growing field of Iranian studies: the question of how to properly merge visual culture with historically text-based and literature-privileging Iranian historiography. In this regard, however, the rare images, some of which are being published for the first time, do little justice to the rich text. Some floor plans appear to be diagrams instead of architectural drawings, and some captions fall short of describing the corresponding image (i.e., "map" is a literal Persian translation of a plan, which does not denote a floor plan). Larger images, perhaps colorful ones, would have helped further the discussion or shed new light on its theorization. In this book's design, the visual material seems to act more as an appendix to the text than a partner to it.

This disjunction between image and text hints at a more general concern. As pioneering works such as *Domesticity and Consumer Culture in Iran* push the conventions and become the norm, Iranian studies as a whole might want to revisit its priorities. This might perhaps involve coming to terms with the fact that not only literature, history, sociology, and political science, but also art, architecture, cinema, and visual studies are at the forefront of ways of knowing. Technologies as well as attitudes will need to be updated to cater to this shift in the field. As a singular and important book, *Domesticity and Consumer Culture in Iran* tackles these and other issues from the perspective of domesticity and economy — both of which have rarely, if at all, cross-pollinated discourse on architecture and identity formation.

Talinn Grigor
Brandeis University

Little White Houses: How the Postwar Home Constructed Race in America. Dianne Harris. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. 366 pp., illus.

In March of 1969, the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* published a short article by John Maass — an art director and information officer in the Philadelphia City Representative's Office and an architectural historian of the Victorian age — titled "Where Architectural Historians Fear to Tread." It was a damning indictment of the artificially narrow purview of academic architectural history, delivered mostly through simple acts of counting. Maass made numerous critiques, including that architectural historians seemed to care little for the technical aspects of architecture, less for urbanism, still less for "vernacular" building, and not at all for architecture's relationships to other arts and human sciences. But perhaps most damning was his documentation that of 461 articles published in the *JSAH* from 1957 to 1968, only eleven treated "Non-Western Architecture":

> *The entire field of Far Eastern architecture is represented by one article describing two buildings in Honolulu. . . . There can be no doubt that the assumption of white supremacy forms the basis for this unbalanced view of the globe. The ratio of 251:4:2 [articles on Western Architecture:articles on "Oriental" architecture:articles on architecture in Africa, Oceania and the Americas] corresponds with the Victorian scheme which divided the world into civilized, semi-civilized, and barbarous races.*

Much in North American architectural history has changed since 1969, but not enough. With the ascent of

Dianne Harris to the presidency of the Society of Architectural Historians in 2010, however, further change was set in motion. A graduate of programs in landscape architecture, architectural design, and architectural history at the University of California at Berkeley, and currently a professor of Landscape Architecture, Architecture, Art History, and History, and Director of the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Harris has long been an outspoken scholar and critic. Arguing forcefully, often against the grain of the still substantially conservative culture of academic architectural history, she has done as much as any other contemporary architectural historian to push for an interdisciplinary, even counter-disciplinary approach to research and narration regarding the history of landscape, architecture and design. (In particular, one might note her article "That's Not Architectural History! Or, What's a Discipline For?" in the June 2011 issue of *JSAH*.)

Little White Houses is a race and class critique of the ubiquitous suburban homes that proliferated throughout the post-World War II United States. It is perhaps Harris's most pointed argument yet for an alternative to architectural histories mired in the hermetic concerns (largely inherited from its father-discipline, art history) of formalism and biography. As she writes, the book is both an effort "to understand the ways in which postwar domestic environments became poignant ciphers for whiteness, affluence, belonging, and a sense of permanent stability" *and* a renewal of Maass's and others' challenges to the hidebound conventions of the "discipline" of architectural history. These conventions were perhaps best summarized by Nikolaus Pevsner's imperious opening line to *An Outline of European Architecture*: "A bicycle shed is a building; Lincoln Cathedral is a piece of architecture." (For a thoughtful and even-handed discussion of the disciplinary nature of architectural history, readers might turn to chapter one in Andrew Leach's 2010 *What is Architectural History*?)

Harris's book is divided into eight chapters, which treat, in turn, the norms that constitute "the ordinary postwar house"; the role of the publishing industry, particularly popular magazines, in establishing a normative rhetoric of domesticity; the graphic conventions of architectural drawing and illustration that realized an aesthetic of hygiene and uniformity; the mechanisms for enforcing "privacy" in suburban homes; the manufacture of taste and consumption of household goods; storage systems and the strategic display of goods to connote status; television; and the yard. Valuable apercus pervade all of these, and Harris's ingenuity in teasing out radical modern innovation, rapid historical change, and insidious ideological operations from the most mundane and familiar objects and arrangements is fascinating. She seems to transform the *heimlich* into the *unheimlich* with a deceptive ease that belies the intensive research and intellectual work underpinning her analyses.

Yet there is a question of method in all of this, which transcends the subject matter. Readers will hardly be surprised to discover that Harris's heated introduction makes the claim that, in the wake of so many vanguardist and ideologically naïve histories of architectural modernism, it is the task of the architectural historian to turn to the much more important sociological and formal study of quotidian spaces and structures. Following a broad coalition of scholars who, beginning in the very same post-World War II period and continuing through the present, have staked out a spatial approach to sociological analysis (and above all Howard Winant and Michael Omi's influential theories on the social construction of race), Harris seeks to expose the "spatial rhetoric(s)" of seemingly "invisible" aspects of the everyday. There is little original in this, no matter how admirable the aim, but Harris adds two significant twists to her method that will be fuel for debate.

The first twist is an appeal to Slavoj Zizek's popularizing interpretation (in his 1989 *The Sublime Object of Ideology*) of Peter Sloterdijk's difficult 1988 masterpiece, *Critique of Cynical Reason*. Here Zizek outlined his notion of ideological cynicism in order to make sense of the persistence of racist and class-based ideology in the face of otherwise withering critique. The second twist is Harris's use of her own (Jewish) grandparents' home in the San Fernando Valley as an object of analysis. This double move at once distinguishes Harris's book from the well-known work on "whiteness" of scholars such as David Roediger (*Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past*), on which Harris's work nonetheless relies, and the work of the very best historians of suburbia such as John Archer (*The Architecture of Suburbia: From English Villa to American Dream House, 1690–2000*). It also sets the book as a whole in opposition to critiques (many written in the headiest days of the influence of poststructuralism in architectural culture) of the whiteness of the International Style, such as Mark Wigley's *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*.

Even for such a sympathetic reader as myself, however, the book is not without significant problems. The most important is a familiar historicist tautology that pervades the text. The book's subtitle informs us that "the postwar home *constructed* race in America." But is this really the case? What about the people who "constructed" the houses? Was it individuals, or groups, who performed this construction? And what about race constructing houses? In fact, Harris is a thoughtful and serious historian wrestling with a very slippery subject. Far from being a flaw inherent to Harris's work, though, the claim made in the title and throughout the book is a necessary step for scholarly debate in a field that still struggles to address race at all. The conversations it will prompt in classrooms and in print will do much to push architectural history into that space into which it has feared to tread.

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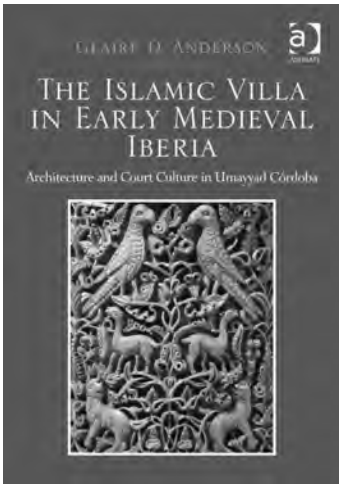
The Islamic Villa in Early Medieval Iberia: Architecture and Court Culture in Umayyad Córdoba. Glaire D. Anderson. Fanham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. 225 pp, 16 color plates, 80 b&w illus.



The elite of many cultures throughout history have built residences in the vicinity of cities as places of recreation and enjoyment of nature. In ancient Roman times, these were given the name *villa*. And in the centuries since, any similar structure has automatically been referred to as such by specialists and architects, despite the presence of other, more culturally specific terminologies. Such is the case here, where the name "Islamic villa" is used in place of the more technically correct Arabic term *al-munya*.

Between the eighth and tenth centuries a surprisingly large number of suburban residential compounds of this type appeared on the Iberian peninsula. And the construction of *al-munya* (hereafter, *munya*) was particularly pronounced around the city of Córdoba, capital of the Umayyad emirs and caliphs in al-Andalus. These structures, of which very little remains, provide the subject of this book by Glaire D. Anderson, an associate professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Anderson uses a convergent analysis of architecture, ways of life, politics, agriculture, aesthetic ideas, and other matters to shed light on this little-known chapter in the history of the region.

As Anderson points out early on, not all of these suburban compounds were made from scratch. Some were renovations of existing structures dating to the Roman and late-antique periods. In chronicling these activities, she reports, ". . . Roman and late antique villas and estates which had passed into the control of Visigothic aristocracy may well have survived more or less intact into the Islamic period, thanks to the intermarriage between the newly arrived Umayyad military leaders and the local Visigothic elite" (p.16).

In her introduction, Anderson deals with the phenomenon of the villa, or *munya*, both generally and in terms of its most outstanding architectural details. After tracing this history in other cultures and time periods, she explores the evolution and nature of patronage that allowed this building type to flourish around Córdoba during the first centuries of Iberia's Islamic occupation. She rightly emphasizes the role of the Umayyad emirs, who undoubtedly were seeking to rival their predecessors from Damascus. But she also calls attention to a group, the *mawali*, within the court elite whose members were frequently not of Arab-Muslim origin, and who had often risen from being slaves to free people. After they had acquired high positions within the Islamic government, the emirs and caliphs sometimes bestowed *munya* on them (although in many cases the *mawali* were eunuchs, and so had no descendants to pass the properties on to).

The *mawali* were often responsible for palace activities related to artistic production and court etiquette, which made their residences a frame of reference on refinement and distinction for Arab elites. Indeed, the participation of these dignitaries in governmental tasks supported the Andalusian Umayyads when it came to confronting the unsure and unruly Arab-Muslim aristocracy. That same Arab aristocracy, however, eventually took its revenge on the *mawali* following the decline in caliphal authority under Hisham II — which in turn led to the decline of many of these properties.

Anderson next deals with the architecture. Hardly any *munya*s are intact today, and some are completely gone, making detailed analysis difficult. In addition to the lack of physical remains, it means Anderson has had to base her analysis largely on previous archaeological investigations and scattered written evidence. In Spain, a *munya* generally consisted of a main residence, with splendid decoration, accompanied by auxiliary buildings to service it and its attendant agricultural lands. The entire estate was generally surrounded by walls to protect residents and produce.

The best-preserved example of a *munya* today is the al-Rumaniyya. This was excavated at the beginning of the twentieth century, and although its main residential quarters were destroyed shortly thereafter, its surroundings remain intact. Only limited information was published in 1912 by Ricardo Velazquez Bosco, who excavated the main building. However, recent research by a German-Spanish archaeological team yielded information about a hall that probably served as a lookout pavilion (or *mirador* in Spanish). Based on this information, Anderson created computer renderings to help readers imagine the atmosphere of no-longer-existing structures. Although this graphic experiment is interesting and useful, it does not employ present-day capabilities, particularly in terms of light effects.

After reviewing the origin and nature of decorative elements, Anderson then attempts to describe the domestic atmosphere in the al-Andalus palaces. She invites the reader to appreciate the luxury and refinement these offered. This includes descriptions of daily etiquette among the aristocracy and the consumption habits of the court, including the uses of clothing, perfume, food and seasoning. An extensive use of texts, contemporary and from other periods, helps Anderson depict many of these refinements, as well as the life of the servants who made them possible.

Anderson also devotes a chapter to analyzing these estates' agricultural features. A villa's surroundings were mainly devoted to farming, which provided a source of in-

come for the owner. But productive lands were coupled with pleasure gardens surrounding the residence. Both relied on the control of water, a scarce resource in a dry climate.

Finally, Anderson describes the role these estates played in the social, cultural and political life of the time. Caliphs often used them as sites for law courts and feasts. The estates also provided meeting places for courtiers and intellectuals, as well as lodging for ambassadors and guests.

The Islamic Villa in Early Medieval Iberia provides a detailed and pleasant addition to literature on the Iberian peninsula, while expanding villa studies to encompass "non-Western" examples. It will benefit those interested in this type of architecture as well as in the life and material culture of the Muslim elite of al-Andalus. Architects, historians, and art historians, as well as scholars and students of medieval culture, will undoubtedly enjoy Anderson's book.

Antonio Almagro
School of Arabic Studies at the Spanish Agency for Scientific Research

Conferences and Events

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

***"The Fourth Asian Conference on Asian Studies,"* Osaka, Japan: May 29–June 1, 2014.** Local, national and global cultures have been transformed by an intensification of human migration and mobility. Gloria Anzaldua's idea of the borderland has become a critical concept for understanding, explaining and articulating the ambiguous nature of everyday life and the cultural politics of border-knowledge, border crossings, transgression, living in-between, and multiple belongings. Borderlands are social spaces where people of diverse backgrounds and identities meet and engage in a politics of co-presence and co-existence. The conference focuses on the borderlands of becoming, belonging and sharing, examining how the culture of everyday life is regulated and contested across diverse political, economic and social contexts. For more information, please visit http://acas.iafor.org/.

***"International Conference on Cultural Heritage Thinking: Tradition and Contemporaneity,"* Bogota, Colombia: September 4–5, 2014.** The conference is intended to encourage research on architectural and urban projects located in natural or cultural heritage contexts in order to harmonize the use of heritage elements and resources to strengthen territorial and community development. It gathers participants from interdisciplinary backgrounds who have drafted, participated in, or developed research or projects in either urban or rural contexts. For more information, please visit http://www.apti.org/events/international-conference-on-cultural-heritage-thinking-call-for-papers/.

***"International Conference on Vernacular Heritage, Sustainability and Earthen Architecture,"* Valencia, Spain: September 11–13, 2014.** The conference themes are vernacular architecture and its contributions for sustainability, the conservation and restoration of vernacular architecture, and the potential applications of sustainable lessons of vernacular heritage to contemporary architecture. The first two days are dedicated to keynote lectures by international experts and the presentation of papers and posters; the third day will be dedicated to technical visits. For more information, please visit http://versus2014.blogs.upv.es/.

***"Metropolitics: The Seventh Biennial Conference of the Urban History Association,"* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: October 9–12, 2014.** The purpose of the Urban History Association is to stimulate interest in and study of the history of the city in all periods and geographical areas. This conference will explore the theme of metropolitics, reflecting on the relationship between state and local actors, and making comparisons of metropolitan politics from various locations around the world. For more information, please visit http://uha.udayton.edu/conf.html.

***"Spaces and Flows: Fifth International Conference on Urban and ExtraUrban Studies,"* Bangkok, Thailand: November 7–8, 2014.** This conference aims to critically engage ongoing spatial, social, ideological and political transformations in a transnational, global and neoliberal world. In a world of flows and movement, the global North and South now converge and diverge in a dialectic that shapes and transforms cities, suburbs and rural areas. The conference addresses the mapping of, the nature of, and the forces that propel these processual changes. For more information, please visit http://spacesandflows.com/the-conference.

***18th ICOMOS General Assembly and Scientific Symposium*, Florence, Italy: November 9–14, 2014.** The symposium will explore the theme "Heritage and Landscape as Human Values" according to five subthemes: sharing and experiencing the identity of communities through tourism and interpretation; landscape as cultural habitat; sustainability through traditional knowledge; community-driven conservation and local empowerment; and emerging tools for conservation practice. For more information, please visit http://www.icomos.org/en/about-icomos/governance/general-information-about-the-general-assembly/18th-general-assembly-florence-2014.

RECENT CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

***"ARCHHIST '14: Periods, Movements, Outsiders,"* Istanbul, Turkey: April 21–22, 2014.** The Fourth ARCHHIST Conference was organized by DAKAM (Eastern Mediterranean Academic Research Center) and hosted by MSGSÜ (Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University). It addressed several questions relevant to the study of architectural history: What are the sources and results of being an outsider, not representing any common theory or attitude? Does every movement have a certain share of outsiderness? Have there been individual approaches which have claimed to have no influence on others or the future? For more information, please visit http://www.archhistconference.org/.

***"Urban Equity in Development — Cities for Life,"* Medellin, Columbia: April 5–11, 2014.** The Seventh World Urban Forum, sponsored by UN-HABITAT, identified old and new factors that create equity; actors who trigger positive change; strategies they employ; and means of financing them. It also looked at the roles that territory, institutions, economy, and social, cultural and environmental factors play in the transformation of cities. For more information, please visit http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=767&cid=12344.

***"Place, (Dis)Place and Citizenship,"* Detroit, Michigan: March 20–22, 2014.** The eleventh annual conference in Citizenship Studies, organized by Wayne State University's Center for the Study of Citizenship, addressed issues of location, from nation-state citizenship to community engagement. For more information, please visit http://clasweb.clas.wayne.edu/citizenship/CFP2014.

***"World City Forum,"* Amsterdam, Netherlands: March 12–14, 2014.** The conference addressed the ability of cities to provide sustainable systems for clean energy, transportation, food, water, and waste disposal. For more information, please visit www.worldsmartcapital.net/worldcityforum.

CALLS FOR PAPERS

***The Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS), Second Biannual Conference*, Canberra, Australia: December 2–4, 2014. Call for papers, deadline: June 1, 2014.** ACHS's second conference, to be held at the Australian National University, Canberra, will build on themes developed at the first conference at the University of Gothenburg in June 2012. The Gothenburg conference highlighted new sensibilities and a theoretical sophistication in heritage studies. This conference will continue to focus on work that goes beyond case-study or site-based reports ("the usual suspects") to present informed and innovative proposals that re/theorize the field. A series of umbrella themes and paper sessions have been identified to accommodate work from such fields as public history, memory studies, museology, cultural heritage, tourism studies, architecture and planning, conservation, cultural geography, sociology, cultural studies and policy, anthropology, archaeology, ethnomusicology, law, artistic research, and artistic practices. For more information and online submission of paper proposals, please visit http://conferences.criticalheritagestudies.org.

"*DIALECTIC*: Dream of Building or the Reality of Dreaming." Deadline: June 1, 2014. *DIALECTIC* journal invites abstracts for papers exploring the history and prehistory of design-build studios and the nonprofit design industry. Contributors are encouraged to evaluate both powerful and toothless practices, and reflect on the value of this enterprise. Suggestions for photo essays are also welcome, as are timelines explaining the history of the design-build movement in any part of the world. The editors value critical statements and alternative practices. Abstracts of 350 words and short CVs may be sent to the editors, Shundana Yusaf (shundana@arch.utah.edu) and Ole W. Fischer (fischer@arch.utah.edu).

***Society of Architectural Historians 68th Annual Conference,* Chicago, Illinois: April 15–19, 2015. Call for abstracts, deadline: June 6, 2014.** SAH will offer paper sessions over two days that will cover all time periods and architectural styles. Please submit abstracts for one of the 32 thematic sessions or for an open session. SAH encourages submissions from architectural, landscape, and urban historians; museum curators; preservationists; independent scholars; architects; and members of partner organizations. For more information, please visit http://www.sah.org/conferences-and-programs/2015-conference-chicago.

***"Fifth International Conference on the Constructed Environment,"* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: October 16–17, 2014. Rolling deadline for proposals.** The conference will explore the forms and functions of the constructed environment during a time of dramatic and at times disruptive change. The conference will bring together researchers, teachers and practitioners to discuss the past character and future shape of the built environment. Conversations will weave between the theoretical and the empirical, research and application, market pragmatics and social idealism. Proposals are welcome for paper presentations, workshops/interactive sessions, posters/exhibits, or colloquia. For more information, please visit http://constructedenvironment.com/the-conference/call-for-papers.

***"The Resilience of Vernacular Heritage in Asian Cities,"* Singapore: November 6–7, 2014. Call for papers, deadline: July 31, 2014.** The conference focuses on the interplay between cultural practices and the production of urban space and placemaking that create the living vernacular heritage of neighborhoods and communities. The attention given to the vitality of vernacular heritage for its own sake and in creating foundations for disaster resilience is an understudied dimension of research on such contemporary issues as the right to the city and spatial justice. For more information, please visit http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/events_categorydetails.asp?categoryid=6&eventid=1529.

Guide for Preparation of Manuscripts

1. GENERAL
The editors invite readers to submit manuscripts. Please send all initial submissions to *TDSR* Editor Nezar AlSayyad at iaste@berkeley.edu with a cc to *TDSR* Managing Editor David Moffat at ddmoffat@aol.com. Place the title of the manuscript, the author's name and a 50-word biographical sketch on a separate cover page. The title only should appear again on the first page of text. Manuscripts are circulated for review without identifying the author. Manuscripts are evaluated by a blind peer-review process.

2. LENGTH AND FORMAT
Manuscripts should not exceed 25 standard 8.5" x 11" [a4] double-spaced pages (about 7500 words). Leave generous margins.

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

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

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

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

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

6. REFERENCES
Do not use a general bibliography format. Use a system of numbered reference notes, located at the end of sentences, 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.

7. DIAGRAMS, DRAWINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS
Illustrations will be essential for most articles accepted for publication in the journal, however, each article can only be accompanied by a maximum of 20 illustrations.

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

8. ELECTRONIC IMAGE RESOLUTION AND FILE TYPE
All images accepted for publication should be submitted as separate grayscale TIFF or JPEG files of at least 300 DPI at the actual size they will appear on the printed page. Images taken directly from the Web are unacceptable unless they have been sourced at 300 DPI.

9. CAPTIONS AND FIGURE PREFERENCES
Please include all graphic material on separate pages at the end of the text. Caption text and credits should not exceed 50 words per image. Use identical numbering for images and captions. The first time a point is made in the main body of text that directly relates to a piece of graphic material, please indicate so at the end of the appropriate sentence with a simple reference in the form of "**(FIG. 1)**." Use the designation "**(FIG.)**" and a single numeric progression for all graphic material. Clearly indicate the appropriate **FIG** number on each illustration page.

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

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

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

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

14. ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION
PDF files are acceptable for initial submission and peer review. All accepted article texts must be submitted as MS Word files. Submission of final artwork for accepted articles may be by CD, email attachment, or electronic file transfer service. Accepted artwork must comply with the file-size requirements in item 8 above.

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

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