WHITE PAPERS
BLACK MARKS

ARCHITECTURE, RACE, CULTURE

edited by LESLEY NAA NORLE LOKKO

WHITE PAPERS, BLACK MARKS
ARCHITECTURE, RACE, CULTURE

edited by **LESLEY NAA NORLE LOKKO**

with essays by

ARAYA ASGEDOM
ANA BETANCOUR
KWASI BOATENG
J. YOLANDE DANIELS
FELECIA DAVIS
KIM DOVEY
PETER HASDELL
EDWARD IHEJIRIKA
JANE M. JACOBS
MATHILDE LOCHERT
CHRIS NASAH
MALINDI NELUHENI
MITCHELL SQUIRE
MICHAEL STANTON
N. OLA UDUKU
IMOGEN WARD KOUAO

WHITE PAPERS, BLACK MARKS
ARCHITECTURE, RACE, CULTURE

For my father

Opanim Yaw Boakye, chief Adinkra printer of the *Maame Tabisb Workshop*, demonstrating the *nhwimm* (crossing). These divisions are drawn onto plain cloth with a wooden comb before it is stamped with Adinkra symbols, which carry proverbial meanings. The hand-printed cloth is used on funeral occasions to say 'farewell' to the departed.

Photo credit:
Imogen Ward Kouao, Ntonso, Ashanti, Ghana, January 1997

Contents

1:1

ONE ON ONE

ALL SCALES

BIOGRAPHY

LESLEY NAA NORLE LOKKO was born in Scotland, UK, of Ghanaian-Scots parentage. She completed her primary and secondary school in Ghana, West Africa, and studied languages and sociology in the UK and the USA. After working variously as an office clerk, barmaid and marketing manager, she returned to the UK and received her BSc in Architecture from the Bartlett School of Architecture, London, in 1992, and her Diploma in Architecture from the same institution in 1995. She has taught at the Bartlett, the University of Greenwich and Iowa State University. She has worked in practice in South Africa, Namibia, France and most recently, with Elsie Owusu Architects, an all-black women's practice in London. She is currently assistant professor of architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago where she is developing a full-time Masters of Design in Architecture programme focusing specifically on issues of race, cultural identity and ethnicity in architecture.

0

INTRODUCTION

Aesthetics.
Apartheid.
Authenticity.
Architecture.
Barbarity.
Binaries.
Centre
Civilisation.
Colonial.
Culture
Diasporic.
Difference.
Diversity.
Dominant.
Empire.
Essentialist.
Ethnicity.
Eurocentrism.
Exclusion.
Hierarchy.
Hybrids.
Identity.
Imitation.
Imperial.
Independence.
Indigenous.
Linear.
Location.
Margins.
Meaning.
Migrations.
Multicultural.
Oppositions.
Other.
Peripheral.
Place.
Pluralism.
Post-colonial.
Primitivism.
Purity.
Race.
Representation.
Resistance.
Segregation.
Space.
Stereotype.
Symbolism.
Territory.
Theory.
Third World. [1]

A new language...is a kind of scar and it heals after a while
into a passable imitation of what went before.[2]

FIRST WORDS

I came into this world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects.

Frantz Fanon, The Fact of Blackness[3]

I do have a right to interact with architecture as a cultural discipline, not merely as a person who is able to make decisions. I have a right to articulate how architecture feels, to me, and what makes it manifest; to be able to experience and relay architecture beyond the object of someone else's examinations and beyond a traditional academic perspective; to simply place my experience at the centre and use that location for seeing and understanding.

LaVerne Wells-Bowie, Art on My Mind[4]

Let me be painfully clear about the subject of this book.

White Papers, Black Marks is a study of the relationship between two highly symbolic and overworked terms, 'race' and architecture. Whilst it is universally accepted that the makers and users of architecture have historically and culturally been positioned as white, scant attention has been paid to the racial identity of either maker or user and to the impact on the discipline of the mythical identity of the white, male and 'universal' architect. The seventeen contributors to this anthology have responded to the following questions: what importance does 'race' have as any kind of category in the study of architecture and the shaping of the built environment? In making, using and studying architecture, does 'race' matter? Should it?

The questions are demanding, as are the responses. A number of fundamental questions immediately surface. What is 'race'? What is architecture? Why these two terms? Why now? And where and how does one begin?

A careful examination of the history of Western architecture and architectural thought reveals very little. In most, if not all, of the thinking about the proper study of architecture, 'race' has been an invisible, unknowable quantity. The casual omission

of Africa from Bannister Fletcher's influential 'Tree of Architecture' speaks volumes here. 'History', in this instance, is clear: blacks, either as Africans or as diasporic cultures, have historically had nothing to say about architecture—as a consequence, architecture has had little to say in response. 'Race', understood here both as an overarching, essentializing trope of 'difference' and as the day-to-day experiential racist reality of millions, and how a deeper understanding of its complexities might reflect on architecture is the conversation we, as practitioners, educators, theorists, black and white (as if those were the only two available categories) never have. This, then, is the conversation that lies at the heart of this book. 'Race' and Architecture. How *do* these phenomena interact?

The territory thus mapped out is at once demanding and strange. Demanding because the territory (and here I refer to the discourse and not this book), as it relates specifically to architecture, is relatively new—the book's primary objective is to carve out a space for the continued exploration of this relationship, to bring the discourses covered—or perhaps constituted?—by 'race' under the architectural lens. And strange because the idea of calling upon architecture to respond to concerns of 'race' and identity—or more specifically, cultural identity—is a curious one, not least because architecture, generally speaking, is rather slow off the mark.

> *Historical analysis has generally supported the view that the role of the architect is to project on the ground the images of social institutions, translating the economic or political structure of society into buildings or groups of buildings. Hence architecture was, first and foremost, the adaptation of space to the existing socio-economic structure.*[5]

Although it has recently been possible (and possibly even fashionable) to reference architecture through a set of 'other' voices—philosophy, art history, feminist theory, etc., its traditional voice is the drawing, the model, the treatise-manifesto and, of course, the building. Discussions of architecture, therefore, are often limited to

traditional formal qualities, supposedly intrinsic to architectural form, such as quality of light, space, organization, materials, axialities, orders and so on. This reduction supports the classification of architecture as an object-driven exercise—the building, validated through reproduction of those same qualities, is, in the end, everything. But it could be argued that this is a language subject to a number of hidden forces. We know that techniques of representation, production, language and vision are historically and ideologically constituted. We know too, importantly, that the terms 'space, site, form, architect and user'[6] are themselves historical and ideological, not universal and neutral. But understanding intuitively if not concretely (no pun intended) that architecture has somehow failed to acknowledge its 'other' presence is unfortunately only the most tentative of steps on a long and difficult journey. Here it quickly becomes necessary to step backwards and in relation to architecture, perhaps, sideways.
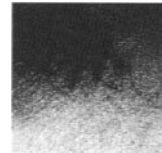
Photo credit: 'Armpit', Lesley Naa Norle Lokko, London, 1995.

STEPPING BACK—'RACE'

To understand the house Negro...you gotta go back.....way back.

Laws…are made of skin and hair, the relative thickness and thinness of lips and the relative height of the bridge of the nose. That is all, that is everything. Christianity against other gods, the indigenous against the foreign invader, the masses against the ruling classes—…all these become interpretative meanings of the differences seen, touched and felt, of skin and hair. The stinking fetish made of contrasting bits of skin and hair, the scalping of millions of lives, dangles on the cross in place of Christ. Skin and hair. It has mattered more than anything else in the world.[7]

Historical accounts of the origins of 'race' and racist ideologies are multiple and complex. In their excellent book, *Race*, editors Steven Gregory and Roger Sanjek

provide a thorough and somewhat startling account of the birth and development of 'race' as an objective term of classification. Their bold opening statement: 'Race is the framework of ranked categories segmenting the human population that was developed by western Europeans following their global expansion beginning in the 1400s'[8] prefaces a careful and detailed analysis of the complex origins of racist thinking.

Mirroring Sanjek, let me begin by stating clearly: 'race' is, in fact, not 'real'. Racial appearance—skin colour, hair and facial features, to put it squarely—relies on a tiny proportion of the many genes that make up 'man'. The biological or genetic differences between humans that result in differences in skin colour, hair, etc., are less significant, in a genetic sense, than the differences between one species of cat and another. To carry the analogy further, those genes responsible for differing skin hues are not enough to differentiate between a cat and a dog (who, incidentally, are as alike as they are 'different'). Differences in skin colour, hair, etc., do exist, to be sure, but these are geographically and continuously spread across the globe. Importantly, these differences gradually merge into one another: there are no abrupt and clear start and stop points. 'Simply stated, there is no line in nature between a "white" or a "black" race, or a "Caucasoid" and a "Mongoloid" race—there are no racial "continental divides"'[9]. In his seminal essay, 'Writing "Race" and the Difference It Makes', Henry Louis Gates, Jr, examining the equally intricate relationship between 'race' and literature, argues that 'race, as a meaningful criterion within the biological sciences, has long been recognized to be a fiction.'[10] For a far more complete account of the historical foundations of race, the selected bibliography at the end of this anthology points readers towards a number of recent (and some not-so-recent) works from a variety of different and interdisciplinary perspectives. In particular, for readers seeking a more complex understanding of the relationship between 'race' and (to mention only a few issues) identity politics, Third World nationalism and (post)colonial discourse, for example, Robert Stam and Ella Shohat's comprehensive work, *Unthinking Eurocentrism,* and Richard Dyer's provocative book, *White,* which examines

the debate from the [O]ther, white side, are excellent references. As Shohat and Stam argue, '[Race] is above all a social relation—"systematised hierarchization implacably pursued", in Fanon's words—anchored in material structures and embedded in historical configurations of power.'[11]

> *It is essential that we historicise race and racism if we are to understand and struggle against their continuing significance in the present and the future. We need to understand how and why a ranked hierarchy of races has been put to such destructive uses, been affirmed 'scientifically', been challenged repeatedly and yet dies so hard. Its toll in terms [of] human worth, dignity and personhood has been enormous. It has transformed and deformed the lives, courses and psyches of its victims and also of its beneficiaries. Its roots and growth lie in nothing more 'real' than the conquest, dispossession, enforced transportation and economic exploitation of human beings over five centuries that racial categorisation and racist social ordering have served to expedite and justify. As part of the legacy of these centuries, millions of people today continue to accept inherited racial categories as fixed in nature, and to interpret the systemic inequalities of racist social orders as based on 'real' differences among 'real' races.*[12]

'Race', in other words, as a trope of difference, is an invention of sorts, a convenient construct through which economic and material practices (slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, etc.) have sought to justify their actions. No case exists, in any of the 'scientific' categories through which we understand the world around us—biology, physiology, genealogy—for the attribution of certain physical, moral or intellectual capabilities based on skin colour. When we speak of the black 'race' or the Aryan 'race', we are actually speaking in metaphor: biologically, no such 'thing' exists. Systems of class and differing methods of hierarchical ranking have existed amongst human societies for thousands of years. Indeed, as David Sibley argues, 'the human landscape can be read as a landscape of exclusion.'[13] (For a more detailed explanation of the psychological and social roots of
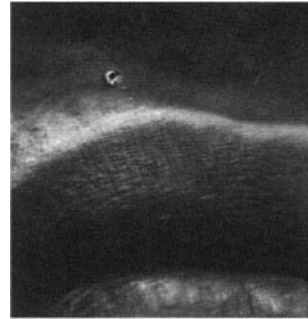
Photo credits: 'Lips', Lesley Naa Norle Lokko, London, 1995.

exclusionary practices in the West, in particular, I direct readers towards Sibley's work, *Geographies of Exclusion*).

But there are important distinctions to be made between older forms of social discrimination and the development of 'race' as the determining factor in post-1400s European examples of the same. In the caste regimes of south Asia or even the Greeks of the ancient world, for example, colour differences, though certainly present, were not the only indicators of position within a given system. Religion and theology played an important role in determining how and where tropes of difference (such as caste) were applied. In Hindu karma theology, as Gregory notes, higher- or lower-caste status was a distinct possibility for all, 'either in previous lives or future rebirths.'[14] Here, class and colour are unrelated: within each caste, a variety of skin colours exists. In slavery, too, certain differences emerge between slavery as practiced by pre-industrial social orders and the new, 'racialized' slavery of the post-1400s world. In earlier slave social orders, the geographical and linguistic proximity of slave to slave-holder meant that the two groups were rarely culturally or physically [read: racially] distinct. Slave and slave-holder populations often melted into one another, as historical fortunes waxed and waned. In such societies, the status of slave was not absolute and unchanging. Complex and sophisticated laws usually accompanied its practice, allowing the descendants of slaves to accumulate, acculturate and often disappear. It was not until the European encounter with slavery that slave status became 'racially' fixed and 'perpetually demarcated.'[15]

Prior to the sixteenth century the world was not 'race'-conscious and there was no incentive for it to become so. The ancient world was a small world and, because of the gradual transition in physical types which is to be found in all continuous geographic areas, the physical differences...were not very marked. Even when the existence of such physical differences was recognised, they had no immediate social connotations. Even the Crusades failed to make Europe 'race'-conscious...it was only with the discovery of the New World and the sea routes

to Asia that 'race' assumed a social significance. Europeans have not been content merely to accept their present social and political dominance as an established fact. Almost from the first, they have attempted to rationalise the situation and to prove to themselves that their subjugation of other racial groups was natural and inevitable.[16]

Thus, coterminous with the rising economic dependence on slavery of half a dozen European economies in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, emerging racial 'theories' began validating and justifying its practice. In the late seventeenth century and particularly by the early eighteenth century, efforts were '[mounting] within the citadels of science in western Europe to place the exploited peoples into natural schemes that fit with their current positions.' As Albert Hourami famously noted, 'to be in someone else's power…induces doubts about the ordering of the universe while those who have power can assume it is part of the natural order of things and invent or adopt ideas which justify their possession of it.'[17]

By the early nineteenth century, 'race' and racio-logical discourses were widely understood and accepted, both in populist and intellectual terms. The emergence of anthropology (the 'science' of races, as it was called) during this period, for example, firmly established the concept if not the 'truth' of 'race' as a legitimate differentializing trope. For readers interested in studying this particular period further, Henry Louis Gates, Jr's *'Race', Writing and the Difference It Makes* is a most valuable starting point. In particular, Sander Gilman's 'Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth Century Art, Medicine and Literature' and Patrick Brantlinger's 'Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent', both essays in Gates' anthology, are excellent sources.

STEPPING BACK—DIASPORA AND THE COLONIAL CONDITION

You were called Bimbircocak
And all was well that way
You have become Victor–Émile–Louis–Henri–Joseph
Which
So far as I recall
Does not reflect your kinship with
Rockefeller.[18]

To understand why the thirteen essays gathered here are at all significant and how they came to *be*, it is important to examine a related but distinct period in the history of 'race'. Colonialism, a historical offspring of slavery and the economic
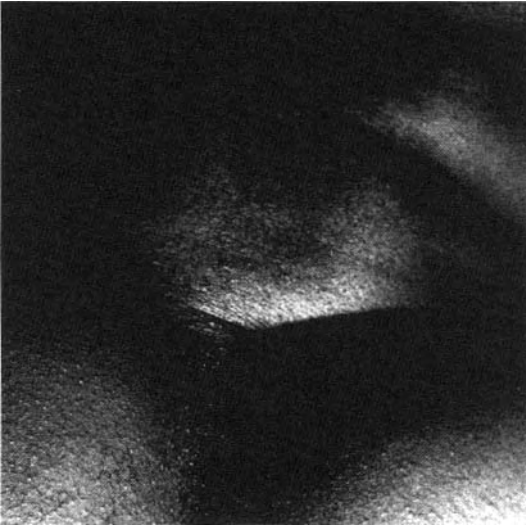
Photo credit:
'Chest', Lesley Naa Norle Lokko, London, 1996

practices of the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, is the process by which Europeans 'reached positions of economic, military, political and cultural hegemony in much of Asia, Africa and the Americas.'[19] Shohat and Stam's chapter, 'The Legacy of Colonialism', in *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, provides a succinct critical overview of this important period. Although, as they point out, colonialism as a practice is not uniquely European, again what distinguishes this 300-year territorial expansion was its scale, its affiliation to global powers and 'its attempted submission of the world to a single, "universal" regime of truth and power'.[20] The origins of colonialism lie in the Crusades, in England's occupation of Ireland and in the Spanish *reconquista*, with the opening up of the 'New World' and the economic institutionalization of slavery, but it was actually in the nineteenth century that the expansionist tendencies of western European powers reached their ultimate conclusion: in imperialism. In 1914, roughly 85 per cent of the world's surface was controlled by European powers, up from 67 per cent, some 40 years earlier. Following Shohat and Stam,

> *[imperialism] refers to a specific phase or form of colonialism, running roughly from 1870 to 1914, when conquest of territory became linked to a systematic search for markets and an expansionist exporting of capital, and also, in an extended sense, to First World interventionist politics in the post-independence era.*[21]

The colonial process can more or less be split in two distinct forms. One, involving the distant control of land and resources (the Spanish in the Philippines, the French in Indochina, the British in West Africa, etc.) and the other, the direct settlement of Europeans in places as far afield as South Africa, Canada, Algeria and Australia). Curiously, the words 'colonization', 'culture' and 'cult' (i.e. religion) all stem from the same Latin verb *colo*, whose past participle is *cultus* and whose future participle is *culturus*. Occupying and cultivating the land, affirming one's origins and the passing on of tradition and values to younger generations are therefore etymologically linked. Again, it should be emphasized that although colonialism *per se*

was practised by various empires prior to the Europeans (by the Aztecs, Incas, Romans and Greeks, for example), the arguments that form this book arise from the conditions specific to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and not from earlier periods.

Out of this history arise two inter-related but discrete conditions: one, the post-colonial condition (which I will briefly examine further) and two, the diasporic condition which is of particular interest to a number of the contributors to this book. For those readers unfamiliar with the wider discourse around post-colonial and diasporic theory, the suggested reading bibliography in the anthology points toward many of the seminal texts in this growing body of knowledge.

The term *post-colonial* is a complex, hybrid and often unstable construction that refers to a wide range of locales, moments in history and often divergent perspectives. It is impossible, in the short space of this introduction, to attempt a comprehensive summary of its history, but there are a number of issues associated with the term that are worth expanding upon in the context of this collection of essays. The term itself emerges largely out of the Anglo-American academe and addresses issues arising from colonial relations, in particular from the cultural and political aftermath (as the prefix 'post' implies) of independence from colonial powers. The term tends to be associated with 'Third World' or 'developing' countries who achieved independence after the Second World War, beginning with India in 1947, but also refers to the struggle of European settler societies to question and, in some cases, overthrow European cultural domination. As Shohat and Stam point out,

> *in some postcolonial literary theory, the term expands exponentially to include literary productions from all societies 'affected' by colonialism, including Great Britain and the U.S. But given that virtually all countries have been afftected by colonialism, whether as coloniser, colonised or both at the same time, the all-inclusive formulation homogenises very different national and racial [sic] formations.*[22]

To equate the case of Ghana, who gained independence from Britain in 1957, with the case of South Africa, the last of the African countries to achieve independence, or even to parallel the South African experience with the Australian, is misleading. Clearly, the myriad cultural, political and geographical (not to mention economic, religious, ethnic, linguistic, etc.) differences within the post-colonial world cannot be reduced to a single and/or simple condition.[23] To complicate the matter further, the term is also associated with the presence of a 'Third World Diaspora' living within the metropoli of the 'First World', in the academe in particular. Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary* defines diaspora as 'b: the area outside Palestine settled by Jews, c: the Jews living outside Palestine or modern Israel and 2: *migration* (the great black ~ to the cities of the North and West [US] in the 1940s and 1950s.'[24] Despite this narrow definition, it is widely understood that the term 'diaspora' now refers not only to the specific phase of Jewish dispersement described by Webster but also to the general condition of displaced and dispersed peoples across the globe. In this way, the words 'post-colonial' and 'diaspora' acquire both a spatial and temporal significance in static and dynamic terms.

In many ways, to refer back to the statement made earlier in this introduction, understanding how these thirteen essays come to be is also an exercise in understanding the wider implications of the post-colonial and diasporic 'movements'. That the question initially posed to the contributors can be understood as part of a larger questioning of cultural values, specifically in education, is due to a complex shifting of identities across the globe. As Mufti and Shohat state in the Introduction to *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives*,

> *it is no accident that [these questions] are being asked in this form, at this time, and at this site. For the last two decades have seen people of colour and/or recent Third World [sic] origin entering, along with white women, the First World academy at an unprecedented level. And previously taboo questions concerning gender, race and colonial discourse have acquired, despite continuing resistance from some entrenched sectors, a certain responsibility.*[25]

Photo credits: Jonathan Hill, London, 1994

The extent to which an anthology such as this one depends upon a mobile, professional (middle-class) and certainly intellectual migration both to and from the 'First' and 'Third' worlds is generally under-acknowledged. This 'fluidity', coming at a time when the immigration controls of most Western nations are tightening, accurately characterizes the schizophrenic nature of contemporary global capitalism. It is against this background that much of the recent scholarship centred around issues of multiculturalism, diversity and identity politics should be considered.

STEPPING SIDEWAYS—HYBRIDS, NOMADS, ARCHITECTURE AND OTHER THINGS

> *My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don't care—Englishman I am (though not proud of it), from the South London suburbs and going somewhere.*[26]

It is precisely the spatial, temporal and cultural ambiguity of the diasporic/post-colonial condition that makes a project such as this one both timely and (dare we say it) important. From deep within a discipline that, as has been previously acknowledged, is notoriously 'slow off the mark', the contributors both represent and demarcate remarkably fluid territory. A new generation of 'Third Worlders' is growing up—urbane, metro- and cosmopolitan. At home in a number of locales and languages, this group represents a new kind of (im)migrant labour. Education and opportunity have combined to afford (although not always in the material sense) a greater sense of 'belonging' or at least an acceptance of a dual or split sense of identity. Bound by a different set of constraints than the preceding generation, the inclusion of these traditionally 'othered' voices in countless aspects of public and creative life has significantly shifted the balance of power.

Drawing analogies between disciplines is inevitable. Literature, in particular, has been an important precedent for a number of the writers here. For some, the way

in which so many post-colonial writers have identified the literary text as the site of cultural control and used it to reveal the way in which Eurocentric notions about 'race', identity and difference lie (and have always lain) at the heart of the literary and therefore cultural imagination, has been crucial. Some years ago, I came across the African–American writer Toni Morrison and read her landmark book, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the American Literary Tradition*. This opened the first of many doors.

> *Reading [making] and writing [using] are not all that distinct for the writer [architect]. Both exercises require being alert and ready for unaccountable beauty, for the intricateness or simple elegance of the writer's [architect's] imagination, for the world that the imagination evokes. Both require being mindful of the places where the imagination sabotages itself, locks its own gates, pollutes its vision. Reading [making] and writing [using] mean being aware of the writer's [architect's] notions of risk and safety, the serene achievement of, or sweaty fight for, meaning and response-ability.[27]*

Morrison spoke of writing and reading, not of making and using, and of the writer, not the architect. The substitutions are mine. Her essay offers a rare insight into how and why racial formations lie at the heart of the American literary endeavour, and how the construct of blackness both permitted and necessitated a counter-construction of whiteness. What, she asks, is 'blackness' for? Whom does it serve? What are the effects of 'blackness'—both on perpetrator and victim? Uncovering a (literal) black hole in the history of the American novel, she examines the ways in which 'blackness' is constructed and hidden, submerged and exposed. The strategies she uses for discovering and uncovering this presence are worth expanding on for a number of reasons. As the extract above illustrates, Morrison's observation that 'reading and writing are not all that distinct for the writer' is important here. Crucially, writers are readers before they are writers, just as the user precedes the architect. For the architect and user, engaged simultaneously as performer and interpreter, the terms 'writing' and 'reading' (and 'making' and 'using' as I have

substituted), imply a shared world vision and an endlessly flexible language. One, as both maker and user, draws upon this language in order to further make. What are the implications—and alternatives—for both the maker and the product, if, as *White Papers, Black Marks* contends, the vision is no longer shared and the language intolerable?

Although readers are encouraged to read Morrison's essay in its entirety for a complete understanding of her argument, one of the examples she used is particularly apt in thinking about architecture and its relationship to 'blackness'. For this reason, I cite at length from her work.

Marie Cardinal's *The Words to Say It*, a simple illustration of 'how each of us reads, becomes engaged in and watches what is read, all at the same time',[28] is Morrison's entrance in the knotty subject of 'race' and literature. Ostensibly the story of one woman's battle and eventual triumph over her 'madness', it contains a number of submerged racial narratives. Morrison's fascination with the unearthing of those narratives is triggered by the following passage from Cardinal's story:

> *My first anxiety attack occurred during a Louis Armstrong concert. I was nineteen or twenty. Armstrong was going to improvise with his trumpet, to build a whole composition in which each note would be important and would contain within itself the essence of the whole. I was not disappointed: the atmosphere warmed up very fast. The scaffolding and flying buttresses of the jazz instruments supported Armstrong's trumpet, creating spaces which were adequate enough for it to climb higher, establish itself and take off again. The sounds of the trumpet sometimes piled up together, fusing a new musical base, a sort of matrix which gave birth to one precise, unique note, tracing a sound whose path was almost painful, so absolutely necessary had its equilibrium and duration become; it tore at the nerves of those who followed it. My heart began to accelerate, becoming more important than the music, shaking the bars of my ribcage, compressing my lungs so the air could no longer enter them. Gripped by panic at the idea of dying there in the middle of spasms, stomping feet and the crowd howling, I ran into the street like someone possessed.[29]*

The imagery that works as a catalyst for her [Cardinal's] anxiety attack is particularly powerful. 'What on earth was Louie playing that night? What was there in his music that drove this sensitive young girl hyperventilating into the street? [What] ignited her strong apprehension of death, as well as this curious flight from the genius of improvisation, sublime order, poise and the illusion of permanence...one precise, unique note, tracing a sound whose path was almost painful, so absolutely necessary had its equilibrium and duration become; it tore at the nerves of those [other than Armstrong, apparently] who followed it. These are wonderful tropes for the illness that was breaking up Cardinal's life. Would an Edith Piaf concert or a Dvorak composition have had the same effect? What solicited my attention was whether the cultural associations of jazz were as important to Cardinal's "possession" as were its intellectual foundations.'[30]

The observation shows how 'blackness' gives the writer a new source of imagery—'like water, flight, war, birth, religion and so on, [the imagery] that make[s] up the writer's kit.'[31] For the black writer (maker), this imagery is problematic. Unlike Cardinal, who was a colonialist, a pied-noir, a Frenchwoman born and raised in Algeria, Morrison does not 'have quite the same access to these traditionally useful constructs of blackness: neither blackness nor "people of colour" stimulates in me notions of excessive, limitless love, anarchy or routine dread. I cannot rely on these metaphorical shortcuts because I am a black writer struggling with and through a language that can powerfully evoke and enforce hidden signs of racial superiority, cultural hegemony and dismissive "othering" of people and language which are by no means marginal, or [are] already and completely known and knowable in my work.'[32] Importantly and again, unusually, 'blackness' is shown here to be a creative force— Morrison's agenda in *Playing in the Dark* is to expose the effect of this creativity on the literary imagination—and its product.

Her observations are persuasive. Turning away from literature and the literary landscape back towards architecture, her essay—and my substitutions—opens up a series of questions which directly address the identity of the architect and the nature

Photo credits: Jonathan Hill, London, 1994

of practice. What, if any, are the parallel 'shortcuts' in architecture that rely on 'traditionally useful constructs of blackness'?[33] Does architecture serve to evoke or enforce hidden signs of racial (spatial) superiority and cultural hegemony? If so, as the contributors here contend, how might one free its (architecture's) language from those same chains? For the black architect, struggling *with* and *through* this language and history, what are the metaphorical, physical, material and spatial opportunities and shortcuts available to him/her? How does the same architect achieve, amongst other things, 'meaning and response-ability'?

SUBJECT/MATTER

Let us begin at the 'beginning', beginning with sight. Vision, examined within the terms of Western history and Cartesian logic, is interesting for a number of reasons. Vision and the visual have dominated the modern era. From the Renaissance and the scientific revolution, modernity has concerned itself primarily with the sense of sight. With the invention of the telescope and microscope, vision suddenly is 'master' of all it surveys, both near and far. Visuality, in relation to architecture, is particularly interesting because it is the medium through which architecture, by and large, is imagined and experienced: the architect's medium of choice. How and where does this medium intersect with 'race'?

The late medieval fascination with the metaphysical implications of light (light as divine *lux*, rather than perceived *lumen*) gave rise to the linear perspective, symbolizing total harmony between mathematics and God's will. Light and dark have a permanent and symbolic place in Western thought—the medievals often conceived of God in terms of light, and regarded it as the original metaphor for spiritual realities. The casual use of the terms 'black', 'dark', 'night', etc., subtly and implicitly fix that original relationship, even when religious connotations have been eroded. But light and dark are also simple, fundamental qualities of the architectural experience: with the efforts of Brunelleschi and Alberti, the three-dimensional space of the world is

translated on to a two-dimensional surface and light enters the body of architecture, chasing out the dark (bad).

Hal Foster, in *Vision and Visuality*, draws attention to the 'difference within the visual—between the mechanism of sight and its historical techniques, between the datum of vision and its discursive determinations—a difference, many differences, among how we see, how we are able, allowed or made to see and how we see this 'unseeing' or the unseen.'[34] The three-dimensional, rationalized space of perspectival vision bequeathed the singular, static and fixated 'eye' to the modern world (and its architecture) and this again has radical implications for the racialized maker/user. If the black architect 'belongs' to a tradition that sees the world neither as a divine text, nor as a mathematically regulated spatio-temporal order which privileges only the dispassionate eye of the neutral and objective viewer, what alternative strategies for seeing (and thus making and using) are available?

Any number can provide a base for counting, though in most cultures the base has been five, ten or twenty, in correspondence with the groupings of fingers and toes. One of the curiosities of ethnology is the quaternary system of the Yuki Indians in California. They counted on the spaces between fingers.[35]

The ideology that supported the imperial–colonial project was almost wholly reliant on a set of linguistic, physical and metaphorical binary groupings: us/them; West/East; master/slave; white/black—a set of convenient, if linguistically arbitrary, rules. European languages, in particular, are filled with references to the binaries of light and dark, good and evil, black and white. Prior to Derrida's deconstructionist reading of philosophy, epistemological, ethical and logical systems were constructed on the basis of these conceptual oppositions. One of the terms in each set is privileged, the other debased. It is important to remember that most of the binaries organize knowledge in ways that are flattering to the Eurocentric imagination. Derrida's analysis of the denigrated and marginalized term within the binary

relationship is interesting to anyone concerned with 'race': his readings suggest a binary relationship all of its own. Again, like Morrison, his analysis points to the fact that, rather than being marginal, blackness is absolutely central to the construction of whiteness—ain't no white without black. Contrary to the 'natural' unities presented in the pairing of opposites, these pairings are actually the result of a process of overdeterminism: the constitution of an identity is always based on exclusion and the establishment of a violent hierarchy between the two resultant poles. Fanon understood this violence only too well. 'Decolonisation, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a programme of complete disorder. [It] is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature...their first encounter was marked by violence.'[36]

In the aftermath of the imperial endeavour, a new set of conditions comes into play: diverse, different and hybrid. The existing binaries have been replaced with a language that attempts to resist the old couplings in favour of a new set of spatio-social conditions. This is the space of a new experience, one that belongs solely to the contemporary, diasporic and post-colonial world. The binaries of white/black; same/different might therefore be replaced by 'white within black' or vice versa, 'same without difference', 'black between dark'. The possibilities for an architectural rendering (or multiple renderings) of the terms are myriad. Stuart Hall's writings on the issue of identity provide an interesting model for architectural thought. Speaking of identities, he writes:

> *'though they seem to evoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming, rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from' so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation.*[37] *(my italics).*

In other forms of cultural production, most notably music and film,

practitioners have explored a wide range of alternative strategies for pursuing their art. Some of these strategies overlook more formal conventions of music and film making in favour of modes of representation such as rap (analogous to the griot oral tradition of the Senegambian peoples of West Africa), jazz, carnival, the magical realist, the resistant postmodernist and the paramodernist[38] (perhaps more appropriate?). Jazz, in particular, has provided fertile ground for the African–American architectural imagination. Bakhtin's reading of the carnival as an anti-classical aesthetic that rejects formal harmony and unity in favour of the asymmetrical, the heterogeneous, the miscegenated is another powerful strategy worth considering. Demonstrating a kind of rebellious, vulgar beauty, the carnival favours what Rabelais termed a grammatica jocosa (laughing grammar) which frees language (music, dance, form) from decorum and formality. The carnival rejects the idealized notion of beauty and exalts and exaggerates the grotesque, the base, the raw—carnival, essentially, is anti-grammatical. Again, this concept can be linked directly to 'race'—to the diasporic experience. Black musicians have always improvised, turning the throw-away, cast-off detritus (washboards, tubs, oil drums, steel pans) into dynamic, energizing musicality. Jazz musicians have always 'stretched the capabilities of European instruments by playing the trumpet "higher" than it was supposed to go, by "hitting two keys, mis-hitting keys" (like Monk did), flubbing notes to fight the equipment. In such cases, the violation of aesthetic etiquette and decorum goes hand in hand with an implicit critique of conventional and political hierarchies.'[39] The architectural equivalent of treating 'notes as indeterminate, inherently unstable sonic frequencies rather than...fixed phenomena'[40] is a critique that strikes right at the heart of the discipline. Irrationality, disorder, instability? Architecture, as we know, is not in the business of providing these things. To return to Stuart Hall's earlier comment regarding the use of historical resources, the relationship between culture, memory and the body is another direction worth exploring.

In much of sub-Saharan Africa, orality includes both oral histories and oral methods of storytelling. Whilst the orality/literacy binary has been powerfully

questioned by Derrida and Bakhtin, to name a few, the '*non*-literate equals *il*-iterate' paradigm is still widely accepted. However, in thinking about the relationship between the body and collective memory, it becomes apparent that there is more to the pairing of these terms than meets the eye. Gordimer's phrase, 'living flesh, in place of petrified monument'[41] conjures strongly a vision of another relationship between the body and space, unrelated to the more normative discussions of 'bodies in space', 'architecture as the envelope of the body', and indeed, the oft-detailed relationship between body, medicine and architecture. The question, then, of how to draw on these traditions, interpreting them in ways that not only satisfy the 'past/present/future' dichotomy 'solved' by the tradition of orality, but offers something new, something to enable the 'process of becoming', is one that preoccupies every one of the contributors here. In architecture, as in other disciplines, the question of whose pleasures are pursued, who gets to build what, whose histories and experiences are represented and whose voice is heard—is largely inextricable from the more complex question of identity. 'An identity based on power never has to develop consciousness of itself as responsible, it has no sense of its limits except as these are perceived in opposition to others.'[42] And, as countless others have shown us, constructs of pleasure and desire—or at the very least notions of pleasure and desire—lie at the very heart of any creative discipline. 'Majority' identities pursue their own pleasures— from the writing of history to the media of representation. The world is usually organized according to principles that flatter the dominant imagination. Indeed, in thinking about dominance and the dominant imagination, it should be noted that many of the issues under discussion here—in particular the challenge to the hegemony of the white, male and European subject—have been the focus of feminist writings in architecture and urban planning.

Again, a more detailed bibliography is provided for readers wishing to explore this area further, but Beatrice Colomina's *Sexuality and Space* and Daphne Spain's *Gendered Spaces* would provide excellent places to start. The anthology of projects and writings, *The Architect: Reconstructing Her Practice,* by Francesca Hughes, is also an

excellent example of work that takes on a number of forms (written, drawn and built), centered around the question of gender that would be extremely useful to readers interested in opening up the terms of practice.

LAST WORDS

> *All the questions we have asked so far point to the question of doctrine and that can only be placed in a political context. How is it possible, for example, to develop the possibilities of a new inventive faculty that would allow the architect to develop possibilities of the new technology without aspiring to uniformity, without developing models for the whole world? An inventive faculty of architectural difference which would bring out new diversity with different limitations, other heterogeneities other than the existing ones, which would not be reduced to the technology of planning? The college (building) cannot take place if one cannot find a place, an architectural form for it which bears resemblance to what might be sought in it. There is a formless desire for another form, the desire for a new location, spaces, architectures, new ways of living and of thinking.*[43]
>
> Derrida sums it up so well. 'New ways of living and of thinking'?

From the outset, then, questions of identity—of the identity of the voices presented here—were always already weighted. Who, in the emerging discourse, gets to speak? What are the social, cultural and—always, *always*—political implications of 'giving' voice? Who 'gives' it? Who takes? The task here, deceptively simple, is to construct a new set of pleasures, to claim certain histories as desirable and—above all—to enact. Far from presenting themselves as problematic, the complexities, in the end, point to a new set of possibilities and to two issues in particular: one, the urgent need to establish all of this—from 'race' to 'identity'—as valid, fully 'operational' territories of architectural exploration, and two, the equally urgent need to bring these territories into mainstream architectural discourse. 'Race', like any other subject of inquiry, must be made available, must be developed, must be inventive. This, I want to insist, is the driving premise behind the collection. Just as the 'building cannot take place

if one cannot find a place, an architectural form for it which bears resemblance to what might be sought in it', neither can 'race' be opened critically if we cannot find the place to do so. Aware that the anthology poses many more questions than it answers, for the moment, the thirteen essays gathered here have staked out their turf. Together, the authors argue for the right to call their histories 'the ones that count'.[44] In doing so, they form the beginnings of a rich and complex set of responses to the original question: 'what importance does "race" have as any kind of category in the study of architecture and the shaping of the built environment?' They present themselves as is: diverse, divergent and often only partially complete. Through the very open-ended nature of their inquiries, it is hoped that others—students, practitioners, educators—will take up the challenges put forward here and allow their investigations to expand and alter the terms of the debate as we currently understand it.

1:125,000

URBAN ANGLES
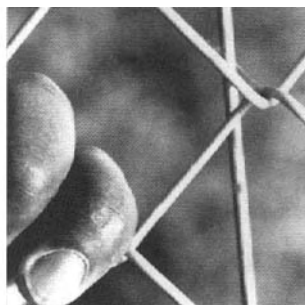
Section I, 1:125,000, is perhaps the most widely explored scale in terms of the existing literature around post-colonial 'space', migration, displacement and architecture. The writings gathered here span a relatively wide area of interest, covering three continents (Africa, North and South America) and thrice as many nations.

Chapter 1, by Dr Ola Uduku is entitled 'The Colonial Face of Educational Space'. The chapter explores the links between Victorian attitudes to racial hierarchy and the subsequent formal development of educational space, drawing on her extensive research in Nigeria, West Africa and Cape Province, South Africa. Originally part of Dr Uduku's doctoral thesis, the chapter analyses the relationship of built form to the ethos and practice of education in the 'colonies'. Although at times it would seem as though housing has dominated the analytical discourse of the colonial city, educational and other institutional buildings can arguably be considered to have had equal and sometimes higher prestige in the urban arena. The direct relationship of education to 'development' at an economic, social and cultural level is clear: societies throughout the 'developing' world still consider literacy, especially through access to educational institutions such as schools, to be the primary example of 'development'. Community aspirations remain centred on producing a well-educated (and therefore 'monied') youth who will use their knowledge and remuneration from well-paid jobs to bring 'development' to the grass roots. As Dr Uduku shows, the educational building or school has remained a powerful symbol or local 'citadel' which reinforces local beliefs associated with the prestige of 'Western' knowledge. Its symbolic (and hence formal) importance cannot be underestimated in its relevance to the shaping and development of the colonial and post-colonial city. Two interesting theories emerge: in the West in particular, new educational theories encouraging life-long learning and the availability of non site-specific technology means that the need for physical educational infrastructures is being played down. In the 'developing' world, however, infrastructure such as schools and often local and national views on education remain highly 'traditional' and grounded in an inherited colonial institutional framework. Through the careful use of examples and exceptions to the rule, Dr Uduku analyses

how and why certain factors have ensured that educational architecture in many post-colonial states has retained the imprint of archaic and sometimes discredited educational theories of the past. She examines and challenges the now considered 'traditional' design factors in contemporary schools that reinforce or romanticize the architecture of a past colonial era at the expense of the more relevant and pressing requirements of an increasingly global 'learning society' in the late twentieth century.

Chapter 2, by the South African planner, Malindi Neluheni, examines the problems associated with a predominantly European (white) attitude, not only towards the discipline of planning as a whole but also towards the acceptance and inclusion of previously silenced voices within the discipline's professional and educational arenas. In the post-apartheid era, as Neluheni writes, 'writing has become an increasingly problematic issue, particularly academic writing, where a certain openness and freedom of expression, crucial to the reconstruction of certain fields of research, has (wrongly) been assumed'. Historically, much has been written about life under apartheid, although this was done predominantly from outside of South Africa, rather than from within, in large part due to the very real threat of state-sponsored prosecution and persecution. However, the most controversial aspect of the issue of writing is (again) racial: it is 'better', she argues, for non-blacks to research and write about the plight of blacks than it is for blacks to write for and about themselves. Ironically, those who did not lift a finger during the many decades of oppression have suddenly become available to offer the solutions to South Africa's many problems, in particular, those affecting the urban environment. Those who are the subjects of new planning and urban initiatives in South Africa have, themselves, no access and influence to the information that is, ultimately, the stuff of their daily lives. As Sartre said, 'the exploited experience exploitation as their reality.' Neluheni goes on to show how,

> *in planning practice in South Africa, it is easier to gain access to a carefully-guarded discipline*
> *through consultancy (due to government legislation which specifies opportunities for previously*

disadvantaged persons through sub-contracting and mentorship) but in the academic arena the situation is quite different. It may be easier to enter the institutions (especially the segregated white universities with the best facilities and top-quality education) than it was, say, five years ago, but correspondingly harder to produce academically 'sound' work.

Thus, one of the most urgent problems within the planning profession of South Africa is the desire for certain segments of society to 'conform'. As the profession opens itself to blacks (the segment in question), they are drawn directly and immediately into a maelstrom of theories, philosophies and principles which are both out of reach and out of synch with their personal experiences. As pressure is applied to 'non-whites' to conform to the minority lifestyle, the greatest challenge facing the South African planning profession is one of standards—specifically, whose standards?'

'Lively Hazardous Places' are the subject of *Chapter 3*, by Kwasi Boateng and Chris Nasah, both practitioners and teachers in Ghana, the Cameroon and the UK, respectively. Boateng and Nasah are interested in the way in which the 'developed' world, through the available literature on urbanization and industrialization, has set the parameters by which societies are described as 'developed' or 'developing'. Their chapter focuses on the extent to which 'development' theory has failed to embrace the other factors which affect human settlement development, namely the social and cultural implications of urbanism and modernization. Boateng and Nasah show how, despite this recognition, the Rostow model presented in the 1960s has reappeared in the 1990s, justifying the economic-growth dominance of the broader development process. The human development perspective has taken second place, if at all, to economic development. Their chapter concentrates on the African region and draws on examples from Ghana and the Cameroon as case studies. Human settlements in these two countries have evolved to reflect strategies put in place by mostly public sector initiatives and delivered by a combination of both private and public sector organizations. The chapter examines human settlement provision in terms of the two

countries' location in the world economic system, their institutional structures, their political development and importantly, their cultural history and outlook. Most built environment professionals locate themselves at the delivery end of the process of developing the built environment. Policy takes place prior to project initiation, which is then reflected in the curricula of most departments of built environment faculties, a practice found both in developing and developed countries. Practice, for the most part, is struggling to cope with projects that are often conceived in developed countries, for the developing environment. Research, at policy and project stage, is seen to be a luxury. As they themselves state,

> the old debates about technology, local materials and craft will not be revisited here, not because they are no longer relevant, but simply because they do not address, in adequate detail, the challenges in a world where finance and technology have no fixed nationality. Who is setting the agendas for both practice and research for these lively hazardous places?

Chapter 4, Michael Stanton's contribution, is entitled 'The Rack and the Web: the Other City'. Picking up where Neluheni's chapter, 'Apartheid Urban Development', left off, this chapter examines the disintegration along racial lines of the American city, reminding us again and again that the same questions can and should be asked in different contexts. Stanton views both the physical form of the American city and its virtual equivalent, the computer communication model, as racialized systems of control and division. His argument stems from an understanding that the urban is always ideological—particularly in the USA. This applies not only to the political idea of the city, linked as it is etymologically to citizenship and the civic, but to the physical fact of the city itself—its grids and hierarchies. Americans remain hostile to the city as a concept, seeing it a pragmatically necessary evil and inheriting this prejudice from the Jeffersonian Pastoral. This antipathy derives from the basic condition of the immigrant in flight from whatever culture has been left behind, persecuting, impoverishing or both. This is a conventional metonym for culture as a whole. It is therefore not surprising that the problematic idea of the city is now inextricable with the one group

for whom immigration was in no way voluntary. The suburb or the neighborhood are perceived as 'other' to the very city they constitute. More precisely, the city is the 'other' of a pastoral and affluent suburbanism, of that 'naturally' correct place of American aspiration and dominance. The citizen is likely to see the city as the place of the underclass, a violent form of corruption—anti-Puritan by nature, blurred and complex in form. While the 'city' and its designated foil, 'nature', are both constructs, in the confusion of the present day, the city is a metaphorical wilderness prowled by predators, returning to the primal vacant lot, without either pastoral or legitimate capital ambition—without Jefferson or Hamilton. Of course, such hostility has direct politico-economic implications. The city becomes the bad, mad dog—chained in the backyard of culture, deprived of sustenance and becoming daily, meaner and more dangerous. The city, essentially, is black.

The last essay in this section, *Chapter 5*, travels south, to South America, and to Buenos Aires in particular, examining one of Argentina's most widely recognized cultural exports, 'tango'. Betancour and Hasdell speculate on the etymology of the word, drawing attention to its 'dark' past. Perhaps, as they assert, 'the word *'tango'* derives from the Afro-Argentinean word *'zango'* or *'tambor'*, the word for the drums of the arriving slaves from Africa—no-one knows. Perhaps it means the place for the forbidden celebrations of the black population. Perhaps it has to do with the word *'tangere'*, meaning 'touch', 'tangent'—that which touches on a marginal point, the circumference of a circle'. They imagine,

> *it results from the Diaspora, from the migrations and displacements of the many, diverse cultures suddenly relocated in other contexts—of individuals whose common plight is this and whose origins have been left behind...carried only as memories, fragments, rhythms and songs. The tango singer sings of alienation, unrequited love and frustration at his circumstances. The dancers express a restrained passion, a tension between two bodies that enact choreographies that are geographic, to do with the non-place of the barrio and personal tragedy. The dance, the lyrics of the songs, the rhythms and the heterogeneous culture in part express an emotion that relates the lives and stories of those affected*

with a geography of displacement as immigrants, a radical urban transformation and a poverty of existence. In this way, tango can be seen as a kind of cultural resistance—regarded as shameful, relegated to the hidden (and black) world of the night.

Only later, during the 1930s, did tango become incorporated into the Argentinean national identity, via its acceptance in Europe. To understand tango only in terms of its legitimized form is to misunderstand profoundly its significance as a resistance allied to the rapidly expanding urban periphery and the marginal existence this had, relative to the legitimate culture of the city centre. Through the history of tango, one can read not only the history of migration from Europe to the 'new' world, but, simultaneously, the history of the periphery, of urban transformation and of the underground world of the tango bars. In the expression of tango, these traces are woven together. Connecting, touching at times by analogy, suggestion, tension or displacement, tango reveals these facets of the city with an inner emotional landscape and a wider geographical condition. In the specific context of Buenos Aires or Montevideo, the urban periphery offers itself not only as a physical or manifest architectural form, but as a factor in the emergence of cultural identities and ideological constructs which offer critiques of the existing power structures of these places. In a more general context, it can be seen as a model for understanding the influx of immigrant cultures into the peripheral areas of cities, the emergence of cultures within ghettos and the subtle transformations of these places into areas with distinct, sometimes separate, sometimes integrated, identities.

1:125,000

BIOGRAPHY

DR N. OLA UDUKU was born in Nigeria in 1963. She gained her architectural qualifications in Nigeria, practicing in Lagos until 1989, when she enrolled for an MPhil in Architecture at Cambridge University. She obtained a PhD in Architecture in 1992, her research being on school design in Nigeria, and was a Research Fellow until 1995. She is currently lecturing in Architecture at the University of Liverpool, retaining her research interest in school design in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1995, she was a co-organizer of the *Learning Spaces Development in Southern Africa* conference. In addition, she has extended her research interest to urban social infrastructure in deprived inner-city areas and is currently working on a university-funded research project looking at infrastructure redevelopment in Toxteth, Liverpool, UK.

1

The Colonial Face of Educational Space

This chapter has been developed as a discussion of the author's analysis of the relationship of built form to the ethos and practice of education in the 'colonies'. Whilst the paper concentrates mainly on research findings on historical and contemporary school buildings in former British colonies in west and southern Africa, the ideas and theories that the discussion develops are more wide-ranging.

Although it would appear that issues of housing have dominated the analytical discourse of the colonial city, educational and other institutional buildings can arguably be considered to have had equal, and sometimes higher, social prestige in the urban arena. The direct relationship of education to development at an economic, social, cultural and philosophical level is clear. Societies throughout the 'developing' world still consider literacy, especially through access to educational institutions such as schools and colleges, as one important attainment of 'development'. Community aspirations are often firmly centred on producing a well-educated (and therefore monied) youth who will use their knowledge and remuneration from their well-paid jobs to bring 'development' to the grass roots.

The educational building or school thus has remained a powerful symbol or logical citadel, reinforcing local beliefs associated with the prestige of Western knowledge and cannot therefore be underestimated in its relevance to the shaping and development of the colonial (and thus post-colonial) city. The new educational theories, which encourage life-long learning and target education at formerly disadvantaged groups, further the appeal of education to a broader section of the community who often have not, in the past, had access to a formal Western education.

Thus, although contemporary Western-style education plays down the need for physical educational infrastructure, in the post-colonial world, local and national views on education often remain highly traditional and grounded in an inherited colonial institutional framework. There are exceptions to this sweeping statement: the international Steiner and Waldorf Schools movement, the Khanya College movement in the then apartheid-ruled South Africa and the Nomadic Education Programme (NEP) being run in northern Nigeria are all non-traditional learning programmes which challenge the need and centrality of physical educational environments.

In this chapter, I will analyse how and why certain factors and forces have

Frontispiece photo credit: Achimota College, Ghana, built in 1907. Dr N Uduku, 1997

ensured that educational architecture in many post-colonial states has retained the formal imprint of archaic and sometimes discredited educational theories of the past. I will also seek to examine and challenge what are now considered to be 'traditional' design factors in contemporary schools, which reinforce or romanticize the architecture (and symbolism) of a past colonial era at the expense of the more relevant and pressing requirements of an increasingly global learning society in the late twentieth century.

THE SCHOOL AS THE CITADEL

> *Their church stood on a circular clearing that looked like the open mouth of the evil forest...at last the day came by which all the missionaries should have died. But they were still alive, building a new red-earth and thatch house for their teacher.*
>
> *Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart* [1]
>
> *Mr Chisholm and three carpenters whom we engaged in Fernando Po...made progress in putting up the house while Mr. Edgerley commenced a new school in a vacant building.*
>
> *Hope Waddell, Twenty Nine Years in the West Indies and Central Africa* [2]

The dominant image of the school as the main purveyor of knowledge has a relatively recent history in non-European societies. Given the comparatively recent introduction of Western education to the 'native' world, its ability to replace former cultural sites of education, both physically and conceptually, often in less than a generation, is truly remarkable. The first part of this chapter discusses the history and the significance of this development to more contemporary educational policy and school design in sub-Saharan Africa.

The 'civilizing' influence of Western education was not lost on either recipients or donors. Evangelical missionaries and company traders were the first major European influences to penetrate the interior of the new continents. Christianity, new trading practices and the resulting radically changed culture and technology this

brought, required an altered or new understanding, very different from the traditional.

The initial missionary establishments had within their structures the first 'schools', of which there are sketchy records *[Figure 1.1]*. These church Sunday schools gradually broadened into institutions which occupied purpose-built, semi-autonomous structures. The 'mission', as the collections of such buildings (church, school and occasionally dispensary/hospital) soon became known, rapidly began to act as physical symbols of development and progress which societies strove to emulate *[Figure 1.2]*.

The Judaeo–Christian puritanical ethos of the new religion and its gradual but total influence on traditional life further worked to establish the symbolic,

[Figure 1.1]

[Figure 1.2]

unchallenged authority of the 'mission' which extended to its related institutions such as schools. Conversely, the equivalent government-run hospitals, schools and other institutions, built ten to twenty years later after the consolidation of colonial rule were perceived differently by communities. These institutions were seen as physical manifestations of colonial power *[Figure 1.3]*.

Traditional educational systems and their related physical spaces, although subordinated in local eminence and status to the colonial institutions of learning were, however, not forgotten. Instead, their function, physical space and timing were often transformed to fit with the new colonial education lifestyle requirements. In the Eifk-speaking community in south eastern Nigeria, the 'fattening houses', in which young women were taught marriage skills and fattened, still exist today. However, they function during school vacation periods so that they do not conflict with the formal

WHITE PAPERS, BLACK MARKS

educational timetable and generally take place in domestic homes, not in the specially-built houses of the past. Similarly, male circumcision rituals, which comprise an educational element in which young initiates learn about manhood from their mentors, still take place amongst Xhosa communities in South Africa. These rites also take place during school vacations and public holidays. The circumcision rituals are performed in sacred space which often involves the construction of a temporary shelter: this practice has continued to contemporary times.

> Inside the grass shelter (not a hut or a house; its feeling was unlike that of any habitation I have known) the frivolous mood fell away with the blankets discarded. These beings were naked except for the paint and a little sheath over the tip of the penis from which a long straw tassel hung, stroking thigh as they moved. White lips made for oracles and the liquid dark of eyes, eyes so movingly, overwhelmingly alive in ghostliness and gloom suddenly asserted the yearning faculties of communication and comprehension—spirit and mind glowing against the presence dominated by bodies.[3]

These and other traditional forms and sites of education have retained their local cultural significance. However, they do not challenge the primacy of Western education as conveyed inside the classroom. This domination, which European culture (conveyed well through colonial education) displayed over the colonized is perhaps not difficult to understand. Colonization occurred at a time when African material culture was thriving—however, the built form or architectural component of much of this culture was, in essence, non-permanent in nature. In part, in the warm humid regions of Africa especially, structures were constructed to last for short three-year life spans reflecting local knowledge of the durability of materials in the humid climatic conditions found in these regions.

One exception to this analysis are the Islamic schools found throughout the northern regions of West Africa, in which Koranic education retains local importance. These schools are sometimes linked to the local mosque or occasionally with the local education system. More usually, however, they take place in informal spaces, such as verandas or village open spaces where the local teacher conducts group classes.

The traditional adobe construction used for domestic and institutional architecture in this dry arid climate has also survived the introduction of Western building and remains dominant in many towns and villages. The colonial Western buildings, on the other hand, were constructed with more permanent materials. Initially, such materials would have been prefabricated in Europe, and shipped from ports such as Liverpool, to the colonies [Figure 1.3]. The main materials would have been steel structural frames, corrugated iron and wooden partition panels. Sometimes clay bricks would similarly be imported as ballast on incoming vessels. Often the labour needed to put these structures up would also have been imported from the West Indies or 'trained' West Africans such as the Kruímen from Sierra Leone. As the local building industry developed, such prefabricated materials became replaced by locally made clay bricks and later, by cement blocks.

These buildings thus were both physically and symbolically created by different materials and methods to be more permanent than most indigenous architecture in Africa. For the duration of colonization, 'European'-styled colonial building, followed by its antecedent the 'International Style', totally eclipsed all but a few forms of African 'indigenous' architecture and became considered by both builders and users to be the only valid and progressive form of architecture.

[Figure 1.3]

However, whilst the formal qualities of Western-style built form may have become a permanent feature in most of the developing world, the functions of many of these newly introduced edifices have been transformed to adapt to local indigenous and cultural requirements. Thus, in religion, there has been a syncretism of traditional religious practice with Christianity resulting in the new 'African' churches, built in recognizable Western architectural form, but practising a syncretic Afro-Christian religion. Similarly, many of the former seats of colonial government, which were rapidly transformed into the parliaments of newly independent states, have stood

empty or been transformed into ministry offices as military coups have transferred power to the barracks.

The school building and its educational ethos, however, have remained curiously unchanged, encapsulated in the neo-Victorian tradition from whence they came. Developments did take place rapidly within the educational curriculum as newly independent states substantially revised inherited colonial education policies and curricula. However, the image and ethos of a 'good' education remained unchanged. Contemporary educational theory and its design, as was being developed in America and continental Europe from the mid-1950s onwards, was rarely implemented in schools built in post-colonial Africa.

Open-plan schools, vocational education, and the attendant facilities required for transforming the inherited formal 'grammar' schools structure into a more flexible 'comprehensive' design form, were rarely developed or supported by the new indigenous educational departments. In Nigeria, the International Development Agency (IDA), a forerunner to the World Bank's Educational Sector Programme, funded a four-year school-building programme (from 1966–70) in which an international team of designers looked to develop a climate-responsive, 'modern' school architecture for the different Nigerian regions. In South Africa, the National Building Research Institute (CSIR) developed its own school design guidelines along similar lines.

Both these programmes resulted in appropriate, climate-responsive, modern school designs being espoused and built [Figures 1.4 and 1.5]. These new schools, however, retained the structured class 'chalk and talk' classroom design of the grammar schools, and left unaddressed indigenous community requirements of schools at the end of the formal school day. Some attempts have been made to redesign the school. In the western region of Nigeria in 1952, the launching of the free primary education scheme resulted in the construction of 'modern' (vocational) schools to complement the traditional grammar as a post-primary educational option. In northern Nigeria, the efforts of the educational officer Hans Vischer, in the 1920s, resulted in vocational schools being built in this region relying on traditional craft skills and materials for their construction. In east Africa, the Jeanes schools had similar

vocational aims as did the 'industrial missions' set up by the Presbyterian missionaries and the American Baptists in east and southern Africa.

However, the recent curriculum changes adopted in Nigeria and Ghana in the 1980s and 1990s, which have supposedly implemented radical transformations in the education system, have remained unable to provide either the equipment or the designed facilities required for the vocational and indigenous components which the new national education policies demand. In South Africa, the attainment of democracy has led to a clamour for better educational facilities for deprived communities—often interpreted to mean an adoption of the 'white' high schools designed as copies of schools in England.

[Figure 1.4]

Photo credit: Fig.1.4 'Pamscad' school, Wa, Ghana, Photo: N. Ola Uduku.
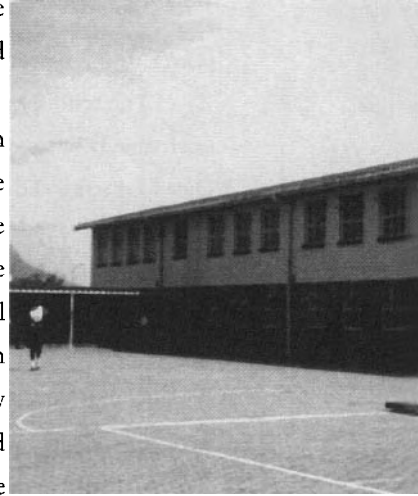
These attempts at changing the form of the school, however, have all singularly failed in transforming the local perception of 'good' schools as synonymous with memories of the mission schools. Indeed, in most of post-colonial Africa, the formally structured school layout, based on the academic grammar school, has been adopted as being the preferred 'traditional' (and therefore 'correct') design form for new schools whilst new open-structured school design and planning methods are viewed with suspicion.

Thus, at the close of the twentieth century, the enduring image of a proper education in Anglophone Africa remains slavishly modelled on the missionary-inspired grammar schools initiated at the beginning of the century.

THE AUTHORITY OF EDUCATIONAL SPACE

So why *is* the school such a convincing and sometimes endearing symbol of authority? The history of their establishment gives some explanation of this. The context in which schools have existed has had an equally crucial influence. Most schools in sub-Saharan Africa were built before self-rule in small towns and villages and were the most important institutions, after the church, in their respective settings.

Furthermore, the value of Western education in achieving 'development' was quickly grasped in most communities and the school's authority as a provider of this (and a link to further 'development') was clear. In many regions, the predominance of the mission with its European staff, health and ecclesiastical duties, showed these physical links. Government schools, in contrast, were fewer in number. Ironically, their substantial financial backing meant that they often had the best facilities and were the most substantially built, staffed and equipped. But it was their siting in predominantly colonial administrative centres in prominent locations close to other government institutions that enhanced their image and authority as monuments to colonial educational power *[Figure 1.6]*.

As the illustrations of the schools show, the architectural style and layout of the mission schools worked well to establish a symbolic presence to the educational institutions. The use of vertical elements such as the chapel spire or bell tower in a mission school compound, or a clock tower, in the case of a government college, were meant to signify presence, authority and power. Similarly, the location and planning of these buildings, by a combination of accidental and expedient requirements, has meant that the local context in which schools had existed worked to enhance further their status. Often the missionaries who set up schools had to bargain for land in local communities who were suspicious of their intentions. Tracts of 'evil' land in sometimes prominent sacred locations were often sold to the missions. In towns, the colonial planners often used schools and other government buildings as symbolic references to the colonial city by placing them on visible vantage points. Such buildings might also serve as centres for public service examinations, concerts and other activities which required formally enclosed spaces, further establishing their image within their chosen élite community circles.

The independent and new state-owned schools which were built after this 'golden era' had a hard example to follow. After self-rule in sub-Saharan Africa was established, the financial resources needed to build schools to match those built in the
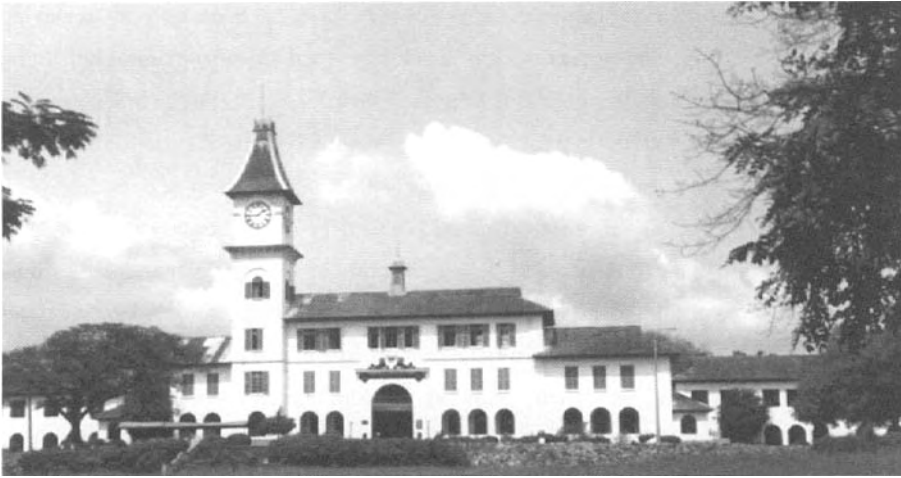
[Figure 1.5]

colonial era often rapidly dried up. Although a few independent and chosen colonial schools became transformed into the flagship colleges of the new era, the schools built after independence found it difficult to establish the authority or image of their colonial predecessors.

The financial limitations and more importantly, the failure of the new education ministries to explore and develop local-to-national educational curricula and corresponding school-design requirements in the first decades of the new post-independence era have resulted in the continued authority and standards and style of educational buildings becoming (and remaining) set at those attained during the days of Empire.

ASCRIPTIONS OF IDENTITY, POWER AND CLASS: THE SCHOOL AS SOCIAL THEATRE

In 1973, the then Federal Military Government in Nigeria decided, at a stroke, to 'nationalize' all Nigerian schools. Twenty years earlier, in 1952, the Bantu Education Act effectively put an end to voluntary education for indigenous black South Africans. These separate incidents were argued as being necessary by the governments of the

day in order to better and more effectively manage and provide for the educational sector. Definitely in the 1970s, with the UNESCO report on education, 'Education For All', this view of large central government funding and input into providing 'national' education schemes was prevalent. However, from the inception of these schemes, there were always schools which would become exceptions to the national provision model. In South Africa, independent 'crammer' colleges soon found legal loopholes in which to challenge the system, whilst the Catholic and other religious orders retained their autonomy to run their own schools and by the mid-1970s had their own 'non-racial' admissions policies, both of which flaunted government policy. In Nigeria, a number of 'university staff' schools and some independent schools effectively challenged the government's nationalization proposals. The schools won the case to provide autonomously a 'different' education for certain pupils (in the case of the staff schools), and to set up a charitable trust to run schools independent of government control (in the case of the independent/private schools).

Effectively then, the nature of contemporary educational space has remained as enmeshed in socio-cultural tensions as its mission and colonial government predecessors, due to its highly politicized nature. The continued stratification of schools along socio-economic or class lines and the high profile of schools and education as policy issues confirms the continued influence of these factors.

In all countries, education policy is a highly emotive topic, with schools effectively being advertisements of the success or failures of current education policies and indicators of their future direction. The 1977 Universal Free Primary Education Scheme (UPE) followed the 'schools nationalization programme' four years earlier (1973). In South Africa, the government took over the running of voluntary-run and grant-maintained schools in 1948, and the Bantu Education Act followed in 1952. As in the past, these schools were to present an image of education through their design and architecture which the public would judge. In Nigeria and Ghana, the new schools built during recent educational regimes are easily identifiable *[Figure 1.7]*. Local nicknames or acronyms of schools, such as 'UPE' or 'Jakande' schools, after the policy or government in place when such schools were built, often convey the generally benign social comment on their success. The more sinister use of educational space,

as described in the next section, in apartheid South Africa, created the image of schools in non-'white' areas as images greater than education—the schools symbolized and localized apartheid policy. 'Bantu' (education) schools, as these buildings were called, conveyed the negative image of the structures amongst local communities.

EDUCATIONAL PLACES WITH SINISTER FACES

Verwoerd and the other architects of the apartheid system were clear about the role of the 'native' in white South Africa. His role was to be that of servant and worker to the dominant white state. Education, similarly, was expected to provide the limited information required for these pre-ordained tasks. In essence then, the schools which the Nationalist Party government inherited from voluntary agencies in 1948, and the limited numbers being built in native homelands, were initially considered adequate for the task. However, as the practical limitations of the apartheid state were discovered, it soon became clear that the objective of total segregation would never be reached. Although formal black townships grew at a 'controlled' rate, there was the constant proliferation of informal settlements. The government's response (in keeping with 'separate group development') was to create different education departments for each racial group whose job it was to plan, design, build and administer schools. In practice, most school designs were prepared by the central government via the CSIR and other government-funded research departments. The schools were then built directly by the ministry or by government appointed architects.

These schools became the physical embodiment of the symbolism and power of the apartheid system in the townships. The different 'departmental' schools were designed distinctively, each educational department had its own school blueprint plan: this design was repeated throughout its schools built in South Africa. The black (DET) schools were designed to a tight formal plan, using hard-wearing materials such as bricks and vandal-proof steel grilled windows. They were planned to the sparsest space standards; no provisions were made for school halls, libraries or special classes. Again, this was in keeping with the original 'Bantu' Education Policy, which stipulated that only a basic minimum education was needed for the 'native', *[Figure 1.8]*.

Photo credit:
Fig. 1.6
'Pamscad'
classroom, Wa,
Ghana. Photo: N.
Ola Uduku.

DET schools were also built without vocational education facilities or recreation space, in accordance with design guidelines developed in the capital city, Pretoria. They were a collection of bleak classrooms with a 'fortified' administration block in dirt surroundings, and barbed wire perimeter fencing. The Soweto riots in 1976 were a result of the culmination of the anger and resentment of the black community with education policies in apartheid South Africa. The use of schools as sites for the riots and as 'legitimized' arson targets again suggests the local identification with the negative, as symbolizsed by the DET schools.

What was most sinister about the South African education system during the 1960s through to the 1980s, was the use of design and planning as a system of educational control and restriction on the segregated educational groups. The schools were in general substantially built (a fact often boasted about by the then regime), but their symbolism and identification with Nationalist Party educational ideology negated any positive attributes that the Nationalist Party-inspired educational policies might have had to its proposed recipients. The buildings also showed physical evidence of the iniquitous and unequal nature of the apartheid system which was espoused to an international public as a direct result of the publicity of the Soweto riots. This event finally led to the government's acceptance that it had to do something about providing more and better educational facilities, which was eventually commenced through the work of the Urban Foundation and partnership development schemes backed by large corporate companies, such as the Anglo American Corporation.

[Figure 1.6]

In contrast, the public perceptions of the 'UPE' schools in Nigeria and the 'Pamscad' (Programme for the Amelioration of the Effects of Structural Adjustment on Development) schools in Ghana have been comparatively positive. Both these acronyms were used by the public, as discussed, as a form of social commentary,
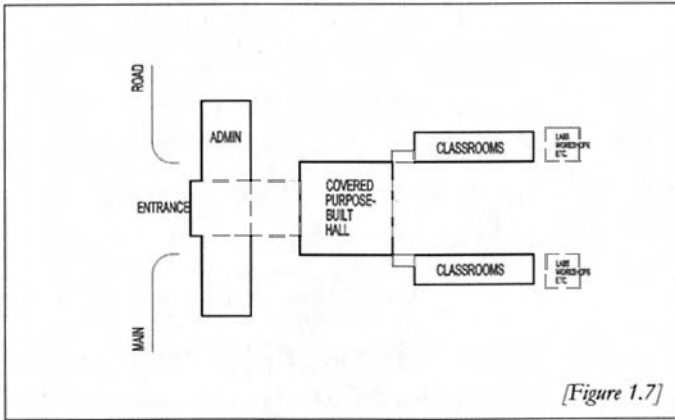
[Figure 1.7]

although the buildings were perceived as being of poorer quality than their colonial antecedents. Also, they were often inadequate for the number of students enrolled. They did, however, maintain their local legitimacy and incur far less ideological rancour than DET schools.

Recently, however, these and other schools have attracted more hostile public criticism, as educational levies and fees have increased and a more discerning public asks to see the new classrooms and equipment provided with their levies. There is public cynicism of the new expanded 'comprehensive' educational system as the equipment and classes discussed above for the vocational courses rarely exist. The key
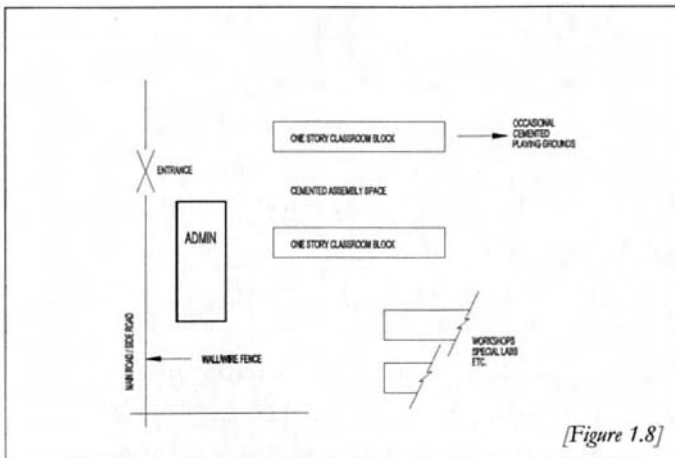
[Figure 1.8]

difference however has been that these classrooms and schools were not perceived as 'controlling' or 'controlled', non-legitimate spaces, but as a gesture towards the provision of a sought after goal: education to the public.

The inculcated positive impression of education and, by extension, its buildings in most African communities (except South Africa) has served to produce a local
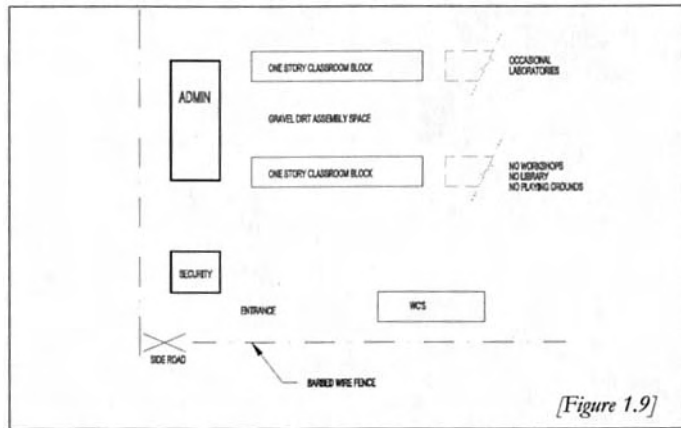
[Figure 1.9]

custodial effect on schools. This has kept school vandalism low and retained high levels of public interest in schools. Thus, the more benign colonial image of schools being citadels of an 'academic' education has remained intact in most of sub-Saharan Africa.

CONTEMPORARY SPACE

In the late 1990s, what do we expect of the structure of educational space? Will the stasis of school design continue in the face of the considerable transformation of educational curriculum from its neo-colonial roots to its 'African-revisionist' present? The formal structure and function of education is being challenged at all levels. There is the challenge of a new colonization of technology and global culture into the educational arena. Educational space is being redefined on many non-traditional grounds. Established factors such as socio-cultural issues (incorporating areas such as race, class and gender), economic and political issues still inform the current 'space' debate. However, of even more importance in today's climate, is the flexibility and extended use of space (for activities done in out-of-school hours such as libraries); the global linkage of space (via electronic media such as the Internet) and the ascription of identity—social, cultural, etc.,` to space. These three factors give a concise description of much broader issues in the design of post-colonial twenty-first century
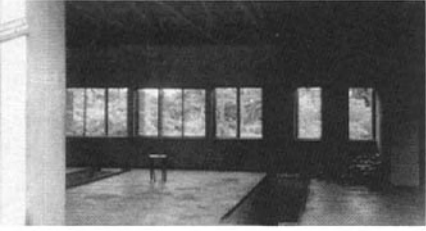
[Figures 1.11 & 1.12]

space.

Flexible, open-plan classroom design has had many Scandinavian (and more recently American) historical precedents. The practical problems of teaching in non-enclosed spaces are less crucial in the African or Asian climatic and cultural context where teaching in non-structured unenclosed space is often both appropriate and is a re-interpretation of pre-colonial educational practice. Large class sizes, which are the rule in most post-colonial schools, also work better in open-plan spaces.

The 'external' flexibility of space is equally important to teaching, but also of local significance. The architecture of the mission and later on, government schools, was often a finished, self-contained, self-sufficient composition. Today's (and future) schools need not be self-contained. There is a definite need in most 'developing' countries for scarce resources, such as those found in schools, to be shared with as many as can benefit from this.

In Neville Alexander's et al.'s recent book, the 'schools out of the ghettos' concept clearly demonstrates a radical educational flexibility model *[figure 1.9]*. School parks become the joint property of a wide neighbourhood, thus both externalising and legitimizing education policy. Also, in the post-apartheid era, schools are being built with 'resources centres', which act as libraries to the local community or township. The physical construction of the new South African post-apartheid schools thus has a greater external commitment to the locale. These new schools are designed to have group spaces, such as the resource room (library) and possibly hall space, open to the community for use after the school day. There is, therefore, the extended use of educational space enabling its transformation to accommodate the uses of both the conventional school population and the wider community. A deliberate move is now being made to move schools away from the formal single-use agenda, in force since the colonial era.

WHITE PAPERS, BLACK MARKS
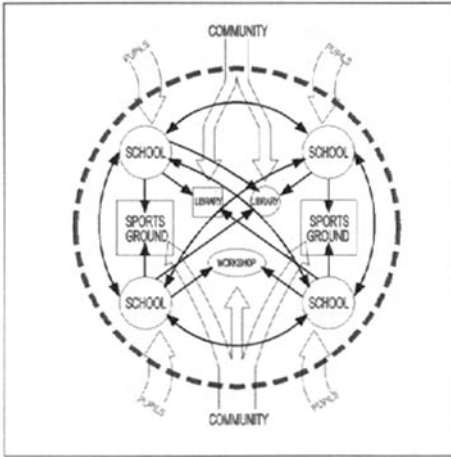
[Figure 1.10]

Similarly, there have been substantial curriculum changes in schools throughout sub-Saharan Africa since the ending of colonial rule. These changes from the colonial 'grammar' to the post-independence 'comprehensive' were more titular than physical. Neither the public nor the government had an interest in supporting this change. The public's perception of non-academic, non-university channelled learning was as a 'second best', in keeping with Foster's 'Diploma disease' thesis. The new African governments rarely had the finances to build or equip the required technical classrooms needed to teach the vocational curriculum which had been officially adopted.

Figures 1.11&1.12 show real situations in which schools have tried to incorporate technical education into the curriculum. The outcomes show technical classrooms with no equipment, or expensive equipment in storage due to the lack of classrooms or staff. Recently designed schools have generally been built to better technical criteria, although many remain understaffed, poorly equipped, and under-utilized. The symbolic perception of schools is only gradually changing to accommodate post-colonial models of wider structures in education.

The macro-level 'global context', in which education operates, is the final factor which will transform educational space. Whereas in the past, information transfer was dependent on printed media and institutional tuition, today the Internet and other rapidly developing forms of electronic media mean that there is little limitation to information flow. The benefits throughout sub-Saharan Africa of distance, non school-based learning are great, although there are start-up costs and basic infrastructure requirements. South Africa's unique recent and colonial past does, however, put it in a good position to benefit more easily from new global technologies.

The apartheid framework created islands of highly developed infrastructure near to extensive poorly-serviced townships. Thus, unlike most other African states, South Africa possesses the infrastructure required to have access to global services on a nation-wide scale.

CONCLUSIONS: A NEW COLONIZATION?

> *The school is not a neutral objective arena. It is an institution which has the goal of changing people's values, skills and knowledge bases.*
>
> Shirley Brice Heath, *Ways with Words*

The school and other forms of educational space have contemporary relevance and historical roots. Whilst there seem to be various alternatives for future education, the formal identity and symbolism which schools of the future will take has become less certain. The 'empire effect' is finally wearing off, as culture becomes more 'global'. Conversely, national and cultural identity, local association and individual belonging are all becoming more explicit agendas in the contemporary world.

Expressions of educational architecture are caught in between these two dimensions. The International Style architecture and global media-perceived images of good schools are one dimensional. The other is the local identity created by architects such as Hassan Fathy in Egypt, or more recently work by architects such as the Craterre group throughout French-speaking West Africa and the more eclectic school in Paarl, South Africa *[Figures 1.13 and 1.14]*.

A radical departure from either of these categories is the concept of doing away with the school as a formal physical institution. Access to information via computers etc., makes it perfectly viable to learn from 'home', making the need for the school ultimately redundant. For the majority of the former colonies in sub-Saharan Africa, this is no real option as the costs and infrastructure required to have access to the high-tech revolution at basic education level are simply not available. But the image of the school and its architecture are, after a century, finally being challenged. New forces of authority and power are threatening established views on the nature and form of

space in which learning takes place. Economic views on aspects such as the internal and external efficiency of the school often result in the production of mass-produced, standardized school designs, built with NGO or multinational donor aid. Similarly, the magnet of donor-funded technical and vocational equipment has, as illustrated too often, resulted in classrooms or workshops being designed as mere receptacles for foreign machinery.

In contrast, new community movements and wider low-cost technology networks have meant that there has been the development of vocal, local school interest-groups. Such groups have often been successful in influencing education policy towards instituting more 'liberal' requirements of school design. The resource rooms being designed within new schools in South Africa in collaboration with local library services units are a good example of this trend. However, as with other institutions, the memories of the colonial grandeur of the former grammar schools and academies remain. These schools continue their existence as monuments to the past in a variety of states: from careful, (often alumni-funded) conservation to utter neglect. Whilst accepting that the 'public school' top echelon colonial colleges are likely to retain their image, status and purpose, the challenge is to absorb, where possible, this former school architecture into contemporary and complementary sites for today's learning requirements.

Conservation, restoration and transformation remain, at present, luxuries that most African states can ill afford. Liverpool, in England has, with various forms of private and European Union funding, managed to transform a number of former schools to different uses, some educational, some residential and some commercial. With the rapid transformation of urban areas in Africa, especially South Africa, such conversions or transformations may become less far-fetched. The transformation of a former 'DET' school into a home or hostel for the homeless may not necessarily be a pipe-dream.

There is a need to confront the past in order to conquer it, in order to lay claim to the future. By engaging in critical analyses through the examination of cultural and architectural institutional symbols such as schools, the absorption and transformation of the 'histories' of these physical symbols from cultural redundancy into positive

images which function as both references to the past and complements to future learning spaces, is an objective which all buildings should strive to attain.

[Figure 1.13]

1 : 125,000

BIOGRAPHY

MALINDI NELUHENI was born in Tshakhuma, Northern Province, South Africa, in 1963. She received a Teachers Diploma from Modjadji College and a BA (Hons) from the University of the North in 1989. She went on to complete a MSc in City and Regional Planning at Cornell University. She is currently at work on a PhD thesis at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.

2

Apartheid Urban Development

In the post-apartheid South Africa, writing has become an increasingly problematic issue, particularly academic writing, where a certain openness and freedom of expression, crucial to the reconstruction of certain fields of research, has (wrongly) been assumed. Historically, much has been written about life under apartheid—although this was done predominantly from outside of South Africa, rather than from within, in large part due to the very real threat of state-sponsored prosecution and persecution. However, the most controversial aspect of the issue of writing is (again) racial: it is 'better' for non-blacks to research and write about the plight of blacks than it is for blacks to write for and about themselves. Ironically, those who did not lift a finger during the many decades of oppression have suddenly become available to offer the solutions to South Africa's many problems, in particular those affecting the urban environment. Those who are the subjects of new planning and urban initiatives in South Africa have, themselves, no access to the information that is, ultimately, the 'stuff' of their daily lives. As Sartre said, 'the exploited experience exploitation as their reality'.[1]

In planning practice in South Africa, it is easier to gain access to a carefully guarded discipline through consultancy (due to government legislation which specifies opportunities for previously disadvantaged persons through sub-contracting and mentorship) but in the academic arena the situation is quite different. It may be easier to enter the institutions (especially the segregated white universities with the best facilities and top-quality education) than it was, say, five years ago, but correspondingly harder to produce academically 'sound' work. But over and above these concerns, which I will return to, is a greater, more fundamental difficulty. One of the most urgent

Frontispiece photo credit: Township life, Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa. Malindi Neluheni, 1996.

Photo credits: Township life, Katlehong, South Africa. Riarua Glynn Huaraka, 1992.

problems within the planning profession of South Africa is the desire for certain segments of society to 'conform'. As the profession opens itself to blacks (the segment in question), they are drawn directly and immediately into a maelstrom of theories, philosophies and principles which are both out of reach and out of synch with their personal experiences. As pressure is applied to 'non-whites' to conform to the minority lifestyle, the greatest challenge facing the South African planning profession is one of standards—specifically, *whose* standards'?

CURRICULA AND CONTENT

Urban planning education in South Africa is designed with close links to the operational laws that have been in place over the decades. The curricula and content of the courses that one goes through would definitely be determined by race, class and gender. In the 1980s, anyone who was not white would only be allowed into an institution of higher learning if they fell within the determined quota set by the government. There were only a few places reserved for non-white students in the 'liberal' institutions that offered a curriculum in planning, specifically the universities of the Witwatersrand, Natal and Cape Town. If a black person somehow managed to gain entrance to the institution, a special permit from the Ministry of Education of the Nationalist government was still required. Often, this meant several negative responses and the advice that 'one would be better placed at a Technikon, rather than a university'.

The institutions that offer courses in planning and architecture, in addition to

the grades, would normally want to see portfolios of past work, demonstrated skills and, in the case of post-graduates, a formal design or research proposal prior to admission to a graduate programme. Needless to say, more than half the black applicants would have gone to a township or village school, where they would have never heard of or seen a portfolio or a draughting board. In most situations, for black students aspiring to enter tertiary institutions, it is difficult to receive ordinary mail because of poor postal facilities in the outlying areas and totally impossible to access studying material in order to produce a proposal. Thus, the planning profession in institutions of higher learning remains totally out of reach for most black students— there is no way to produce academically challenging work under such conditions. As a black woman who has somehow managed to negotiate these hurdles, I reflect on some of the childhood talks that I used to have with friends. I remember some of them had a strong passion to be 'a white person' when asked what they aspired to be when they grew up. Today, however, the major hurdle is not just overcome by gaining admission to these institutions, but very often funding and scholarships are without consideration of the backgrounds of individual students. Often, the poor-quality education black students have received means that being a top student in a black college or university (where more than half the teachers are white), one is regarded as 'good' with a 50 per cent in their first attempt at any course, and 'very good' if anything above 60 per cent is obtained. Different sets of rules apply in white institutions. A 60 per cent is certainly not the best available mark. This situation also means that when funding and scholarships are awarded, applicants are generally required to produce 'top grades'—this has always meant that blacks rarely qualify for university-administered funds.

A disappointingly difficult 'grey' area still remains in the profession. The majority of people who have always known and written widely about the type of planning that would suit black people in South Africa have, for the most part, lived all their lives in white surbubs, had access to the best education, chosen where to live— and, crucially, had political 'control' over their lives through the ballot box. Their

curious, one-sided relationship with life, particularly urban life, in South Africa sadly also qualified them (and only them) to write about the lives of blacks in the 'homelands' and townships of their own country. The concepts and theories used in these instances were obviously simulated and imagined—baldly stated, there is no way at all that they could have 'known' about urban life, living in a 'matchbox' house in Soweto, walking in the dark and dusty streets at 3:00 am to catch a bus or train to work in the nearest town, some 60 kilmometers away. For millions of their 'fellow' South Africans, this often meant leaving a family in the remote village to eke out a living in the mines of Johannesburg, spending a whole year (and often more) away from their families in squalid 'single-quarters' hostels, returning home to what Govan Mbeki has described as a 'breeding camp, where the men procreate, in these round huts, the next generation of cheap labour for whites'.[2]

It is a common fact that black, or non-white, students experience more problems in planning schools than their white counterparts: they are often portrayed as the poorest performers, and often seem just to scrape through the programmes to qualify. Black students, who are 'very intelligent but under-prepared' in most tasks, experience a strange dislocation—writing and learning about Newlands, Houghton and Sandton Square (the 'archetypal' South African urban conditions, acceptable to a European discourse) instead of recognizing the other side of the planning debate—the traditional African settings which are part of their everyday environment and sentimental attachment.

Professional Advancement and Transition

One of the major problems in the planning profession of South Africa can be described as the desire for a certain group (blacks) to conform, stemming from both sides of the profession—the up-and-coming black planners and their well-established white counterparts. As the profession slowly opens itself to blacks, they are drawn directly into well-established and grounded principles and views, normally out of

touch with their own personal experiences. But blacks must always conform to whites. It has never been regarded as critical that the predominantly white profession must begin to adapt to the perceptions, history and values of the majority population. Unsurprisingly, as recent as two years ago, job advertisements by (white) planning companies still carried the proviso 'affiliation to the South African Institute of Town and Regional Planners is a requirement for the job'. This institute is a professional body, chaired and run by white males who, historically, saw no reason to open up the profession to include the few emerging black planners, responding to the changing needs of the country, but still use this proviso as a barrier to the employment of non-whites. In no small measure, the greatest challenge of the South African planning profession is therefore standards—more specifically, *whose* standards?

> *Companies are rapidly reverting to 'African' culture to portray a better business image. The paintings done by Ndebele women on this British Airways jet may also be used on buildings, which is actually where they are often done in Ndebele culture.*[3]
> *(Source: The Star, 11 June, 1997)*

If colourful Ndebele dwellings can be exhibited in Paris and the Netherlands, why is it 'racist' to suggest that South Africa moves away from designing high-density walk-ups and tests concepts of the much-celebrated *lapa* and *kgoro* aspects, so inherent in the traditional African life-style? It is ironic that the all-too-common cluster development of enclosed walls and common gathering spaces are liberally applied in the Western urban context without any acknowledgement of its origins, found in the

Photo credits: Township life, Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa. Malindi Neluheni.

traditional African homestead and based on strong kingship and communal subsistence.

OTHER WAYS OF LOOKING AT PLANNING AND DESIGN STANDARDS

In the Western world, the perception of a holiday in Africa is usually of a safari, exploring the wilds of southern Africa, an exotic lake-side resort in Malawi—or even a visit to the Masai territory of Kenya. The local life and artefacts are important for the occasional tourist who buys from the locals, goods that they labour to produce with meagre resources. In an economic sense, eco-tourism brings income to the local people, but it is sad to see how local practices are often regarded as primitive or native and dismissed as unworthy..

In the case of South Africa, the much-needed planning to provide housing is being done in a similar vacuum, without the basic assessment or appreciation of local needs, with local people as active participants. Those for whom planning is being done are consulted only in terms of contracts, labour and sub-contracting. This is all well and good, as people are often desperate for accommodation, and there is an assumed need to consult, but therein lies the danger that in another ten years from now, society will look back and realize that, in many aspects, the mistakes of the past have simply been repeated. The Nationalist Government designed, planned and provided the four-roomed houses in townships (often referred to as 'matchboxes' by the locals) and hostels to accommodate migrant labour. Soweto, a township of over 4 million people, is characterized only by the proliferation of 'matchboxes', the absence of trees and the low-lying smoke that hangs over the township, day and night, from millions of open-fire stoves.

> *Row upon row of interchangeable, identical brick cabins in barrack formation, without any architectural reference points to community—add or subtract a row here or there, nothing would be noticed. I recognise the model at once: Soweto, the dreary paradigm of black segregated townships in South Africa. With all the world's*

experience of humanising low-cost housing at their planners' disposal, [South Africans]
are passing from their round thatched huts to this.[4]

But far from being a homogenous, undifferentiated mass, those who live in such townships have wildly differing needs and aspirations. For instance, the characteristics of the public-transport users are low car ownership, low income, homes in low-density residential areas—often tenants as opposed to owners, living far from city centres and having low occupational status. In South Africa, this segment of the population is always, and only, black. To complicate matters further, following the colonial 'divide and rule' principle, during the *apartheid* era, certain ethnic groups were encouraged to look down upon others. Needless to say, their group profile still means that they have certain cultural traits which are quite different from white South Africans (Europeans), but which do not necessarily make them less 'African' despite the fact that they are primarily urban residents, not rural poor. The characteristics of the other (white) section of the population, are car ownership, upper middle-class income, homes in high-density, outer-suburban residential areas, owners and high occupational status. In a 'normal' dynamic environment, the persistent traditional, as well as new and appearing elements, must be identified. Historical and environmental behaviour become important in research to set a basis for generalization. In South Africa, for the reasons outlined above, this is problematic. By the same token, identifying conflicts in planning and design would help shed light on what is happening, what the problems are and how improvements can be made.

URBAN RESEARCH WRITINGS IN SOUTH AFRICA

As far as planning and the design of cities in South Africa goes, most publications have hovered between the policies of *apartheid* (where townships were established in the periphery of white towns) and writing by white, liberal authors (see below) who idealize the 'proper' towns and cities to accommodate blacks. Within the

scope and frame of reference of this proposal, liberal authors are viewed as those who recognized the injustices meted out to blacks by the *apartheid* government, especially in reference to the views outlined below.

Urban research writing in South Africa is clearly explained by Hendler (1991). This is the period between 1922–70. The ideology behind urban and rural planning ran more or less along the ideological lines of the Nationalist Party: blacks were less developed and whites decided for them. Blacks were seen as being intellectually, spiritually and physically responsible for their own problems, particularly in terms of population growth. The curricula of courses taught at universities supported this philosophy. However, the period between 1970 and 1990 brought about an alternative to the dominant theory. This was the period where the argument was pro-market forces in the urban economy and the removal of barriers to urbanisation. During the period of unrest in the country, 1976–90, a number of academics wrote about the political economy of South Africa, suggesting how, in the view of the fact that black revolt had reached a point of no return, the government could and should implement a number of reform strategies. During this period, scores of blacks were prepared to perish under detentions, arrests, shootings and successive States of Emergency, rather than be stifled under the appalling conditions of *apartheid*.

Hendler states that liberal scholars wrote on the controversial stance of the National Party while others, such as Dewar and the Urban Foundation, exposed social policy without examining why black people were (are) poor. Maasdorp, on the other hand, advocates factors for positive economic reproduction through labour in the urban areas. These authors also exposed the possibility of being able to challenge the processes, laws and regulations in place, for example, Nattrass (1990) and Tomlinson (1990). This group of writers tried to understand the issue of violence in the townships and criticized the very ideology which saw to the creation of townships. This category of authors (such as Hendler above) advocated democracy and non-racialism as solutions to the problems associated with the built environment. This is the period where urban environments are studied outside of *realpolitik*—the situatedness of man

in his environment, for almost the first time in the planning discourse within South Africa, is seen as important in society. Hendler's arguments show that housing and the economy have been afforded their place in the South African space economy, but *design and implementation* of ideas in urban environments by communities, as cultural entities have not been explored (my italics). Hitherto, the cultural and spatial history of urbanization in South Africa were seen as unsatisfactory: planning trends were determined by the politics and policies of the government of the day.

During this same period, some authors (e.g. Muller, 1991) appealed to the conscience by exposing the need not only of involving the unrepresented black population, but also by questioning the moral and ethical rights of decision-makers during the apartheid era. In his work, he stresses the need to see that participation in planning of urban environments was extended to the black majority who were (are) disadvantaged; to allow and include self-interest, self-expression, expression of preferences and decision-making. Olivier (1991) looks at the situation not as a politician, but as a planner. He relives the suffering of the poor, black, urban majority by showing how competition for services and access to jobs has brought discontent and frustration. He further exposes the contrasts in 'white', as opposed to 'black' urbanization, which has resulted in racial tensions and resentment of the privileged few by the destitute majority. A starting point in the consideration of wishes and aspirations of blacks (though as observers and not participants in implementation) in the planning and design of their urban environments can be seen in the works of Welch (1978). Another pioneering study exploring the way residents perceive their built environment has been done by Moller and Schlemmer (1980), in a survey on the needs and aspirations of blacks, concerning housing. From the study it was evident that quality of life can be improved through other related aspects such as social, environmental and security provision. In another related study by the same authors, they looked at the performance of the city of Durban's central business districts and the extent to which blacks used the districts' functions. This survey does lay a foundation for eliciting residents' perception of their environment, but here too, as

was the case with previously cited works, the aspect of culture does not feature. To some degree, this study does explore the social interaction that occurs in residential areas and the need for design of urban environments to cater for this.

Hardie, having been involved in a project for the provision of housing to the people of Mangaung, came up with a clear conclusion in the need for communities to have input in design of houses and streets and the need to include their preferences regarding future expansion of their town. In a much broader study of environmental—behaviour—design research that deals with Third World cities, Chokor (1978) states that available work has always concentrated on European and North American environments and as a result, research methods and techniques to provide information on Third World environments *are not available* (my italics). Lang (1989), in his study of the design implications of housing on the built environment in India, shows how design has not been able to fulfill the cultural needs. He criticizes the lack of meaningful explanation in house form and how salient aspects of people's lives are disregarded when designing houses. In his view, some of the indispensable characteristics of a community which have to be catered for through design are: 'private open space, transportation systems, community facilities, needs of women, ablutions, frontage and set-backs, climate, cultural usage of building material, aesthetics, mode of economic reproduction, integration and segregation of activities and life-style needs'. Although this study in particular focuses on India, the conclusions that Lang draws are useful for anyone studying a post-colonial (to which definition South Africa, in part, does belong) built environment. Amos Rapoport, having researched widely on Man–Environment Studies, states that there is no body of literature specifically designed for the evaluation of Third World environments, given the specific *different culture and way of life of its people* (my italics).

Many of the fundamental characteristics of traditional and modern societies are known. Linked to these social characteristics, it is argued, are corresponding architectures. In South Africa, 'traditional' architecture is usually associated with Africans and is consequently perceived to have its origin in an exotic, 'other' world of

'tribes' and ethnic groups. More specifically, it is often seen to lie beneath a fixed set of 'primitive' traditions, the roots of which are embedded in the depths of historical time. Over the years, the systematic and continued subjugation of local and 'traditional' perspectives and perceptions has led to passiveness and powerlessness, witnessed in the resulting ideology and particularly, in physical space. 'Vernacular' architecture is acquired through acculturation: it owes nothing to conscious 'design' but is an instinctive command and knowledge of particular materials which the trained architect or designer, by their very sophistication, are unable to equal.

There are several instances of poorly designed areas in the townships of South Africa, which, due to inherent unsuitability or the lack of an eloquent opponent (given the political situation over the years), have gone not unnoticed—but have been regarded as a painful, but necessary, compromise. Townships were seen as the only way of 'allowing' blacks a life and job opportunities closer to the then-segregated towns and cities. Hostels, with no private outdoor space, often high-rises, were designed to house rural immigrants, accustomed to the vast open spaces as a way of life; town-houses and multi-storey houses were designed by middle-class white males as starter units or singles' accommodation and are now being rented out to black families of six people or more, on average. Recently, the R15,000 subsidy scheme, which provides two-bedroom houses for the poor in South Africa, was introduced. The many social problems—crime, in particular—can well be directed to the architects, designers and planners of South African cities, specifically for their failure to respond to the many social problems experienced by the majority of users of these spaces (poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and most importantly, lack of respect for their own cultural values). This does not, however, disregard the fact that there were some positive intentions in designing space to suit the needs of the users. These initiatives will be discussed elsewhere, but the failures exposed above are important in guiding future planners and designers in considering the neighbourhoods and spaces of the New South Africa.

The Group Areas Act (although now disbanded) serves as a constant reminder

of what our urban spaces will continue to be for some considerable time. This fact is the most concrete basis for understanding South Africa's urban past. Public spaces such as post offices, police stations and train stations were built in a way that a complete duplication of services was necessary in order to cater for *apartheid*, with signs and clear markings to denote who was entitled to use space, and where. Even with the apparent political inclusiveness that is now found in South Africa, the city centres, once the almost exclusive domain of blacks, particularly after office hours, are now emptying, as are the townships where those blacks who can afford to, do so. On the other hand, in not one instance do whites, or even those from the former 'coloured' and 'Indian' areas ever move into the township. This widens the gap in reconciliation further, because 'other' populations still regard the townships as unhealthy, squalid, occupied by vagrants, full of rampant car-jackings and the need to 'watch one's back' at any given moment. This perpetuates the rift created over the *apartheid* years. For millions of blacks who have survived the urban nightmare with strength, determination and *ubuntu*—the kindness that can only be understood within the context of strong cultural communities and kinship—this desertion and the recent indifference by the authorities to their plight, is practically the last straw.

SPACE AS AN ENTITY FOR DISCONTENT

In an effort to design integrated built environments that cater for the urban needs of the new, 'mixed' South African population, what can rightfully be referred to as 'hybrid' environments are likely to be the most acceptable solution. It is apparent from South Africa's historical past that the standards which were used to design city environments were political and exclusionary in nature. The major concern at the moment, as political differences are being resolved at the negotiating table, is how best to modify those same urban spaces to inculcate the spirit of reconciliation. With the latest pressing developmental need for housing provision, the issue of alternative high density/low-rise walk-ups is being considered. As there has been no 'national' study to

this effect, this is still an area of great uncertainty. Questions of cultural constraints and acceptability, in particular, are a major concern.

The theory and supporting arguments lean heavily on what has become everyday rhetoric in terms of the urbanization of blacks—from the upgrading of informal settlements and the provision of basic infrastructure to the total restructuring of hostels into 'communities'. However, the planning of built environments must extend further than the basic provision of shelter, schools and primary health care facilities. South African urban space, as it exists today, is a result of different, conflicting ideas and phases of various decision-making processes. The historic processes, with their major political influences at a given period, have each left a mark on the urbanization processes and forms. From colonialism to *apartheid* to the current transitional period, major decisions on how South African cities should look and behave have been made. It is important to understand that the arguments presented in this chapter, and indeed, in South African society as a whole, are not only about 'race', class, culture or the prevailing politics. People currently 'look' at culture and identify with it according to the latest 'mood'—South Africa, in particular, is an ever-changing world. The imposed form of the built environment has come to be identified with the circumstances of our country. In this situation, it is important to view culture, identity and contemporary social issues as a 'system', a holistic ensemble of these various influences (race, class, gender, etc.).

One important issue to be considered in understanding urbanization, the use of land and its procurement is the system of land tenure. Traditionally, land was (and, in a few places, still is) owned by a chief who then distributes it to members of the community. With the advent of colonialism, the picture was radically altered as land was appropriated from the indigenous peoples and the entire system of ownership was formalized according to Western traditions. In the process, urban areas were subject to land constraints arising directly out of this history and as a result, dense compaction in townships occurred, with people being literally squeezed into tiny township houses with ever-decreasing plot sizes. Traditionally, they would have had a piece of land,

owned by a clan with strong extended family ties. The land-tenure system in built environments is thus in direct opposition to the traditional life-style of communal coexistence. This is a history that has to be reckoned with. Equally, it is critical that, no matter how much one idealizes traditional settings and tries to force the urban settlements to accommodate accordingly, there are constricting space restraints and these must be considered. As blacks have been excluded in sociological and cultural terms from the urbanization process in South Africa, an 'identity' problem now surfaces with the present built environment. In order to design appropriate urban landscapes which are representative of their inhabitants, these hitherto disregarded aspects must be integrated into designs of the new South African urban environments.

These issues, to some extent, have been articulated by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the present government. The policy framework provided by the RDP document has as its aim the reconstruction of all aspects of life for the previously disadvantaged through a much wider range of consultancy and participation. New ways of accommodating everyone in the blueprints for cities and urban environments are now being considered which take the diversity of South Africa's populations and cultures into account. Often, the need for change in South Africa is being implemented through affirmative action. In this sense it is important to mention that there is no way that environments can be affirmed, if not by integration.

Place identity is seen as important from a communal and psychological standpoint. A lack of place identity often means that public spaces and facilities are experienced as strange and aversive, which usually leads to the breaking down of social

rules. The arguments followed in this chapter posit identity as being experienced at different levels, not just around buildings. Buildings, groups of buildings and open spaces within a society are designed with a sense of aesthetics, but it is important that these are adapted, and not just in terms of their functionality, to the social significance and lifestyle of users as well. Socially important and relevant characteristics should be important aspects in design—not the satisfaction of the designer's ego. This calls for the supportive elements of crucial important characteristics of a group such as social units and institutions. Rapoport specifically identifies four sets of characteristics necessary for supportive environments:

(1) *Critical central or core social units of the group and their role in the culture.*
(2) *Corresponding physical units at different scales—fixed and non-fixed.*
(3) *Units facilitating social integration for the concerned group in relation to other groups.*
(4) *Institutions, economic, recreational, ritual, government and other activities—how these are facilitated in the specific setting of the community.*

After these have been clearly defined, design has to understand and clearly establish what it is that it seeks to do and why.

CHANGING TRENDS OF URBANIZATION THEORY

In South Africa today, research is being conducted around the concept of densification by research institutions such as the Urban Foundation, the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Urban Problems Research Unit (UPRU) of the University of Cape Town (UCT). The standard norm as to what constitutes *high-* and *low-density* differs from country to country, sometimes even from one urban authority to another. Essentially, urban density is used in the sense of a land-use plan that favours spatially connected urban spaces and development opportunities. Within the context of South Africa, this concept can be positively or negatively used. The situation, as it occurs in

the townships—Soweto, for instance, which has a density seven times higher than that of Johannesburg (CSIR, 1995)—is merely the constriction of movement, characteristic of townships with their low-built density but a marked degree of overcrowding. This was a direct result of providing housing without the necessary supporting infrastructure. In a positive sense, densification should be the process of increasing residential population densities and at the same time supplying proportional facilities to serve the population. Activity systems then become relevant as they are concerned with the way that man and institutions such as households, industries, governments and other institutions organize their interactions to produce a communications dimension. This is sometimes facilitated through the media, but very often on a face-to-face contact made possible by transportation and communication systems.

The promotion of high-intensity, mixed-use development along corridors is a central focus of many of the urban restructuring projects being initiated by the South African government. There are, however, a number of potential inhibiting factors which need to be evaluated. Socially important characteristics of a built-up area are as important as the structure itself, an aspect that has historically always been ignored. In the context of South Africa, the classification of people according to ethnicity and language group went only as far as achieving the apartheid goals of 'separate development', but did not afford the urban population the space, place or opportunity to develop an appropriate urban culture. In the process of upgrading existing informal settlements (i.e. urban slums) it is not only the residential and shelter needs that need to be provided for, but the holistic development of communities. The extent of ties likely to develop in a community in an informal settlement is greatly determined by the length of stay: the longer people live together and get used to sharing facilities, the stronger the ties. In cases where communities are relocated to make way for development, either through roll-over or green field developments, those ties are severed with disturbingly negative implications.

Other methods of development closely linked to upgrading (including agricultural production, albeit on a very small scale given the limited land resources)

can and do take place to alleviate food shortages and decrease dependency. Waste material and storm water run-off can be ploughed back into agricultural production, especially vegetables. Through upgrading, other resources such as recreational and place-making efforts become much more established in the communities and are able to follow on from the already existing communal ties. Economically, townships depend on cities. Whilst in the past, township dwellers were far better off than people in the 'homelands' as they could still gain access to cities and towns during the day (provided they had valid passes to do so), it is now becoming more burdensome to own a township house. It is commonly accepted that people did not live in townships because they wanted to, but because they *had* to. Fixed and permanent structures are non-flexibile: people can pack up and carry their belongings around in their search for work, but not the township 'box'. While there are few job opportunities in the 'homelands', the same is true in townships—but the township dweller is restricted from moving in his search for employment due to the factors mentioned above.

CASE STUDIES

The following section is devoted to two case studies which are used in a comparative outline. The example of Thohoyandou, Northern Province, South Africa, is used as a typical 'homeland' town established under the *apartheid* government. In the context of separatist development, 'homelands' were eligible for 'independence' from South Africa—only then would they receive funds from the central state for running an economy. Thohoyandou was established in 1979 as the capital of the 'homeland' of Venda.

It is a typical example of a town that has inherited the planning practices, especially design, from First World standards and is currently experiencing major problems. In this study, all aspects of the rural/urban interface (contributing to the existing structure) as well as the aspirations of the South African planning profession in shaping this town as a model 'developing' town (by Western standards) have failed.

The second case study is of Ithaca, New York, USA. The problems analysed here are very different from the South African case. This city, like Thohoyandou, is small and located in a semi-rural setting—the greatest difference being that it has run its full circle of development. The problems that beset Ithaca are those of putting back life into and revitalizing an environment of 'people all over the place' and creating an 'old new town' that retains its interest as a suburban alternative. But, like Thohoyandou, Ithaca has its problems regarding the physical, social, cultural and economic set-up.

THOHOYANDOU

While there are historic explanations to the present location of Thohoyandou, essentially, it was founded as the administrative capital of the then independent 'homeland' of Venda. Thohoyandou, along with other 'homeland' capital towns, was supposed to develop and contain its people from moving into white South Africa.

PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

The arguments by Martin about the plan and layout of an area as the reflection of the social, political, economic and technological determinants in operation are true in the context of this small town. The layout plans and policies for development, as well as the nature of facilities to be provided, were all dictated by the South African government.

The major land-use functions of the area also grew in response to the urbanization trend of the 'homelands' where people live in the rural–urban fringe but enjoy the functions and services offered by the urban centres. Presently, expansion impinges on the adjacent rural areas and interferes with tribal authority, especially with supply and payment for services and functions.

DECISION MAKING FOR URBANIZATION AND LAND-USE POLICIES

City planning has, as its final goal, the creation of communities with institutions to perpetuate and relate to their culture through proper location of homes, retail functions, facilities, recreation and other related environmental elements within a community. The final result of these are seen in the three dimensional landscape: the spatial features of architecture, civic organization and landscape of cities and towns.

The 1994 all-race elections in South Africa were a milestone in South African history, the dawn of a new era for South African blacks. In the context of the laws of segregation in this country, functional boundaries have, for a long time, been surpassed by racial boundaries. Needless to say, the zoning of land use in Thohoyandou has been restricted to this form of administration, economically, politically, financially and administratively. The result of artificial 'homeland' towns has created an outdoor environment of disconnected anti-spaces. The resulting situation is the curtailing of social contact and the absence of warmth in structures in the urban setting. The exterior surrounding environment should be seen and understood as more than just the buildings, sites, poorly defined spaces and randomly displaced objects in the landscape. The professional collaboration among planners, landscape architects and urban designers should guide the equitable city environment in the context of the needs of communities. All this would easily happen if we were to answer the vital question 'in what manner is this all carried out'?

The policy of exclusionary zoning used over the years has resulted in two parallel economies functioning within South African society. *Apartheid*, as a distinctive planning strategy, sought to preserve white power, domination and the exploitation of black labour by the capitalist system. In its own justification, it is a blueprint for peaceful racial coexistence. Within these policies and in this historical context, Thohoyandou received no formalized guidelines for planning procedures. Through in-fill planning, pockets of land which fell within the not-so-distinct boundary of the town were developed as the need arose. This created serious problems as the people

who occupied—and continue to occupy—land that had been proclaimed as part of the metropolitan area still owed allegiance to the chiefs and local traditional rulers, making administration extremely difficult. The current situation is such that the available land for the growth of the Thohoyandou area is exhausted, unless total incorporation of the tribal land occurs.

In so far as urban design and the location of buildings are concerned, the principles behind the architecture of Thohoyandou negate proper functioning of the people it is meant to serve. Architecture is a transparent art which reveals insincerity and compromise. In Thohoyandou, the picture conveyed by its architecture reveals its degrading history as well as the devastating effect of centralized political power.

ITHACA

The problems of First World cities are different from those experienced in developing countries. In the United States, urban problems are about safety, cleanliness, beauty and putting back the cultural richness in cities. Urban renewal, rather than urban planning is the major driving force. For cities such as Ithaca, New York, the revitalization of the downtown area is its priority. Admittedly, this city has its share of physical, social and cultural problems.

When, in 1974, some three blocks of downtown Ithaca were closed to traffic to create a pedestrian mall, the aim was to encourage retail activity and a bustling 'living room' and gathering place for the alienated community. In keeping with the thinking of the day, it was decided that downtown areas should be revitalized and turned into bustling, dense environments full of 'people all over the place', outdoor dining, office buildings, and public institutions that relate to the community; and to create an 'old new town' that retains its interest as a suburban alternative. In Ithaca, however, the anticipated business and commercial boom failed to materialize, though the problems that the city is faced with today are not unique.

PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

The suburban low-density sprawl, such as that which exists in the north western side of the county in Lansing, is an example of the twentieth century Functionalist movement to create garden cities. Physical aspects such as streets, open spaces, parks, squares and buildings need to relate to the social fabric of the county to help it overcome the economic hard times it is going through. The street-scape of Ithaca is one telling example of the economic hardships experienced by the city. The streets look 'tired, dull and uninviting' with a clear need for animation and detail. Office buildings are low-rise single- or two-storey buildings as are all the stores. The major retail core of the downtown area supports commercial functions such as banks, lawyers, the post office and retail. The 'tuning fork', a Y-shaped junction, serves as an entrance from New York State Route 79 on the eastern side through State street, but does not serve to connect the street into the city. In short, for all its inviting natural landscape, downtown Ithaca does not compensate for its poor relations with the surrounding feeder community.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COMMERCIAL CORE

The city of Ithaca, although dissimilar to the earlier example of Thohoyandou, is struggling to revive its dying downtown area. Though based on a firm foundation of undaunted enthusiasm, noble intentions and a deliberately conceived plan, a combination of other factors such as land use, social issues, housing, circulation, historic preservation, open spaces and pedestrian access need to be further articulated, particularly in relation to each other. Because of its place in urban development and the advanced nature of problems, Ithaca displays the problems of Western cities which do not need general restructuring, but have to review their land regulation and zoning mechanisms in order to survive. This strategy goes as far as the balancing of the needs of all parties: industry and commercial enterprises, farmers, homeowners, urban–,

suburban–area, and rural residents in order to maintain the economically viable downtown. Two concepts remain vital in this instance: necessity and possibility—in the end, not all that different from the concepts that are necessary for improvement and development in Thohoyandou.

CONCLUSION—SYNTHESIS AND NEW URBANISM IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

The far-reaching effects of poor education have taken a heavy toll in the type of graduates that South Africa has produced, especially in black institutions. Though a few have acquired the necessary education, they are still not making critical decisions on a large or wide enough scale. Education has always been a central issue in directing the perspective of change in South Africa, particularly when one considers that it was the student uprisings of 1976 which ushered in political change. There is still no policy that can effectively alter what continues to be taught, regarding content and methodology in tertiary institutions. Even at the present moment, much remains unchanged.

Architecture has a way of constraining unbounded space whereas space is not always demarcated by physical boundaries. Cultural conventions, coded systems, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour as well as the use of colour to depict mood in buildings are often subtle but dearly valued ways of inhabiting space and are observed in black culture. In the day-to-day activities of a group, the ways in which time and space are used give meaning and open communication channels to life's activities. Blacks who are accustomed to open spaces from their strong ties with the rural areas have certain beliefs which are not likely to disappear simply because they are housed in a two-storey walk-up. The structures, all designed by middle-class white men for blacks, are simply simmering pots of future problems. In this regard it should be borne in mind that much as change is stressful, it is worse so in situations where the environment is not in any way related to the user's needs and expectations.

Black South Africans are justly proud of their heritage and culture. The present nondescript structures provided by the government as housing lack the character that makes black people who they are. The assumption that blacks aspire to Western

standards of living in general, and for their housing types in particular, can only be true in so far as workable and appropriate alternatives, particularly in an urban context, are, as yet, undeveloped. In certain instances, there is a growing concern by the people for whom services are being provided that, as development progresses, what the residents regard to be the most important aspects are being overlooked. This does not imply that there are never good intentions when development initiatives are undertaken, but, as in any professional–layman relationship, the two sides often do not understand what goes on in each other's worlds. In this sense then, there is a pressing need for decision-makers to discover what factors are necessary to contribute socially relevant provision of infrastructure, given the activity systems of the communities. This should be stressed in all projects of this nature. The way people *feel* and and interact in a space is just as important as what they *do* in that space.

The issues presented in this chapter lie close to the hearts of many black South Africans, particularly as they pertain to the various cultural practices—art, literature, music, architecture and urban design. Some of the government's efforts at providing infrastructure to previously disadvantaged areas, through the framework of the National Public Works Programme, has produced, to a certain extent, the slow but sure realization that blacks are eager, capable—and in some cases, literally dying—to take part in the design and control of the built environment.

1:125,000

BIOGRAPHIES

KWASI BOATENG was born in Akim-Oda, Ghana, in 1961. He studied at the Southbank University where he gained his Diploma in Architecture in 1986. He received a Masters Degree in Urban Development Planning from University College London in 1992. Since then, he has taught at the University of Science & Technology, Ghana, and Southbank University, where he is currently an Honorary Fellow.

CHRIS NASAH was born in the Cameroon and is also a graduate of Southbank University & the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London (DipArch and MSc Building Design for Developing Countries). Boateng and Nasah run an architectural practice, KNAK Design, with offices in London, Ghana and the Cameroon.

3

LIVELY HAZARDOUS PLACES

The 'developed' world, also referred to as the 'First World' or the 'North'; the materially wealthy and the first group of countries to leap through the modernization loop described by Rostow, has, to a large extent through the available literature on urbanization and industrialization, set the parameters by which societies are described as 'developed' or 'developing'. For the purposes of this chapter, it should be noted that most black people are located in the 'developing' world—a cruel generalization, perhaps, but a necessary one for the development of this piece. Blacks in the diaspora (i.e. outside Africa and the developing world) are also located in the North, in increasing numbers. There are curious and tenacious links between Peckham (London, UK) and Lagos (Nigeria), and Accra (Ghana) and Manhattan (New York, USA), to name but a few. This chapter aims to look at the ways in which territory and the notion of a sense of place are determined and experienced. It also aims to look at the extent to which 'development' theory has failed to embrace the other factors which affect human settlement development, namely the social and cultural implications of urbanization and modernization. The Rostow model presented in the 1960s has retained its attractiveness for most development economists, and has reappeared recently, justifying the economic growth dominance of the broader development process. The human development perspective has taken second place to economic development.

The challenges facing human settlements over the next millennium are multidimensional in nature. The main root of the problem in both developed and developing countries is poverty: poverty in a spiritual sense in the developed world and in a material sense in the developing world. It is recognized that human settlements are not isolated from the social and economic development of countries and that this cannot be set apart from the needs for an international framework for sustainable development. The construction industry creates considerable opportunities for groups and individuals in terms of employment and is thus a good indicator for measuring a country's economic growth. The processes engaged to create human settlements in developing countries are not unlike the processes in developing countries—save for

one major activity. Planned intervention in the creation of human settlements has lacked a governance system in developing countries that appreciates the human and natural resources at a group's disposal. The importation of development systems alien to developing countries has left vulnerable groups and individuals to their own devices—creating a multitude of lively hazardous places.

The construction industry alone accounts for a sizeable proportion of the gross national product (GNP), the economic growth indicator for most countries. With the explosive rate of urbanization in developing countries, the built environment seems to reflect similar patterns in these regions. Formal urban human settlements in developing countries usually have informal settlements developing within and on the periphery of towns and cities. Urbanization has become a powerful force in developing countries: it has also taken place comparatively quickly and recently, particularly in Africa. This phenomenon of explosive growth has not been adequately researched or even understood in the policies and development programmes of international development organizations. Certain themes can be detected in the emerging research on urbanization: the environment; sustainability; poverty; finance and the economy of cities, urban social structure and urban governance.

This chapter concentrates on the Africa region and draws on examples from Ghana and the Cameroon as case studies. Human settlements in these two countries have evolved to reflect strategies put in place by mostly public sector initiatives and delivered by a combination of both private and public sector organizations. The chapter examines human settlement provision in terms of the two countries' location in the world economic system, their institutional structures, their political development and importantly, their cultural history and outlook. Most built environment professionals locate themselves at the delivery end of the process of developing the built environment. Policy takes place prior to project initiation, which is then reflected in the curricula of most departments of built environment faculties, a practice found both in developing and developed countries. Practice, for the most part, is struggling to cope with projects that are often conceived in developed countries, for the

developing environment. Research, at policy and project stage, is seen to be a luxury. The old debates about technology, local materials and craft will not be revisited here, not because they are no longer relevant, but simply because they do not address, in adequate detail, the challenges in a world where finance and technology have no fixed nationality. Who is setting the agendas for both practice and research for these lively hazardous places? The rapid changes that have occurred in communications over the last decade have made it possible for people in Accra to communicate with their contemporaries in New York, faster than ever. The aspirations of groups and individuals in developing and developed countries are closer. For professionals working within the built environment arena, our generation has to cope with wider disappointments/opportunities in more spheres of life than the generation before us. However, exposure to things happening around us paradoxically fills us with hope that the technology is available to assist us in 'doing the right thing.' The educational process that prepares built environment professionals is shared in both developing and developed countries. In Ghana, its origins are British, while Cameroon has inherited a French tradition. Western-style education is subtle, indirect and is often an unconscious form of transfer from trainer to trainee. Our colonial pasts have prepared us for graduation into a wider world where we unconsciously carry out the dependencies we consciously try to avoid. Ali Mazrui spells the situation out in no uncertain terms. It is appropriate to quote him:

> The educated class has already grasped at least the basic fact that sovereignty implies both self-reliance and autonomous power. All educated Africa to a man (and woman) are still cultural captives of the west. The range is from Samora Machel (a captive of Marxism as a Western ideology) to Léopold Senghor (a captive of French philosophical traditions), from Charles Njonjo (a profoundly anglicised Kenyan) to Wole Soyinka (the angry westernised rebel with a Yoruba accent). And every morning when Ali Mazrui shaves before a mirror, he bears witness to the visage of yet another culture captive of the West. The difference among us does not lie in whether we are captives but to what extent

we are. We vary in degree of bondage but not in actual degree of state of being enslaved.[1]

Ali Mazrui

The dilemma of the 'generalist' versus the 'expert'—the person with a good general literacy education, able to manage any position or job, rather than the person with specific or technical skills, managing a position for which he or she is trained, is particularly relevant in the developing world. All built environment professionals fall into the second category. This dilemma is reflected accurately in architectural education and is correspondingly reflected in practice. The formal education of architects, be it local on the African continent or abroad in Europe or North America, greatly contributes to the profession's alienation from the communities to which it belongs. The theoretical framework we address is primarily dominated by the images and debates set by Western-trained academics. The framework in which we operate limits the concept of a 'sense of place' to the imaginations of those who can read and write in a fashion acceptable to such academics. Other forms of record-keeping and tools for analysis are currently being admitted but still trail well behind the established forms of producing reference material. Hamdi highlights the needs of the different interest groups that battle to present their agendas in the debate about how professionals operating in the built environment contribute to the development of such places via his analysis of a divided agenda.

Lively hazardous places are found mostly in the urban areas of developing countries. These places exhibit physical conditions usually associated with 'rural' areas in most developing countries and have been researched by economists to understand their economic potential in relation to the formal national economies. Pioneering work by Hart in Ghana pointed towards the importance of the informal sector, which contributes a large proportion of the national economy of Ghana. This revealed a difficulty for traditional planning institutions who, traditionally, respond to this fact by devising mechanisms to formalize this sector, both institutionally and architecturally. Numerous strategies and methodologies have been devised to measure activities in the

informal sector. The informal sector is currently viewed, even by institutions like the World Bank, as good but in need of regulation. Similarly, it is no coincidence that large numbers of blacks in the diaspora find themselves located in the informal sector as they are excluded, for a number of reasons, from formal sector activities.

We believe that there are strong links between the various peoples on the African continent in relation to the arts and shared cultural activities. Architecture, though not immediately and easily understood, is one of the areas of this interface. The process of governance in relation to architecture and the provision of the built environment is slowly evolving, geared towards improving the participation of key urban groups and individuals in deciding how and who gets potable water, sanitation, primary health care and education. These are the essential services required for such lively hazardous places—helping people to obtain suitable shelter before moving towards debates on form and aesthetics. Donor organizations are attaching importance to ensuring that the development assistance packages to developing countries reach their intended target groups and individuals.

The last of the major UN conferences at the tail end of the twentieth century was Habitat II: the City Summit, in Istanbul in June 1996. Habitat II: the City Summit was more spectacular than preceding conferences in the last decade, primarily because it incorporated a wide selection of experts from all sectors: public (government), community (NGOs) and private. These included superstars from the built environment professions: architects, planners, engineers, developers and housing professionals. The private sector even had its own forum where it was expected to present its views as to how it will contribute to develop affordable shelter throughout the globe. Unlike cars, televisions and cameras, the issues surrounding shelter do not simply mean the production of houses. Human settlement development encompasses the development of homes, schools, health-care facilities, workplaces and general service facilities. The right to shelter and adequate services is a basic human right. There are enough resources to achieve this task. Why are Africans unable to obtain or sustain this basic human right?

The UN is a 'club' of governments—under the term 'good governance' we should no longer accept that governments have the monopoly on who gets what goods and services, either regionally, nationally or globally. In its long overdue review of the areas on which the organization concentrates and focuses its attention, the UN has articulated that a key area in the future will be that of 'governance'. The term 'governance' is given a variety of meanings by different users and is usually associated with government. It is clear that governance has progressively become a component of 'aid-speak': 'governance' and 'government' are frequently used interchangeably, suggesting that these terms, to some groups, mean the same thing. The term governance is controversial in development assistance. As with most kinds of new terminology in the wider field of development aid, it is important that the term be integrative, multidisciplinary and holistic. The concept of governance is the process of interaction between the public sector and the various actors and groups of actors in 'civil' society, ensuring an equitable distribution of goods and services. The crucial distinction between government and governance is the clear notion of civil society. This is defined as the public life of individuals and institutions outside the control of the state. Government, on the other hand, consists of those agencies that make laws and carry them out. There are individuals and groups outside government that are important parts of civil society who, in the past, have not been part of the processes that come together to help make laws, but are affected by those laws. If we accept that in most developing countries, the distinction between government and state is very unclear, the terms governance and government, particularly in this piece, are not interchangeable.

This chapter raises four dimensions of governance which are key to understanding the integrated approach required in developing this concept. These are the political, technical, institutional and cultural dimensions of governance. The cultural dimension, probably the most overlooked, confirms the fact that different societies have different ways of addressing issues. Boeninger's analysis of governance is a good starting point to explore the twin realities of establishing:

(1)   What services are provided and for whom?

(2)   Who decides how these services get distributed?

Architecture, in this context, is reduced to a service. Architecture, as it is understood and practised in the developed world, can only be viewed as a luxury. In almost all cases, it is either unaffordable or unavailable. In addition, a deep-seated 'romanticism' seems to prevail in institutions that are involved in teaching, research and consultancy—'why spoil the beauty of nature?' This inability to address questions of architecture, in their broadest sense, in modern-day Africa has contributed to the notion of architecture as mere service provider and does not encourage lively, critical debate. The basis for the performance of all those who collaborate to provide services in the first place also has to be established. The objective for this economic, social and political activity is to increase the amount of services at the disposal of any given society. After this has been accomplished, irrespective of the quantity or quality of these services, comes the problem of how to share these. The supply of services does not meet demand, especially in urban areas. This is common in most urban areas of the developing world. According to current developmental theory, the 'market economy' model of economic development has been identified as the best way of producing these much needed services in the most efficient manner. Both Harris and Stren state that cities stand as engine rooms of economic growth—they are no longer viewed as parasites to rural areas. According to such theories, urban areas should progress and strengthen the market economy model and thus should have an abundance of services, sufficient to supply their inhabitants. In reality, however, these services are not readily available. The problem is that of bad—or lack of—urban management.

Urban management and local administration are past umbrellas under which the processes of urban governance have been debated and carried out. The term 'local administration' was the predecessor of the term 'urban management'. It would be unfair to declare that these terms mean the same thing. Essentially, both attempted to

bring about an improvement in the production and allocation of services in a given locality. Urban management is used as a template for revealing clues as to the subject area of urban governance. Urban management should, at its best, according to Rondenelli and Cheema, focus on the following:

(1) *Providing the infrastructure essential to the operation of cities;*

(2) *providing services that develop human resources, improve productivity and raise the standard of living of urban residents;*

(3) *regulating private activities that affect community welfare and the health and safety of the urban population; and*

(4) *providing services and facilities that support productive activities and allow private enterprise to operate efficiently in urban areas.*

All but a third of the tasks listed above involve the provision of infrastructure and services. The current phase of delivering urban services is biased towards the private sector. The earlier phase (public administration) was biased towards the public sector and concentrated on the creation of institutions in the public sector to carry out the functions of delivering urban services. The two phases of the process of urban management are highlighted to reflect the history of service provision. Human settlement development cannot be left to either the public sector or the private sector to deliver. Most people in developing countries build their own shelter, thus the recognition of the community sector in human settlement development is long overdue. Mattingly argues that the over-arching processes of management in any development activity should entail processes such as planning, co-ordinating, resourcing, developing and maintaining, These, in most developing countries, are absent as most groups and individuals in civil society are usually not considered as part of a defined or formal community. There is therefore little chance of carrying out any co-ordinated management of human settlement development. The community sector is beginning to emerge as a competent third partner.

Human settlement development is closely linked to the problem of population

displacement in Africa. This link can sometimes be pushed aside and dealt with when a crisis appears in specific regions. Individual countries in Africa prepare their own national development plans and allocate budgets to take care of refugees as they arrive, (we hope) or simply call up the UN agency that deals with refugees for assistance to cope with the problem. There are refugees already in most African countries who fall outside the main development plans of many countries. These forgotten masses are also desperately poor. It would be a mistake to generalize that the same situation exists in all countries in Africa. The poor are not a homogeneous group, although there are many common factors linking different impoverished populations—vulnerability and insecurity are two of the main characteristics of this condition. These two sets of circumstances alone can collaborate to deny the basic things of food, clothing and shelter. This chapter attempts to looks at the basic human right of adequate shelter and necessary services in human settlements. These services can be listed as good drinking water, sanitation and shelter. Most African cities do have some things in common. They all have shanty towns within the main cities or located on the periphery of major cities. These settlements have the three services mentioned above. The processes that come together to direct where the basic services go is an issue of good governance.

Most of the settlements emerging in developing countries are not planned and usually contain a mix of people in terms of income groups, professions and expectations. Most of these settlements have been looked at by various local and international agencies for the purposes of research, upgrading projects and demolition. The reality of these informal human settlements are that people live in the places, raise children and die in these settlements. For most people in the planned and well-serviced settlements, these are hazardous places. These settlements are the last resort for large sections of urban dwellers in Africa and will not be represented at The City Summit. Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in most African countries, through partnership with international agencies, are making a difference through participatory approaches in improving the living conditions of these lively hazardous places. These approaches are participatory in the sense that communities

are involved through directing resources into local self-help groups and liaison with the relevant public sector agencies. The private sector is already active in these communities through the efforts of entrepreneurs operating catering establishments and most of the basic maintenance operations (shoe-makers, dress-makers, carpenters, etc.) The amalgam described above might create a confusing picture of people in transit, semi-permanent or temporary residence. This situation is real—and growing in most urban areas in developing countries.

How many professions in the built environment in Africa have, as a core of their educational curriculum, issues about poverty and development? These established professions confront poverty and the broader process of development as if by default. The provision of services is biased towards the projects stage of the whole process. The policies and programmes stages, for most of the time, are left for those who were (and will continue to be) present at The City Summit. Decisions about the quality and quantity of services are made without the full participation of the wider community. Provision here means the processes by which the quality and quantity of the services are determined. In integrating good governance within urban development, we should ensure that more sections of the community contribute through relevant participation at the relevant time. The roots of governance lie in social development and, we argue, in participation by all sections of civil society. It is imperative that the current power relations between the community and private and public sectors be re-examined. From the urban management perspective, a new convention is appearing that rejects the notion of government monopoly in the definition and solution of social problems. Considering the resources most governments in Africa command, it would be more beneficial for governments to play a more analytical, political and managerial role than the technical role they have played in the past. This role demands skills that might lie latent in the public sector or require a re-think about the training programmes its employees undertake. These approaches need time to take root and demand that there is considerable mediation between the sectors and interests.

We have presented an argument for developing human settlements as an

operation in need of reform through good governance. We will now expand on four different but related dimensions of the governance process, showing the scope and scale of the issues involved in improving human settlement. The role 'race' plays in good governance is central to the process of improving the effective delivery of services in human settlements. We believe that only by observing the larger picture of how the African continent and its peoples are perceived throughout the developed world is one able to understand what lies at the crux of the developed/developing issue. Black people do not command respect anywhere on this planet—there is an immediate link between how blacks are perceived and how our expectations can be measured. The good governance framework simply provides Africans with an opportunity to develop in a multitude of ways, without staying a social underclass.

TECHNICAL DIMENSION

The whole process of human settlement delivery from a management perspective has traditionally been concerned with the technical aspects of this activity. However, ideas about how best to operate urban services have evolved—from the concern for local government (public sector delivery); through urban management groups (incorporating the benefits of the private sector); to the current urban governance phase, which fully acknowledges the community sector's role and is now attempting to integrate this sector. These technical dimensions are governed by the constraints imposed by natural resources, levels of education, manpower skills and the installed industrial capacity of any given society. These limitations will have an impact on any form of planned intervention in developing countries. Participants have to grapple with planning, co-ordinating, resourcing, developing, operating and maintaining the process of good governance. The World Bank has an interest in the programmes and projects it finances in the developing world, primarily from an economic growth perspective. There are numerous occasions where the Bank has been accused of forcing countries to adopt policies that have been economically

devastating for its population. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) have been examples of the Bank's emphasis on technical aspects of assisting a borrower to organize its economy, thereby improving its economic growth potential. These have involved assistance to reform banking systems and steps to eradicate general inefficiencies in the national economic programmes. The global economic system locates most developing countries in what dependency theorists in the development debate describe as the 'periphery regions'. However, urban areas in the peripheral regions of the world economic system seem to defy this norm. The current matrix of economic opportunity for huge multi-national companies makes it possible for pockets inside countries who, within the old world-system would be grouped as 'economically poor performers' now have economic growth rates much higher than some developed countries. Some urban locations enjoy such economic growth rates but the citizenry as a whole do not enjoy improved services.

It is important to reiterate the point that the topic of urban governance presents two sides of an equation: performance and representation. The technical dimension of governance is very biased towards the performance side of the governance equation. This dimension of governance has been dominated by the debates on economic growth, despite the World Bank's admission that this model cannot resolve the lack of equity in the distribution of the fruits of any society's performance. This is confirmed by the way in which newly industrialized countries have been able to organize technically their economies to achieve impressive growth rates. Studies on how some of these nations have been able to achieve such growth rates are beginning to reveal other elements to these economic miracles. In most cases, the state, normally through repressive regimes, has been able to execute economic programmes that require considerable sacrifices by large sections of the population. The pursuit of economic growth, by any means, can result in swift and unmanageable environmental, societal and cultural change. This brings into focus the issue of environmental sustainability with regards to the processes that are currently being pursued to achieve economic growth. Most developing countries (and especially urban areas) cannot hope to sustain

the growth rates associated with previous growth patterns of urban areas in developed countries. The energy resources required to sustain such growth rates and operation of services are limited. The debate about sustainable development cannot be fully explored in this chapter, but is highlighted in relation to the development of human settlements. There is currently some convergence of understanding about how to work technically towards sustainable development that both permits economic development and encourages the human development of developing countries. A similar convergence of interest must be encouraged to fulfil the goals of sustainable development for both poor and rich societies. The governance element of this debate is how developed countries and urban areas (high consumers) adjust and rethink their consumption patterns. Most urban areas in developing countries are beginning to attract environmental concern because they are the first signs of competition for increased natural resources. The disparities in technology and information systems have widened between nations and regions—for example, urban waste disposal in developing countries. Environmentalism and economic growth are not natural enemies. The particular kinds of technology and materials being employed in most formal developments still follow the rules and recommendations of a production system linked to a pattern of consumption usually more recognizable in developed countries. The issue is not only how much economic growth but what kind of growth. The alternative of environmentally friendly products and lifestyles are not being given similar presentation. The emphasis on the cost of replacing environmentally unfriendly products and marketing an alternative, low-maintenance and consumptive lifestyle is used by some interest groups to present an economic argument that takes a short-term view of human settlement development. The process of good governance could assist with presenting both sides of this economic growth debate for individuals and groups to make informed economic choices.

The technical restructuring of a country's economy (getting things to work more efficiently) does not address the question of which group should bear sacrifices in order to achieve the growth associated with SAPs. This example highlights the fact

that within the technical dimension of governance, decision-makers (internal and external) have a responsibility to address the aspect of human development and ensure that there is a more equitable allocation of resources to the two aspects of the technical dimension of governance. A clear balance must be struck to present development in a holistic manner that encompasses the needs of all groups in any given society. This dimension of governance reveals the imbalance between economic development and human development. This is magnified in an urban context in most developing countries and reflected in the operation of services.

POLITICAL DIMENSION

The political dimension of governance is closely related to the technical dimension in that one cannot consider in isolation the economic and social policy of any society without developing an appreciation of the processes that guide decision-making. Thomas and Potter[2] describe these as essentially power relations within and between political actors and institutions, including forms of power struggle. This involves state power and the maintenance of order in society. The World Bank attempts to draw a clear distinction between the political and technical dimensions of governance by stating that its mandate is the promotion of sustainable economic and social development. The Bank's Articles of Agreement explicitly prohibit the institution from interfering in a country's internal political affairs and requires it to take only economic considerations into account in its decisions. This approach, however, is counter to the 'just development' approach suggested by Clark through popular participation of all sections of any society.

It is imperative to tackle this dimension of governance in relation to the development of human settlements because it is here that the issue of land has to be faced head-on. Land tenure and more specifically the security of tenure is crucial in developing human settlements in Africa. It is in the area of land tenure that the state and donors can make significant progress through creating the environment

favourable for the equitable distribution and management of this depleting resource. The political dimension demands good, strong leadership to secure good governance. It is under such an environment that opportunities for the public, private and community sectors collaborate to provide sustainable human settlements.

INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION

Allied to the political dimension is the question of whether citizens enjoy the freedom to organize according to specific interests. It can be argued that institutional pluralism can be seen as an important mechanism for diluting and disseminating exclusive central political power. The recognition of the community sector as a distinctive sector has broken the old mould of the private sector versus the public sector as the two institutional (and sometimes opposing) camps. The accession of the third partner, the community sector, has presented new possibilities for groups in civil society who have, in the past, been marginalized because they did not fit within the established system of institutions. The literature on the institutional dimension of governance in developing countries is linked to governance in developed countries because this is where mechanisms can be created to make public regulation less remote, thus promoting the growth of relations based on cooperation and trust and ensuring a flow of information and commitment on the part of all actors necessary to the pursuit of 'quality' in market economies. Most of the World Bank's experience is primarily in the institutional dimension of governance. The main components of this dimension are as follows:-

(1)   Public-sector management
(2)   Legal framework
(3)   Participatory approaches
(4)   Human rights

Structural adjustment programmes offered by the World Bank throughout the 1990s to developing countries were indirectly attempts at institutional reform. These attempts gave governments who were implementing these packages the legitimacy to modify economic and social institutions to the advantage of the private sector. The institutional dimension of governance addresses the failure of existing mechanisms to provide services to all groups equitably. With the advent of the modern state most community networks which traditionally enable groups and individuals to support each other in developing dwellings and the associated services that make up human settlements have all but disappeared in most of Africa. Established private and public sector institutions are gradually changing but still present forces that attempt to keep the status quo intact, through the forces of hierarchy, inertia, subversion, degeneration and corruption in the organizational sphere. In the sphere of social relations, the established institutions resist change through social domination, tokenism, coercion, conflict and opposition. Most literature in this area focuses on the reform of institutions rather than the creation of new ones. Public sector management is primarily civil service reform, public financial management and public enterprise reform. Good governance, as perceived by the World Bank through the reform of public sector management, is guided by a model of a smaller public sector, equipped with a professional, accountable bureaucracy that provides an 'enabling' environment for the private sector. This has already taken place in Ghana and Zimbabwe. The objectives of this reform are effective economic management and sustained poverty reduction. The human settlements produced are mainly for higher and middle-income groups. The United Nations Development Programme highlights the lack of balance between programmes that concentrate on economic development as opposed to human development and exposes the bias towards economic growth. The report argues that the notion that human development focuses on distribution of income rather than generation of income is a false one.

CULTURAL DIMENSION

Sen argues that economic and social progress are not the only objectives of development. Freedom from fear and arbitrary arrest, free speech, free association and the right to run for and hold political office can all be viewed as important elements in living a fuller and more meaningful life. The concept of meaningful life becomes the broader issue of culture as a specific dimension of governance. The state does not operate in a vacuum. It operates, as Martins suggests, in an environment in which people share certain beliefs and values, compete for some objectives and associate for others and differ in ideas about power and how it should be exercised. The rules by which any society exists are set by the central organ of the ruling power in that society but are also contracted from explicit or implicit cultural agreements about what is acceptable and desirable. Different groups of people approach the provision of human settlements differently. The ways by which each group of people choose to go about organizing themselves is as much a cultural question as, for example, an environmental one. The state cannot be separated from culture, nor can governance be considered without reference to its cultural context.

The importance of understanding and considering culture in the development process cannot be overlooked. Unfortunately, because of its complexity, there has been no formula or methodology to aid practitioners and academics in incorporating this dimension in relation to good governance. Culture is 'trans-social'—an invisible yet tangible part of all social activities, groupings, operations and expressions. In pursuing what one society has agreed to be good governance, some concensus must be reached over what that society considers 'good' and appropriate. It is clear that the world is made up of a myriad of rich cultural groupings. What is crucial to identify are the dominant patterns that seem to be setting the pace for cultural development. From the earlier sections, it was identified that two mega-trends have emerged and the one that concerns this section of the study is the capitalist economy. The cultural dimension of capitalist modernity belongs to a contextual web within which almost all

cultural spheres operate and find expression in the urban. Exponential population growth and the increased rate of urbanization are powerful agents impacting and changing the urban environment. Cities are a manifestation of cultural expressions of modernity. The physical city that the United Nations conference in Istanbul did spend a lot of time discussing is but one side of a fairly battered coin. The other side of this coin is more difficult to measure and thus less interesting to present. This is the well-being of the populations who inhabit these lively hazardous places.

At the centre of the debate of good governance in development has been the cultural practice of consumption or consumerism (a culture whose central preoccupation seems to be that of consuming). This is further developed in a related argument that the real agency in the process is the producer and internationally connected forces of production who use the seductive keys of advertising, together with other instruments such as armaments, clothing and new technology to attract and entrap the consumer. There is a homogenization of what can be described as a global mass culture—a culture which is centred around the concentration of capital in Western technology and Western techniques. Good governance, through the representation side of the equation, should, to a certain extent, present alternatives to this economic-dominated mode of what various societies want and can have.

CONCLUSION

Evolving sustainable human settlements in developing countries and more specifically in Africa requires research that has the dimension of culture at the heart of an implementation strategy. The dimensions of governance highlighted earlier in this chapter form a backdrop to ensuring a more integrated approach to providing the necessary access for all groups and individuals in civil society. Human settlement development in Africa has reached a watershed as far as creating a framework which is flexible enough to accommodate the current mega-trends of the market economy and the rise of democracy is concerned. The public sector, through pressure from

donor organizations, has shrunk and can no longer muster the resources it enjoyed post-independence in many African countries. The private sector is governed by clear rules dictated by profit and thus can only cater for particular sections of the market. It has not yet developed mechanisms that extend beyond the bank balance sheet. The community sector is slowly evolving mechanisms that enable it to deliver some housing, but is nowhere near to meeting current demand. Housing, as has been mentioned before, is only one aspect of human settlement development. The necessary services of good drinking water, adequate drainage and sewage collection which have health implications on communities are integral in evolving sustainable human settlements. Other facilities that would enable such lively hazardous places to thrive would be schools, clinics, shops, etc., but would this be demanding too much? The reality of the places most people describe as shanty towns, slums, barrios and ghettos is that people are making the best of pretty bad, often desperate, situations. Numerous strategies have been attempted to improve or upgrade these settlements. Decades of experimentation with schemes dubbed 'affordable' and 'low cost' have still left the large majority of people living in urban areas in Africa with poor shelter and inadequate services. A framework with good governance at its core could assist the community, private and public sectors to pool their resources towards more integrated strategies for developing *really* sustainable human settlements.

Photo credit:
Township life,
Katlehong, South
Africa. Riarua
Glynn Huaraka.

1:125,000

BIOGRAPHIES

MICHAEL STANTON was educated at Antioch College and Harvard University and received his Masters in Architecture at Princeton University. He has worked in the offices of Agrest and Gandelsonas in New York and Hartman/Cox in Washington, DC, and independently since 1985. His design work has won an ACSA Design Award, the Young Architect's Award from the Architectural League of New York and the Biennial Steedman Prize. He was a Fellow in Architecture at the American Academy in Rome in 1990–91 and the first Aga Kahn Traveling Fellow in 1980. He has lectured and exhibited his work extensively in the Americas and Europe. He has taught at The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York, RISD, Catholic University, The University of Miami and, for much of the last decade, at Tulane University in New Orleans. He is currently Visiting Associate Professor at the American University of Beirut. Stanton lives in New Orleans.

4

THE RACK AND THE WEB: THE OTHER CITY
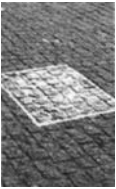
Indeed, in our political economy of commodity-signs it is difference that we consume.

Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real*[1]

A migrational, or metaphorical, city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city.

Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*[2]

A line extends outward from what was the teeming city center. A cluster of intensely conditioned and security-hardened buildings marks that spot but the streets are empty of pedestrians where the urban pressure was once frantic. Moving out, the line passes a rapidly deteriorating fabric of old buildings, mostly masonry and new semi-temporary structures of light materials in which business or institutions lodge, equally temporary. From there the fabric dissolves into a burned-out residential tundra where more lots are empty than full and the aspect is that of post-war desolation. This continues with slight variation—a knot of gentrification, fast-food colonization, homesteading religious and community improvement operations, dilapidated public housing, a few old neighborhoods hanging on, jammed highways flying over or digging under, deserted parks—until the city line. Suddenly new office blocks, commercial ventures and malls designate the revenue-rich zone beyond the border of the industrial city. From here on, the dense new urbanism hums with automobile life. Exiting the elevated or suppressed high-speed roads, cars return to the surface and the residential fabric extends, single family or townhouse, relatively identical in Tampa or Seattle. Gradually this generic mat thins and the agricultural grid regains dominance, stretching to the next point where the fragmented and episodic city begins again. This chapter will reflect the nature of this city, moving outward chronologically towards the imprecision of the present and, like the city and culture under discussion, presenting vignette and inconsistency as a descriptive fabric.

Cities are form and attitude. They depict the cultures that produce them, inscribing best intentions and worst prejudices. The urban is always ideological, particularly in the USA, a doctrinaire place to begin with. This applies not just to the

political notion of the city, linked as it is etymologically to citizenship and the civic,[3] but to its physical attributes as well. Urban form both reflects and reinforces states of class and race mercilessly, becoming another of the systems of control and division. This applies particularly to the turbulent history and distressed body of the American inner city, now primarily identified with 'difference', with minorities, both racial and social. It also includes the suburbs and city prototypes presented by the computer and through the media. While they remain the centers of gravity for a highly industrialized society, American cities are simultaneously its murky perimeter as centrifugal force moves energy outward. At the center, the urban folds back on itself and generates the strongest cultural voltage and negative polarities, contributing to a perpetual misrepresentation of the modern American metropolis.

> *In our day everything is pregnant with its contrary...even the pure light of science seems unable to shine but on the dark background of ignorance. All our invention and progress seem to result in endowing material forces with intellectual life, and stultifying human life into material force.*
> *Karl Marx, Speech at the Anniversary of The People's Paper[4]*

Paradox resonates in America's cultural production, in its literature and art. Dichotomies characterize Americans' conceptions of themselves, and by extension, of the Modern Age, for which the USA remains the exhausted torch-bearer. The American city embodies the national friction between utopian and social-Darwinist impulses.[5] Given that it provides a mechanism for reconciling extreme disparities, here paradox permits oppression while it simultaneously sanctions liberation, proposing a disturbing dialectic that disregards the essential grayness of issues in preference for black and white. Paradox flourishes where antitheses are contrived, masking the interrelations and symbioses that actually form culture. But America thrives on rhetorical oppositions—isolation and empire; puritan and libertine; bellicosity and pacifism; secular and ecclesiastical; agrarian and industrial; individual and society, to name a few. Possibly the most exaggerated is between 'desire' and 'fact' in the

Americas, between a show of fanatical idealism and the plain and often sordid actualities of a tough frontier.[6] Polarized on all issues, defining itself by extravagant contrasts, American urbanism naturally succumbs to xenophobia and conflict.

'America' here should be understood as all of the western hemisphere. One of the more troubled illusions maintained by the USA is that it is somehow more like Europe than it is like its neighbors to the south. In the history of its development, in the configuration of its cities and countryside and in the structure of its society, the nation is more decidedly a version of the other Americas than an outpost of Europe. South, Central and North America (with the possible exception of Canada) are linked and distanced from their fading origins by the distance between affluence and poverty, and by an inevitable multiculturalism and the equally insistent rejection of that multiculturalism by those who feel fully assimilated. The USA is typified by skepticism towards the social contract, by enthusiasm for mobility, social and physical, and by systematic exploitation based on the aforementioned conditions. The disparate urban economics and physical realities of the other Americas should be seen as less wealthy but not different from the technologized and consuming excesses of their big northern neighbor. One per cent of US citizens control more wealth and property than 90 per cent. This statistic is reflected in urban form and links typologically to the rest of the Americas. The USA is a prosperous Third World nation, if such distinctions can be made after the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, the similar cultures of the west have produced new urban configurations, proposing a hemispheric morphology. Houston or Los Angeles are formally closer to Mexico City, São Paulo or Buenos Aires than they are to New York or Chicago, let alone Paris or Prague, though these older cities, both American and European, are quickly moving toward the Pan-American model, suggesting a universal urban order for the twenty-first century that may also include the ballooning cities of Asia. Using this Pan-American model it becomes easier to resolve or at least mitigate the stifling ideological discrepancies that bind the USA and its cities.

The most pragmatic, technocratic society in the world–the United States–is also one of the most fullbloodedly 'metaphysical' in its ideological values, solemnly invoking God, Freedom and Nation. The businessman justifies his activity at the office by 'rational' criteria before returning to the sacred rituals of the family hearth. Indeed the more drearily utilitarian a dominant ideology is, the more refuge will be sought in the compensatory rhetorics of a 'transcendental' kind...To see ideology simply as an alternative to myth and metaphysics is to miss an important contradiction in modern capitalist societies. For such societies still feel the need to legitimate their activities at the altar of transcendental values, not least religious ones, while steadily undermining the credibility of those doctrines by their own ruthlessly rationalizing practices.

Terry Eagleton, Ideology[7]

The USA was, and is, a state of mind,[8] a construct of ideology, rather than a place where ideology follows particular cultural needs. The physical fact of North America, the infinite variations of the urban and the agricultural inside the millions of marked square miles and their subdivisions, may be the planet's grandest executed conceptual design project. Like all conceptual entities, it is capable of extraordinary and cruel oversight. A group of American *philosophes* invented the USA. Conceived as white, cerebral and male, it was the homunculus for Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin *et al.* What they perceived as the tiny perfectly formed nation became the experimental laboratory for this patrimony, producing a troubled 'monster'[9] of grafted doctrine and romantic vignette. The Enlightenment contrived the nation. No matter that it was already there. Europeans and their slaves had been in the New World for 300 years and the dwindling population of natives for much longer. Nonetheless America appeared to provide a fertile field for all the passions that drove the troubled eighteenth-century European conscience. It was an ivory vessel and the national self-image of fecund virtue remains even now as the facts point to other conclusions. The purity of this imagined field needed but could not accommodate philosophically either the sordid mix of immigration nor the color of native and slave populations. The melting-pot in this case was too exclusive for its purpose: expectant, yet perpetually

trying to remain clean of tint or refuse.

The modern city was a phenomenon of the eighteenth century and after, embodying the incongruities, new values and advances of a transitional European era, sitting at the metropolitan brink: of the industrial, the revolutionary, the bourgeois. In its extreme remove from the compromised reality of Europe, virginal America seemed to offer the place for utopia to overcome its status as mere reflection, fostering the precarious notion, endemic to all utopias, that the physical realm and its man-made component—architecture—could repair or perfect the human spirit. Even though it masks hard facts and despite its troubled history, utopianism was instrumental in giving form to the American landscape, rural and urban, while its realization was severely compromised by the development of the rough New World city and the conflicting doctrines of the new nation's constructors. In the Americas, ideal joined with restructured society to form a new armature for actual settlement. The charged metropolitan pattern became the stage for capital's grandest performances and meanest tragedies. Jefferson delivered the plans of twelve European cities to the Frenchman Pierre Charles L'Enfant in 1791 to inspire the design of the new Capital,[10] old-world formats to be laid upon the inevitable grid of the new nation, producing the ideologically charged plan of Washington, hybrid of formal garden–park, papal–monumental city and egalitarian–rational gridiron.

In the simple dynamism of the Midwest of the early twentieth century, the complex calculus of historical growth or loss did not seem particularly real or important....in this brief moment of fulfillment and ease, it seemed that here must be a strict logic of the relationship of site and satisfaction, something approaching the validity of natural order.

Carl Sauer, Forward to Historical Geography[11]

With the utopian comes the Pastoral and the same latent malice lurks in the apparently gentle idealism of these two pervasive vehicles for societal critique and adjustment. Potentially the most powerful and extraordinarily durable of doctrines

relevant to American urban development were contained in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's anti-urban texts. These suggested the program for a new society, Pastoral in format, but much more vehement in its intentions than the wistful reverie of Virgil or Theocritus. These ancient writers, and the continuing tradition of 'the return'[12] in the centuries that followed, valued the simple and rustic from the position of sophisticates presenting a soft, almost self-congratulatory chiding to their urbane peers. No matter how mildly the Pastoral as a literary form expresses urban self-criticism, it can reach such a pitch in popular interpretation so as to reject rather than reflect.

The Pastoral tradition romanticized the bucolic from the perspective of continually more chaotic urbanism and set a powerful example for Rousseau:

> *How greatly did my first sight of Paris belie the idea I had formed of it. I had imagined a city of most imposing appearance, as beautiful as it was large, where nothing was to be seen but splendid streets and palaces of marble and gold. As I entered through the Faubourg Saint-Marçeau, I saw nothing but dirty stinking little streets, ugly black houses, a general air of squalor and poverty...it was on the 9th of April, 1756 that I left Paris, never to live in a town again.*[13]

For Rousseau, the image is that of the white and gold City of God juxtaposed with the actual 'black' city, setting a permanent standard. Under the pressure of industrialization and revolution, the popular interpretation of the late Pastoral negated the urban rather than remaining its conscience. The atavistic sentiments of Rousseau set a powerful directive when combined with the even more powerful arguments of his Social Contract, proposing the sovereignty of the people along with Locke and others, calling for popular rights, urging the overthrow of a civilization in which most of its members were expendable for the benefit of a few. These sentiments shaped the actual relentless pattern of the USA and its cities, forming a landscape that was simultaneously ripe for urban proliferation and hostile to urbanism as previously defined.

Within the Pastoral, egalitarianism and discrimination could thus co-exist comfortably. The concept of a superior nature and its aggressive evangelists can, and

did, turn particularly ugly. I use the word 'nature' with all the horror that the Fascist experience was able to give to such an apparently harmless notion—a horror that begins with Rousseau or even Virgil, but ends with the violent 'cleansing' processes that this century has had to endure. While profoundly romantic, the Pastoral also legitimized the difference that could then justify slavery. Savage nobility was easily associated with the New World. During the Enlightenment, natives were brought from the Americas to people the halls of European palaces as curiosities, but also as teachers. The slaves reversed this process but without the didactic intention. New-world natives, deported or killed off, were replaced with a possessed substitute, an African perceived as savage without dignity, ignoble and no longer savage yet not perceived as civilized. Such terminology continues today in popular descriptions of criminal elements—or of urban zones in general.

> *The Metropolis is the general form assumed by the process of the rationalization of social relations. It is the phase, or the problem, of the rationalization of all social relations, which follows that of the rationalization of the relations of production.*
>
> Massimo Cacciari, *Architecture and Nihilism*[14]

Despite the agrarian aspirations of some of the founders of the USA, it was in the New World city that much of the desire of eighteenth-century social philosophy took hold. Cities are the crucible of change, after all, and it was in cities that the grinding realities of the Industrial Revolution, the practical sibling of the Enlightenment, were most felt. More than 50 per cent of the English population lived in cities by 1851. Berlin increased from 150,000 to 1,300,000 from 1800 to 1890.[15] And these European statistics are, of course, temperate compared to those for American cities which often barely existed in 1800 but held millions a century later. Born in an era when urban culture would, for the first time, become truly numerically dominant, the American city would eventually embody that dominance.

The USA is much more the creation of the practical and industrial Alexander

Hamilton, realized in the harsh vernacular of the American city, than of the rural reverie of Mr Jefferson, whose academical dream may have reached its lowest common denominator as the 'middle landscape' of the middle-American suburb.[16] Certainly many of the same desires resonate discordantly in modern ex-urbia. The American Civil War was, among other struggles, a conflict between debased versions of the contradictory views that continue to define American reality, between the agrarian but slave-owning South whose grave ideological problems the Virginian Jefferson had struggled with, and the industrial and brutal practicalities of the urbanized Northern capital where the privileged could buy an immigrant to serve for them in the Union Army, and that has come to be identified with the transplanted New Yorker Hamilton. This paradox had nearly reached flash-point in 1800 when several states threatened to send militias to put down the Federalist block on the Presidential election of Jefferson, who had already, under John Adams, drawn legislation for the secession of states from the Federal entity that he loathed. The collapse of the South was sealed long before the war which so viciously brought it about. It may have dated from the moment when the inevitability of capital, centralization and industry caught the national consciousness or from that moment when it became clearly more practical to hire one of the abundance of immigrants at a day wage than to own a slave for whom the owner took a responsibility. The cruelty of wage-slavery made obsolete the horror of human ownership. The slave-driven Pastoral was so agitated by the practicality of the harsh industrial metropolis that an horrific correction had to occur, that the 'terrible swift sword' had to fall.

While it was the object of fascination for the intelligentsia, the New World mostly embodied the hope of economic refugees, as the majority of immigrants were drawn there by intolerable situations elsewhere. Jefferson, in one of his most intelligent passages in the Declaration of Independence, calls not for happiness but for the 'pursuit of happiness,' recognizing the impermanence of the former and the essential frontier logic of the latter. America is an ideal, at least in the dreams of those who come to start a new life, for it sits at a great remove from the societies that fueled

emigration and since it holds a cornucopia of resources. The Puritans were escaping persecution and hoped to establish a place where a new world could be forged from extreme convictions. This orthodox culture was naturally hostile to heterodoxy but it had to thrive on heterogeneity. Based on the belief that in the new place, old oppressions will be resolved, that place alone can ameliorate, heal and shelter, the national consciousness maintains one glaring exception. The slaves who were brought here harbored no such illusions. For them it was an involuntary fall from culture and for many of their descendants, not coincidentally, its rewards remain especially elusive.

Cities simultaneously are made and make. The American city is the product of the ideologies and ambitions of its residents and creators, as probably all cities are of the cultures that make them, and are encoded by being in them. The grid itself is an ideological pattern arguing for equity and authority. It wrestles with the nation's other great contrivance, the concept of 'nature.'[17] Its mark extends from the designation of agricultural units to the exploitable lot in the city and the structural frame of the skyscraper. Returning then to the language of the 'natural' this fertile field is coupled with an organic model of capital development, of fertilization and growth. In the rigorous frame of the grid, the rhetoric of agriculture imbues economic development with inevitability and benevolence. Suffering and exploitation are 'natural' processes. Red-lining and the institutionalization of the ghetto are perversely viewed as ecological, necessary quarantines within the bountiful fabric: middle-class, middle-America, middle-landscape.

To make Birmingham, the grid was stretched from ridge to ridge in the ore-rich Alabama valley. The city began at the center, at 19th, 20th and 21st streets, confident that 1st would be eventually reached against the mountain, but not imagining that the mountain would be cut in the 1970s and that 70,000 white residents of this small city would escape to the suburbs beyond the wall.[18] The iron grid of New York was laid across farms and forest in 1811, organizing the peninsula, accommodating Broadway and proposing a system that would extend up the Hudson 150 miles to Albany. It took John D. Rockefeller Jr to defy the omnipresent gridiron, and then only by making a

mid-block street to frame the RCA tower. The housing authorities did what even the Rockefellers could not. They closed the streets to create superblock projects, finally breaking the absolute supremacy of the uniform orthogonal, which was only violated historically by the axial icons of the industrial age, Grand Central and Pennsylvania Stations,[19] the Public Library and Central Park—icons of the era's values: mobility, popular knowledge and the Pastoral. In the twentieth century new values led to the closing of streets to form larger blocks, serving development—public and private—and huge, new institutions.

> *Ten Eyck Houses, Williamsburg district, Brooklyn. A blighted area, partly cleared and redeemed. The school in the center, though admirably placed and new, is an old-fashioned type that contrasts unfavorably with the apartments. Note the closing up of wasteful streets in the replanning of this area into super blocks.*
>
> *Lewis Mumford, photo caption in The Culture of Cities*[20]

Utopian terminology permeates Mumford's description from 1938. The blighted (urban) is 'cleared and redeemed'. The school is at the center. Its position is utopian. Streets are wasteful and discarded—the broken grid forming superblocks. Whether for housing or other forms of development, the amalgamation of blocks corresponds directly to the centralization of urban capital in the hands of entrepreneurs or public authorities. As the monopolistic pressure mounts, the figure fuses. Be it private or state controlled, vast capital does away with the illusion of equality while simultaneously claiming to ratify it. The superblock, the prototype of the gated-community, with its unchanging and repetitive fabric, dissolves the potential for change while apparently clearing ground for change. Showing the best intentions, from the right and the left, the superblocks attack the individualist model of development by destroying the prime figure of that model: the transforming city block and its component lots on the one hand and the web of streets on the other. Through the troubled medium of public housing, the class monolith becomes the precise defining

instrument of segregation both by race and class, resisting heterogeneity. Ideals, utopian in sentiment, meet the most dire cost cuts and uniformity both in means of production and domestic quality: a formula for fantastic failure and the institutionalization of the ghetto itself. The projects replicate, in their buildings and layout, the prison camp. But here the walls are phenomenal, keeping the rest of the population out as much as keeping the residents, caught in the cycle of poverty, within.

It is ironic that at the center of many American cities Jefferson's vision of a gridded landscape is being recaptured, replacing the urban. The streets lie across empty fields, sometimes cultivated by urban gardeners but neither agricultural nor utilitarian in the sense of either Jefferson or Hamilton. St Louis has lost more than two-thirds of its population since the 1950s. It is an example where the urban blight and white flight have been so exhaustive that the corridor inland from the Gateway Arch has the demeanor of post-civil-war Beirut or Sarajevo rather than of a city that has never felt war in a nation that is so affluent. Islands of monumental buildings or village clusters scatter across the empty grid where a new primeval landscape, a 'jungle' as the inner city is now commonly referred to, lies between the exact matrix. Meanwhile the suburban satellites, just beyond the perimeter of the anemic municipality or springing up at the intersection of highways, thrive and offer their alter-urbanism. The grid, a rude but economically egalitarian structure, has been deserted or filled by the cycles of poverty and exploitation that constitute an ongoing subtext to the national epic.

> *Modern Architecture died in St Louis, Missouri on July 15, 1972 at 3:32 p.m. (or thereabouts) when the infamous Pruitt-Igoe scheme, or rather several of its slab blocks, were given the final coup de grâce by dynamite. Previously it had been vandalized, mutilated and defaced by its black inhabitants, and although millions of dollars were pumped back, trying to keep it alive it was finally put out of its misery. Boom, boom, boom.*
>
> Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post Modern Architecture*[21]

Jencks' condescension is a symptom of the social, or anti-social, agenda of much

of early post-modern work and criticism. Such typically haute-bourgeois bias, new-urbanist or neo-avant-garde, continues to be laundered through pseudo-populist arguments. Jencks goes on to write 'Another factor: it (Pruitt-Igoe) was designed in a purist language at variance with the architectural codes of the inhabitants.' As if only privilege can appreciate the 'pure' or, more perversely, as if the language of the buildings caused the poor residents to attack them, driven mad by bad architecture. Reverse utopianism contradicts Jencks' anti-utopian rhetoric. While the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe was marked by Jencks and accepted by others as a seminal example of the failings of Modernist utopianism, the vacant lots left behind speak of the deeper failure to accommodate the idea of the city evident in historicist post-modernism's even speedier collapse along with the Republican administration and the febrile economy of the 1980s with which the style had become identified. Boom, boom, bust!

> *The distinctive sign of nineteenth-century urbanism was the boulevard, a medium for bringing explosive material and human forces together; the hallmark of twentieth-century urbanism has been the highway, a means for putting them asunder. We see a strange dialectic here, in which one mode of modernism both energizes and exhausts itself trying to annihilate another, all in modernism's name...In the new urban environment–from Lefrak City to Century City, from Atlanta's Peachtree Plaza to Detroit's Renaissance Center–the old modern street, with its volatile mixture of people and traffic, businesses and homes, rich and poor, is sorted out and split up into separate compartments, with entrances and exist strictly monitored and controlled, loading and unloading behind the scenes, parking lots and underground garages the only mediation.*
>
> Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*[22]

Meanwhile the reclaimed downtown blocks become armed camps. Isolation from inherent societal problems generally finds form in current redevelopment. The atrium building with its interior 'public space' controlled by guards and surveillance cameras seems ultimately cynical as a gesture toward both the vitalization and the problems of the urban fabric, like the 'compounds' of South and Central America.

Washington, the capital besieged by its own cast-offs and underclass, resorted to a systematic enclosure and fortification of the block in dozens of new 'atrium' office buildings during the Reagan–Bush deficit-fed developer glut of the 1980s. Houston and Minneapolis use climate as an excuse for the monitored spaces of their tunnels and skybridges. North or south, they serve to insulate from more than weather. Harvey Wiley Corbett's Venetian–utopian vision of 1923[23] is grimly realized as urban life becomes segregated in section. The ground plane is left for the have-nots. In New Orleans quaint and proliferating street-car lines serve tourists and the middle class while grim buses move the underclass, their windows obscured by lurid advertising often for the most rancorous *gangsta* hip-hop. Two-tiered circulation, enforced by separate routes layered like those envisioned in Lang's Metropolis, ends the heterogeneous life of the boulevard. Vertical class mobility is discouraged by vertical class segregation. The automobile and 'defensible space' have ended the urban stroll.

In America, the public replaces the civic. Stemming directly from Rousseau, the concept of the public sits at the ideological core of the nation's sense of itself. Frances Perkins said of Robert Moses 'He loves the public, but not as people.'[24] This paradox is pervasive. American cities institutionalize the national sensibility in many vast untended parks and recreational spaces, engulfing sections of the grid. These feral simulations return controlled nature, that refined commodity so precious to the Enlightenment, to the savage practicality of the industrial city. The paradoxes that frame the Western definition of *nature*: the simultaneous accolades that accompany the Pastoral and the primal association of the wild landscape with madness, savagery and the other, in opposition to the urban and civilized, find themselves conflated in the modern city park.

A reductive over-identification with the other is not desirable either. Far worse, however, is a murderous disidentification from the other. Today the cultural politics of left and right seem stuck at this impasse. To a great extent the left overidentifies with the other as victim, which locks it into a hierarchy of suffering whereby the wretched can do little wrong. To a much greater extent the right

disidentifies from the other, which it blames as victim, and exploits this disidentification to build political solidarity through fantasmatic fear and loathing. Then there is the problem of the politics of this outside-other. Today in our global economy the assumption of a pure outside is almost impossible. This is not to totalize our world system prematurely, but to specify both resistance and innovation as immanent relations rather than transcendental events.

Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real*[25]

Antipathy to the city survives as one of the powerful contradictions in an America that is decidedly urban, yet continually attempts to escape the fact. Americans see the city as a necessary evil. Conceptually, the urban is left to the poor and racially marginalized. Americans inherit a distrust of the urban from their ancestors, who were in flight from whatever culture they left, one where they were persecuted, impoverished or both. In the New World of refugees, the city's image was automatically threatening. The oppression from which they fled was more than likely identified with the city, always the primary metonym for society as a whole. It is thus not surprising that the problematic image of the urban itself is now inextricable with that one group of Americans for whose African-slave ancestors immigration was in no way by choice. Their passage was not a flight but a profound and involuntary loss exacerbated by a further dissolution of social systems during captivity. For the media, the barometer of the national consciousness, the American city is now the black city, as it was for Rousseau. Now the color extends to the occupants. Canal Street, the teeming main street of downtown New Orleans, was described as 'dead' by white residents when I arrived in the city. The energetic 'Third World' and African–American commercial presence there was not registered as a realm of the living. This is an economic force that is more instrumental in the revitalization of American downtowns than the false vigor 'festival marketplaces' that in fact suck life from existing downtowns which are left to the have-nots. The many Rouse Company malls, Harbor Place in Baltimore, Riverwalk in New Orleans, Bayside in Miami, South Street Seaport in New York, to name only some, attach like limpets to ailing cities,

funneling activity and removing revenue from the city to support franchises or suburban interests. From its edge, the African–American city is viewed as frightening and spectral. In fact, no vital signs show from this quarter on the charts of mega-capital. The gray zones of perception, sustained by fear and the resistance to an expanding field of opportunity, combine to negate cities and their inhabitants.

> *Don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge,*
> *I'm trying not to lose my head,*
> *Its like a jungle sometimes,*
> *It makes me wonder how I keep from going under.*
>
> *Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five*[26]

Urban Americans abhor the city as a concept, seeing it a pragmatic misfortune comprised of the disenfranchised, inheriting this prejudice from the Jeffersonian Pastoral. The worst manifestations of the human spirit are seen to fester in this urban pressure vessel. Losing its accepted position as the citadel of human ingenuity and capital, the city is the place of sin, violence, insensitivity, exploitation, alienation, corruption and filth: virulent but apparently necessary to a vicious cultural dialectic. On the other hand, the countryside and its surrogate urbanisms sing the clear song of Arcadian harmony. In the ultimate confusion of the present day, the city is a metaphorical 'jungle' prowled by predators, returning to the primal state of 'vacant lot' without either Pastoral or capital ambitions—without Jefferson or Hamilton—a primal state without hope, without structure, without mercy. The home–office has made even more remote the notion that the city is a vital center, a societal energy point. The urban wilderness becomes the foil for the tamed cultivation of the suburb, its neat domestic rows contouring the new landscape, irrigated by commercial strips.

> *Surely it is impossible not to see the similarity between ethnic cleansing in Eastern Europe and*
> *the critical situation in the marginalised urban wastelands of the West's metropolises where faceless*

vandalism, drugs, prostitution, racketeering, and armed combat between racial gangs have become commonplace.

Paul Virilio, The Art of the Motor[27]

An alienated underclass no longer sees any reason to play by the rules of a society which so obviously has fabricated those rules in disregard of or to directly disadvantage it. An armed revolution is consequently underway, unfocused, more lethal to its perpetrators than to those who are its object, as are so many revolutions. The carnage is intense, far outreaching that of the more organized combat in Northern Ireland or other urban class conflicts. As long as the suffering remains contained within ghettos, the authorities look the other way and society rhetorically dismisses the participants as 'animals' as it continues to encourage the possession of arms and the solution of conflict through violence. The city has thus become analogous to social groups with whom greater culture enters into a truly sado-masochistic relation that runs in both directions. From one side, a defiant violence, often self-directed, combines with a romance with the codes of oppression. From the other, 'hard-on-crime' rhetoric masks the apparent need to maintain and even encourage the suffering and alienation of the poor as a point of reference for privilege, a modern *pharmakon.*

In the national consciousness, the traditional city is opposed to affluent suburbanism, and to the Jeffersonian idealism embodied therein. The citizen of this bucolic fantasy is likely to see the city as underclass, anti-puritan, blurred. Of course, such hostility has direct political–economic impact. The cities are deserted by the middle class and thus starve as tax revenues enrich the education and quality of life in outlying towns which still live off the city but give little back. The Federal government does likewise. The city becomes like the bad dog chained in the backyard of culture, deprived of sustenance, becoming daily meaner and more dangerous, kept barely alive.

His (Wright's) scheme is eschatological beyond its humanism. In abolishing the city, he abolished

the country as well, by distributing the components of the city to the limits of the of the landscape...the
city becomes the nation.

<div style="text-align: center">

William A. McClung, The Architecture of Paradise[28]

</div>

The names of the great suburban sprawls–Phoenix or City of Angels–reflect the convictions expressed in their form. The optimism that spawned early American suburbs, the Greenbelts, Radburns and Park Forests, with their New-Deal ethics, has deteriorated into the absolute opportunism of tract development. Still, the rhetoric of the suburb argues that the best of garden and city join there. The modern Pastoral finds form in the tranquil simulacra of Whispering Pines or Brookhaven Estates, debased utopias tainted by the tough pragmatics of the frontier and of the exigencies of speculation and development. So it is also with almost all of new American cities like Houston and Atlanta, not to mention Toronto or Mexico City. Though rife with drugs and the uncanny, the popular image of the suburbs is Golden Retriever, Christian, white, sports–utility–vehicle family, straight. While perceptive analyses[29] recognize the suburb's oddness and consequent potential, there is overtly no place for the *other* there. The post-industrial suburb and the machines which enabled its creation have replaced the city as the format for current social definition, denying the difference that has maintained the historical richness of the nation. The poor and African–American are rhetorically[30] as well as physically excluded from this realm.

Houston is possibly the most extreme city in the USA, fourth in population after Chicago,[31] newer, less scaled even than LA, at points 70 or 80 miles across: where jets fly from one airport to another within the city,[32] where skyscrapers sprout without geographical hierarchy. The region is flat. Except to the east where estuaries of the Gulf of Mexico carve inland, there is no geography to stop the urban expansion, no sea or mountains like those that channel LA. The Texan-scaled metropolis has developed rings of suburban ooze around the 'downtown,' whose primacy seems contrived given the many high-rise groups that march in all directions off the curve of the earth. This declared center, while somewhat grander than the tall buildings that

cluster around the Galleria shopping mall or the medical complexes near Rice University, is primarily defined by the concentric freeways that ripple out from it. The first ring, with a diameter of one and a half to three miles, circles the core which chiefly consists of surface parking lots temporarily occupying the unaffordable real estate between the tall buildings. The streets are mostly empty as workers move through security-controlled air-conditioned tunnels from one building to another and retreat beyond the rings at night.

The second ring road, highway 610, circles this eerily vacant hub with a 10–18 mile diameter; 610 encloses a suburban field, largely dating from the expansion of a smalll city after World War II. Here is what can now be identified as 'traditional' suburbanism, multi-story single homes and handsome strip-malls like River Oaks, distinctive nostalgic relics now in the much more generic suburban field of the last decades. In this ring are the most affluent neighborhoods of what became a rich city during the oil days. Groups of mansions form neighborhoods that impress mostly by shear domestic volume and ostentation. Palaces abound in Houston. Districts exist were every house is a grand chateau, Palladian palazzo or English manor-house. While wealth is decidedly undistributed in the USA, there is so much that privilege can embrace more citizens who nevertheless still form a tiny percentage of the entire population. Inside 610 also are the ghettos that ring most American downtowns. Thus the enclaves of excessive wealth and dire poverty coincide within a less than 50-year-old zone that is already antique. Along the second ring-road aggregate new high-rise pseudo-downtowns.

Between the second and the third ring-roads, between 610 and the links of Route 8, within a diameter of 25 miles, is the radical urbanism of the post-oil Reagan expansion, the flotsam of a population tide, often of immigrants from south of the border. In this ring are the single-story homes on cul-de-sacs, the choiceless routes that deny the options offered by the grid.[33] Here also begin the 'town-home' clumps with their semblance of individuality masking the lower income and attached typology of the 'downsized' fiscal culture of the 1970s and 1980s. Gated communities and

domestic reserves with names like New Territory stretch beyond the third ring into a zone now being encircled by a fourth ring with a diameter of almost 50 miles made up of a series of roads that include Route 6. In the new residential compounds the houses are dramatically pumped-up, the suburb on steroids. These domestic piles are like the grotesque sports–utility–vehicles (SUVs) that inevitably accompany them. The SUV is apparently prepared to tear full-speed into a virgin frontier far from the crowded boulevards and packed highways that is its actual habitat. These absurd trucks manage to combine the testosterone-driven brutality of the resurrected alpha-male with the image of opulence and family values embodied in their sheer programmatic volume. In this they mirror the domestic mother-ships to which they dock. These eclectic monstrosities reflect the economics of privilege of the post-Reagan era. A fantastic elaboration of program, of new non-spaces, of specific zones suggested by new technologies and the fantasies of leisure-consumerism, increase the bulk of these massive homes without providing quality or space. This periphery is also the site of marginal urbanism, repeating the economic profile of the inner city with trailer parks and the cheapest housing and institutions. Thrusting into the countryside are assorted 'existenz-minimum' manifestations of the cruel transience of the American dream. The heterogeneous mixing of wealth and poverty of the first urban ring of Houston is repeated at its outer limits, as if the pressure at the center and the entropy at the edge produce a similar mingling of classes and physical fabric while it remains numbingly homogenous in between. The polyglot realm of the *flâneur* moves from the boulevards to the greyzones of the post-industrial.

Extraordinarily, more towers rise along the arterial routes, as much as 30 miles from the center of Houston, literally springing from the East Texas pasture. Linking all this, like fungus forming where the suburban flow is most rich, are the infinitely repeating franchises, the exhausting commercial homogeneity, the fast-food meccas, the discount behemoths urging the delirious consumption that keeps the whole network humming. Commercial strips are everywhere in Houston but the scale of enterprise becomes gargantuan beyond 610. Acres of cars surround dealerships. Wal-

Mart is petite. The Astrodome, the first such sports facility in the country is, in its gargantuan mass and Texas-scale plain of parking, the prototype for new Houston business. Houston is to the post-industrial city what Astroturf is to the traditional suburban lawn.

Though fearful of the city and fanciful about nature, America engages paradoxically in an ongoing romance with devices. The USA shared the same crib with the machine age, after all. Perhaps it was the emphasis on movement, coupled with the love of the idea of the machine and the force of the limitless capital that machines accumulate around themselves, that joined Jefferson's anti-urbanity to produce the post-industrial city. The suburb and the universal machines which enabled its creation are the format for current social redefinition. This then is the city of the Second Machine Age, as clearly as the industrial city was made by and represented the first machine. In the nineteenth century, gigantic turbines, lathes and mechanisms of all sorts were displayed at the grand expositions as objects of wonder beside the greatest artistic and decorative products of culture. The twentieth-century machine is often electronic, without the pumping pistons, the shafts and tendons of the industrial icon. It is made, in bulk, by other machines. It is not so magnificent, like photographs next to paintings, like LA next to New York. From the air by day when mass is the predominant characteristic, the spine of Manhattan is like a vastly complex engine, prickly with mechanism, spewing vapors. LA is like another machine: silent, electrical, universal. Seen from hills at night when lights expose the fabric, it stretches like a vast circuit board. The devices of the Second Machine Age serve, producing comfort, pleasure, distraction, convenience, mobility. They are personal and expendable. An exquisite formula of puritan consumption is their point, denying the innate material satisfaction in things acquired. Only the act of purchase can momentarily placate, for the real material pleasure of consuming goes against basic cultural tenets. It is quantity not quality that matters. Possession replaces a forbidden appreciation. The mall borrows the idea of the ambulatory market–social space from the Old World and reshapes it in the context of an America that is learning, with the pain always

associated with change, to shift from an outdated work ethic to leisure. The prohibitively rich mixing downtown is simulated but filtered in homogenous ex-urbia. The ersatz city of the mall becomes a tightly controlled theme park of useless buying. A society that compulsively consumes without satisfaction is infinitely demanding of production and vicious in its exclusionary tactics. Those who cannot afford to indulge are sinners, misfits, ghosts.

> *And myth is always against history.*
>
> Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*[34]

> *Why is home plate not called fourth base?*
>
> A. Bartlett Giamatti, *Take Time for Paradise*[35]

Symbol of personal mobility and power, the car makes the city. The networks of highways and boulevards zone the city into class enclaves. The wall-like and rarely crossable I-35 presents a precise barrier in Austin between the invisible Mexican and African–American communities and apparently liberal academic–bureaucratic city. Often ecological or ostensibly social legislation enforces the precision of this border. The actual form of the new American urbanism is proportioned to the automobile. While the charged semantics of the industrial city were primarily dependent on architectural expression, in the suburb it finds other outlets. The office or apartment building takes its structural module from the cars that must park under it. Their grid determines the space of work and living, the new automobile-scaled urban lot replacing the agricultural paradigm with a transportation expedient. Parking combines with the lot to become the actual commercial signifier. The garage becomes the suburban facade. Vehicles transform the breadth of the city. The dimension has changed, to the coefficient of the private automobile. Vast space can be traversed: ten miles to the store, a hundred to work, a thousand for a weekend getaway. Public transport dooms the have-nots to another scale. In the inverted order of class in this materialist culture, status is determined more by car than by home, driving even the underclass into excesses of conspicuous consumption and edge borrowing.

The private automobile clearly allows for an exponential distention of the fabric

of the city, but perhaps too much has been made of the difference between industrial and post-industrial urbanism. To oppose them so glibly is to dismiss easily the value of each and symbiosis of both. The second is really a transformation of the first, a flattening and widening of its hyper-concentrated material: more to Jefferson's taste. It represents a change of measure and sentiment, one transforming urbanism and not an antithesis. The energy of the vertical extrusion of the block that characterized the industrial city goes horizontal with equal vehemence. The Chrysler Building becomes the Chrysler New Yorker: the same details, fins, streamlining, shine. The automobile, the icon of the early Modern for Le Corbusier or Marinetti has become the prime commodity of the late modern period. With the facility with which the current era wields both symbol and commercial object, the car retains its significance while simultaneously becoming ubiquitous. The *flâneur* of the nineteenth century wandered the boulevards in fleeting contact with the teeming denizens of the new metropolis. His twentieth-century counterpart cruises the boulevards in low-rider or jeep, in an even more removed and accelerated promiscuity of contacts, but this time the contacts are not with the shadowy figures behind tinted windshield and sunglasses but with the mobile carapace that these fragile figures have pulled around themselves.

The second transforming machine is the television. Its space overcomes the increasingly marginal space of the actual. TV offers charms for which there is no competition in this realm. The traditionally urban is presented as a horror far worse than any sustained reality. The palpable becomes the other, replaced by that which is broadcast. In the 1950s, the media hub became the comfortably familiar scene of television drama for a what was still a predominately urban viewing audience. The domesticity presented was happy, white and suburban. The city was Los Angeles.

The TV provides the modern *flâneur* with a safe promenade through the carefully controlled image of the city via hand-manipulated remote. Like the protected promenade from folly to grotto in the picturesque garden, from the seeming *verité* of live cops shows to vulgar comedy to the safe violence and pseudo-war of network sports, the channel cruise provides disengaged titillation, immersion in, but insulation

from, the freaks and horror, the unnamable, the irresistible 'perversions' presented on the screen. A new primeval release is safely packaged. The modern mysteries are participated in, but this time not in blood rituals beyond the city walls. Here the other is devoured from the easy-chair. Pumped up on fear and righteousness, the couch potato surfs restlessly from channel to channel, between scenes of ersatz passion, carnage, humor, and the freakshow–confessional–inquisition of the talk show,[36] finally incapable of separating this world from that which is really experienced, replacing the city with the even more violent and bizarre urbanism of the networks. The talk show itself is a prophylactic penetration of 'normalcy' and a viscous counter-attack by the normal on that which penetrates. Sanctimony and xenophobia become inevitable.

> *After all, American culture is basically one of images, so that changes effected at the level of imagery cannot be underestimated, Since commodification is one of the main modes of integration in the United States, it can certainly be used as a vehicle of symbolic intervention. Rather than of active or passive cultures, one can now speak of mutual appropriation.*
>
> Celeste Olalquiaga, Megalopolis: Contemporary Cultural Systems[37]

The oral tradition has been resurrected, with the story-teller replaced by what Barbara Kruger calls a 'piece of talking furniture,'[38] but with the same potential for uncritical assimilation of propaganda and the same likelihood of an increasingly docile audience. Nothing is left to the imagination and little mental action is necessary beyond controlling the remote. Like the allegorical imagery of the Gothic church, where the illiterate, incapable of independent access, were provided with symbol and accompanying rhetoric, the TV presents a seamless space. A new mythic return occurs to the excesses that must associate themselves with this sort of information matrix— transcendence, directed consumerism, the impression of choice masking control, most importantly the extreme animosity directed toward fellow citizens who are marked as 'different' by race, language or sexual preference and who thus stand outside the myth. When polled, safely suburban Milwaukee residents statistically felt as threatened

by urban violence as did the residents of dangerous inner-city neighborhoods. The city represented, and rarely experienced in its actuality by most citizens, becomes a manifestation of negative desire. The titillating city of television represents a transgression, a cultural id, a place in which the fear and the essential notion of a Pastoral 'better life' can find definition by dialectical comparison. The stars and shows are disproportionately African–American. Their portrayal is either saccharine, vaudevillian or sinister.

In 1994, half the world's population shared the same televised images of the finals of the World Cup. The number of hours of elapsed time given repeated images the prostrate Rodney King beaten over and over by LA police multiplied by the number of viewers may make that scene the single most viewed human event in history, a collective nightmare rivaled by the explosion of Challenger 7 and certain popular music videos and network logos. As with MacDonald's 'billions and billions', it is sheer repetition that penetrates, pure quantity that finally impresses in a Puritan equation that is very American. This comes not just from the technology of medium but also from the concentration of information within the infrastructure of the broadcast network. The transmitted image supersedes that perceived in the increasingly indeterminate field of the urban real. The concentration and consequent simplification of information leads inevitably to an increase of ignorance and its ugly side-kick, intolerance. The citizen replaces the city with the caricatured violence and corruption that the city has come to represent—a caricature which is also extremely racist.

While skepticism is healthy about the evolutionary potential of technologies,[39] computer models do seem to propose urban configurations, made up not of the places of transport or physical gathering but located phenomenally at the ganglia of networks, electronic boulevards crowded with users, a city of information and desire that projects simultaneously from Australia, Mozambique, Sweden and Guatemala, shifting with the speed of the reformed. The computer delivers a strange theater where alienation and fetish thrive and class is the lowest common denominator. The user will

cruise the virtual boulevard. Briefly, and safely, contacts will form: erotic, pedagogical, commercial. This cyber-city resembles its real counterpoint, but in the way Disney World represents, in a prophylactic simulation, the urban wonders of the world. The anti-formality of the contemporary suburb recognizes the increasing non-physicality of its actual space that is replaced by the antiseptic demi-monde of the television and computer. Due to its cost, cyber-urbanism is thus unavailable to the poor and projects an antiseptic world where an underclass can only appear as the opponents in computer games. The gated communities of the world-wide-web come with precise entrance requirements and economic profiles. The virtual world does not adjust its colors easily.

A characteristic of the modern city is the sameness of the private environments of work, home and travel. The repeated format of screen with controls below breaks down the perceived difference between television, computer and automobile. It also brings into question the discriminatory powers of those caught in the nearly continuous cycle of their use. The portable channel and VCR controls, the computer keyboard and the buttons and dials of the car, the replication of the apparatus of work and home completed by the cellular phone, all control very different blocks of information and demand different levels of response and attention. However, the uniformity of these environments seems to downplay that difference, lulling and disengaging the uncritical consumer. In Miami, commuters will begin to fiddle with dashboard dials and punch buttons when confronted at the stoplight with the homeless or individuals of threatening profile, as if to change the channel or adjust the environment.

In warm zones, streetlife has retreated into the machine-chilled recesses of buildings and automobiles. The attractiveness of the southern USA for the northern immigrant has increased as the environment has been tempered. The regional architecture and urban configuration that confronted particular climates have given way to a tacit dependence on recessive consuming machines, deconditioning a public less and less able to survive without them and neutralizing environments that no longer require specific responses. This makes for an increasingly hostile out-of-doors,

superheated by the same cooling devices. The lure of energy-glutted artificial environments compromises a communal life that is already restricted.

> *We are all, willy-nilly, caught up in a grand experiment which is at the one time our doing–as human agents–yet to an imponderable degree outside of our control. It is not an experiment in the laboratory sense, because we do not govern the outcomes within fixed parameters–its is more like a dangerous adventure, in which each of us had to participate whether we like it or not.*
>
> Anthony Giddens, *Living in a Post-Traditional Society* [40]

Post-industrial urbanism is pervasive and vast, consuming enormous tracts of land at the periphery of all old cities and defining the totality of new cities like Miami, born in this century. The hole in the Atlantis, the first Arquetectonica slab, is the most recognized architectural image of that city, featured in the opening sequence of Miami Vice. This void, occupied only by Jacuzzi and palm, is just that, a void representing the new and up-for-grabs signifier that is the pubescent city of Miami, less than 100 years old and still inventing itself. If fantasy was expressed architecturally in the industrial city, the disengagement of symbology typifies the post-industrial. The alienation that sits at the core of the modern and that clearly forms the strengths and weakness of American culture, is an alienation that is both productive and disorienting, and also makes a city of periphery, a city where all urbanism is outside: a city without presence.[41] The USA has taken to medieval limits the disparity between the facts and the rhetoric of cultural desire and this powerfully affects the nature of American cities.

In between the commercial strips that often correspond to the original mile grid of the agricultural–utopian fabric lie the residential subdivisions, composed of single-family homes isolated on their lots, pseudo-farms, or in pseudo-villages of town-house communities. Parking lots and subdivisions repeat the typology of boxes in lines, brutally uniform within the look of individuality. 'Gated communities' take this uniformity to another level, offering 'freedom' from crime, from worry, from the inevitable threat that comes with the heterogeneity upon which the USA was founded.

In fact, these communities restrict through homogeneity, through codes of appearance and behavior for the private home, no longer the unassailable bastion of the personal, in the guise of maintenance of 'property values.' Market forces become the justification for conformity and exclusion. Mercantile value equals society. Its rules are rigorous and conformity required. Its 'profile,' like that implied by 'family values,' is restricted. The new city is the city of enclaves, infecting their surroundings as they encapsulate them.

In the industrial city the edge is physical. While the distinction between public and private is inevitably ideological, it is also tangible. A real wall exists. The membrane is as exact as the social mixing in the boulevards is indeterminate. In the post-industrial city, the walls are there but they are phenomenal, understood as that line between lawn and sidewalk or street and parking lot. Here the vague border meets the street that is empty of *flâneurs*. Private must not appear to be so, in order to satisfy the muddled ideology of the place. The front yard is the most doctrinaire of spaces generated by American domesticity: this lawn without fence, appearing public but most emphatically not, the neutral simulacrum of the primeval agrarian space, neither given to the public realm nor personalized, empty and smooth, the site of fierce possession and defense, inviting yet deadly. In Baton Rouge, at the moment when Japan was the focus of the rapidly shifting xenophobia that seems to offer essential reassurance to the contemporary American consciousness, a Japanese high-school exchange-student looking for a party was shot dead by a homeowner because the boy walked from the sidewalk on to his front lawn and then did not 'freeze' when told to do so. A jury acquitted the killer. It was not his fault if the foreigner did not understand the spatial codes or Hollywood lingo.

What matters most to modern man is no longer pleasure or displeasure, but excitement.

Friedrich Nietzsche[42]

The new city is a patchwork of enclaves, infecting their surroundings like tumors

in the medical sense that Foucault employs.[43] Compounds and zones are marked in its polymorphous and polycultural fabric. Conflating physical and ideological, following from Virilio, leisure itself may be seen as the 'suburbs of time,'[44] extending the physical fabric into a conceptual middle landscape where simulation frames the life of the periphery while actual relaxation remains illusory. With its cute reconstructions and festival marketry, the American city has begun to replicate the cleansed space of Disneyworld within the actual fabric of the traditional metropolis, hoping to carve an homogeneous and segregated realm from the heterogeneity. The filmic image of the industrial city, of musicals and gangster romance, overcomes the gritty reality, marginalizing all the more those who remain real, the poor and racially or ethnically distinguished. Meanwhile in the post-industrial metropolis, the driven culture embodies a restless mobility. The life of the suburb is punctuated by rides in the car, segues between disconnected events and experiences. Films like *Pulp Fiction* and *Short Cuts* present an ambulatory narrative, associative and structuring a mobile story. All are set in LA and that city is a frame, a circuit of randomly meshed stories. New descriptive forms are evolving to accommodate the experiential fabric of the city.

> *A new totality, whose elements appear to be both joined (joined in space by authority and by quantification) and disjoined (disjoined in that same fragmented space and by that same authority, which uses its power in order to unite by separation and to separate by uniting).*
>
> Henri Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism*[45]

Lefebvre's typical word-order gambits seems particularly appropriate to the elliptical logic of the urban in America. For the suburbanite the city embodies difference often synonymous with African–American culture. As Hal Foster points out, this difference is not so much rejected as consumed while consuming. Its otherness is an essential theme, a counterpoint and ironically an active logo-encrusted market. A concatenation of 'other spaces,'[46] illogical, misplaced, nonsensical by traditional European standards, addressing both deviance and crisis, form the new city.

But these other spaces are class linked, color-coded and exclusive. Urbanism itself becomes a powerful mechanism for the maintenance of racial stereotypes, separation and discrimination. The latest NASA fantasy is for a space station, a city in the sky, a white floating engine safe from the motion sickness that plagues the Americas, pointing to the heavens, projecting into the sphere that the new city yearns for, avoiding the cacophony and struggle, and change, that crust the planet.

Photo credit:
'City Square',
Jonathan Hill,
London 1994
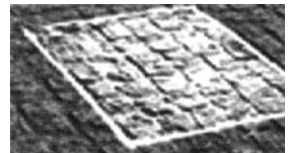
1:125,000

BIOGRAPHIES

ANA ERRADONEA BETANCOUR is an architect, teacher and doctoral student at the KTH (Royal Institute of Technology) school in Stockholm, Sweden. She was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, but has lived in Sweden for the past 20 years. She has taught at schools in Stockholm, New York and Italy and is currently on the faculty at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. Her doctorate looks at the development of marginal and excluded populations from traditional urban planning and how these positions may be incorporated into urban strategies.

PETER HASDELL is an architect and teacher who studied in Sydney, Australia, and at the Architectural Association in London. He is of Eurasian descent, born in Australia and currently resident in London. He runs his own practice, teaches at the University of East London, and, together with Ana Betacour, is currently on the faculty at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. He has worked in the past for the Chora Institute of Architecture and Urbanism with Raoul Bunschoten and has taught at schools in Stockholm, Amsterdam, Helsinki and London.

5

TANGO: A CHOREOGRAPHY OF URBAN DISPLACEMENT

THE TOUCHING LINE

Tango, it is said, originates from the Afro-Argentinean word *zango* or *tambor*, the word for the drums of the arriving slaves from Africa, calling up memories and rituals of their homelands. Perhaps it means the place for the forbidden celebrations of the black population on the edges of the cities of the South Cone? A song, a dance, a choreography, a noun without etymology, no origin other than naming that without name, describing a place, a sentiment, an atmosphere or a certain time or place. Or perhaps it is linked to the word *tangere*, meaning touch, tangent—that which barely touches on a marginal point of the circumference of a circle...its edge, the periphery.

A tangent, the touching of two lines that do not intersect. An infinitesimally delicate act, like kissing—touching at a point that tends to nothing mathematically. A definition that speaks of the tension between two lines, two bodies...and their displacements. The touching line, linea tangens. Into the abstract, rarefied language of geometry[1] and line enters a beautifully descriptive definition that speaks as though the line had emotive power capable of touching, of being touched or of having a physical existence. A movement of the interior soul of the line that reaches out, without deflecting and touches—only just—another.

To go off on a tangent: we might speak of completely different or divergent courses. That play in the mind, digressing, so that one might think oneself moving on in a particular direction only to be displaced, elsewhere. A tangential existence. In tango's obscure origins, the nature of these tangents, digressions and displacements are fragments, journeys, displacements and digressions. They are bits of Paris or Napoli, of detours made, trivial moments in everyday life: the *barrio*[2]; a photograph carried in a suitcase; broken lineages; oceans that separate; colonies claimed[3]—the hope that springs from a particular sound; one's presence in a city that has no collective past, like the sudden changes of direction in a dance. They circumscribe, in a way that can only ever be incomplete, their subject.

One way of describing culture is to see it as the 'unfolding' of a place. In these

terms, the relationship between tango as an emerging culture and the city in which it 'unfolded' is a complex one. Factors of geography, heterogeneity, displacement and migration all play a role in this, as do ethnic origins, 'race', colonialism and slavery. Tango's origins, analogous to oral cultures whose origins and expressions are quasi-mythological, become hazy and indistinct, ascribed at a later time and written into the history of the city. Tango in its written and popular history becomes an 'after-the-fact' cultural expression that sublimates most of its hazy and complex beginnings, and by implication, those of the city. Parallel to this, key aspects of its milieu—the newly urbanized cities of Buenos Aires and Montevideo—become similarly indistinct, their *origins reconstructed post-factum*.

To understand tango, therefore, only in terms of its legitimized form as a national cultural expression and a specific, marketable cultural commodity is to profoundly misunderstand its significance as a resistance to the rapidly expanding urban periphery and the marginal existence this had in relation to the legitimate culture capital of the city centre. In the general context of the history of urban change it can be seen as a possible model for understanding the massive influx of immigrant cultures into peripheral areas of cities and the emergence of cultures within ghettos. It may also point to the subtle transformations of such areas and non-places into places with distinct identities, where dreams and memories—and everyday lives—touch the physical, official world of the city. Describing, in other words, places that are open to interpretation.

Three such descriptions are offered here. They offer neither closure nor finite interpretation, but simultaneous existence in the space of the city. Through the use of ellipses, tropes, analogies and digressions, they rely on tango's obscure origins, allowing slippages and tangents to occur such that anecdotes can enter grand narratives and private, inner emotional spaces may be read in terms of local or national geographies. The tangential and the circumstantial both exist in the emerging culture of Buenos Aires, evident as a state-run enterprise that expanded its rational grid according to a larger ambition of the Modern Project.

Frontispiece photo credit:
From a drawing by Ana Betancour & Peter Hasdell. See this chapter for details

DRAWING (RIGHT)

1. The Slave Market
2. La Boca (The Mouth)
3. The Ridge
4. Promenade
5. Banco de la Boca (Displaced Ground)
6. Extension to Avenida 9 de Julio

A. Immigrants' Hotel
B. Customs
C. Avenida Venezuela
D. Avenida Europa
E. Grain Silos
F. Avenida Brasil
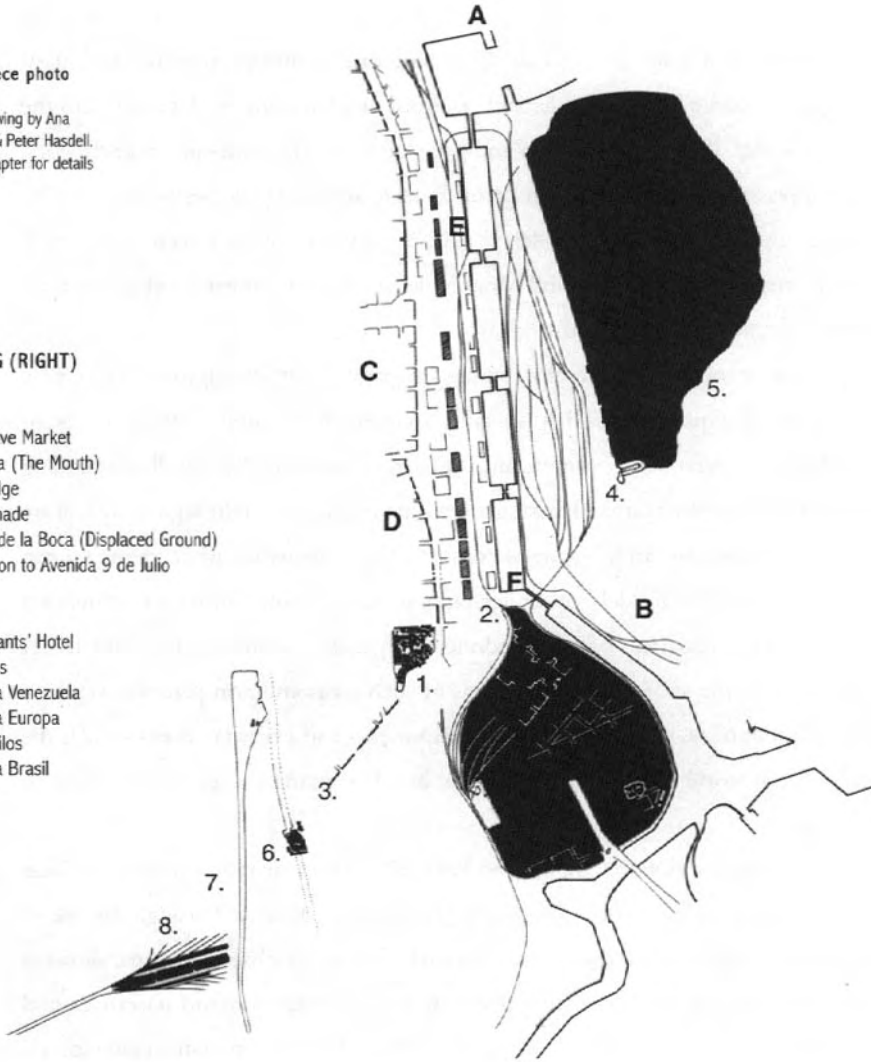
CITY OF FRAGMENTS

> *When accelerated changes in society arouse feelings of uncertainty...an old remembered or*
> *imagined order is reconstructed by the memory as past. Against this horizon the present is placed*
> *and evaluated.*[4]

The massive migrations of disparate peoples from Europe to the New World brought an unfamiliar existence to the milieu of Buenos Aires, perceived as a loss of cultural referents and a poverty of existence. By the turn of this century, up to 70 per cent of its working inhabitants were immigrants, flooding into the country to provide labour for Argentina's rapidly expanding export market to Europe.

> *More than fifty thousand workers come each year to the River Plata—Europeans washed up*
> *by desperation on these coasts. Eight of every ten workers or artisans are foreigners, and among them*
> *are Italian socialists and anarchists, Frenchmen of the Commune, Spaniards of the first republic,*
> *and revolutionaries from Germany and Central Europe.*[5]

The enormous flood of immigrants into Buenos Aires, commencing in the 1870s, meant, for example, that the city expanded by over 300 per cent from 187,000 inhabitants to 650,000 in the 25 years[6] to 1895, later swelling to 1.5 million by 1914 and to 2.5 million by the 1930s. By then, the city had grown 10-fold in a matter of 50 years.

> *The numbers given in the official census tell that 184,427 immigrants arrived to the country*
> *during 1924. An amount really full of promise because it represents an average of more than*
> *15,000 immigrants monthly, an important current of human energy flowing into our country.*[7]

These numbers, naturally enough, had drastic effects on the city's fabric, on its public spaces and also on its culture and ethnicity. That the immigrant population

formed the majority of the city's citizens meant that a very particular common condition could be said to prevail: the city effectively became the place in which a culture of mixture emerged, one in which the heterogeneity and diversity of people made for an incredible ferment. Given the scale and rapidity of change in this context, the emergence in this context of tango as a specific culture of 'otherness' seems a natural consequence.

One could say that the implicit understanding shared by immigrant cultures, irrespective of origin, drew together their differences, inasmuch as the lyrics of the songs speak of the laments of individuals, whose common plight is migration—to Argentina and Uruguay in the nineteenth century—and whose origins are left behind or only carried as memories, fragments, rhythms and songs.[8] Many tangos specifically tell of the *barrio* and *arrabal*, places of hope and longing, laments for a place where dreams have a patina of expectation and a mythos of home that replaces, substitutes perhaps, for an originary displacement to the far end of the world. Laments on the absence of a loved one, machismo lyrics about the grim or tough conditions of street life in Buenos Aires are also found in tango, mythologizing the present moment, the everyday, in a city that apparently had no past for the newly arrived immigrant other than their carried memories.

Yet what is not commonly understood is that tango was, in essence, a form of cultural resistance; akin—whether explicitly or implicitly, to a masked critique of the larger forces that contributed to this condition, and therefore also an implicit critique of the state. In the specific context of Buenos Aires or Montevideo, this allows us to understand the urban peripheries and their growth not only as physical or manifest architectural form but also as factors in the emergence of cultural identities, offering a critique of the structures of power of such cities, even if this critique is masked (and in a sense impotent) as a lament on the nature of the powerlessness of the individual, akin to many tango lyrics. In these terms, tango is not a pure cultural commodity but also a marker of spatial territory and of very specific conditions. It is no wonder that the authorities of the time regarded tango lyrics and dance as lascivious and

threatening, subjecting them to censorship (as did the military dictatorship of the 1970s). Only later, during the 1930s, was tango incorporated into the Argentinean national identity via its acceptance in Europe. The 1930s and later were also periods of heightened nationalism, epitomized in the 1950s by Peronism—dubious arbiter of national identity—and, in some senses, a reaction to the earlier fervour of immigration. During this period the construction of a national identity via an increased nationalism appropriated tango as a distinctly Argentinean characteristic. Beneath the surface, the discontent and underworld image of tango threatened the hegemony of the official and authorized identity. Public space in Buenos Aires during this time was a civic and urbane gesture, modelled on the European, French and Anglo-Saxon ideals. Tango, in contrast, was regarded as part of the hidden or shameful world of the night. Tango took place in the seedy darkened corners of the city's peripheries, in the barrios and harbours, beyond those places where the acceptable and recognizable European high culture resided, thus territorializing the extent to which the body politic and an emotional inner landscape of the immigrant masses could be controlled. Where the cultural 'landscape' and the political met was, in essence, the street, the newly constructed urban fabric, the physical city.

Tango, it may be argued, results from the conjunction of two key factors: a geographic displacement and an inner emotional condition. The restrained passion of tango, in dance and song alike, is only revealed at certain controlled moments, giving a glimpse of a deeper passion that surfaces where it touches others and is understood by many. Tango's appearance is two-fold: the tension, sexuality and hidden passion of the dance and the withholding and control—these characterize tango. In these terms, it can be said to reveal, by suggestion and expression, an inner landscape, resulting from the wider geographical displacements, a consequence of migration. The inner landscape is unspoken, has—*is* no place recognizable—yet reveals itself in the words, lyrics, movements of tango trying to make sense of a fragmentary existence. It expresses the topographies of hope, despair, depression, relief and elation; the oceans, rivers, mountains, chasms and fields that give shape to a city without relief, existing

frenetically in the present and future tenses only and in the numbing horizontality of Buenos Aires.[9] The inner landscape is illustrated by Galeano, in exile himself during the 'difficult' years, who constructed his life in fictions, anecdotes and commentaries from afar, analogous in principle to the songs of tango. Of the immigrants' arrival in Buenos Aires, Galeano writes:

> *One fire less, they say in the villages of Galicia when someone emigrates. Over here, he was excess population...in a foreign city he takes up less room than a dog. Here they make fun of him and treat him with contempt, because he can't even sign his name, and manual labour is for inferior species. He gets little sleep, the lonely immigrant, but no sooner does he close his eyes than some fairy or witch comes to love him on green mountains and snowy precipices. Sometimes he has nightmares. Then, he drowns in the river. Not just any river, but a particular river over there. Whoever crosses it, they say, loses his memory.*[10]

Galeano's text is concerned with the differences between here and there, the 'otherness' and alterity that results from a displacement. Analogous to the hero of Cortázar's *Rayuela*, Hopscotch (1963), who 'wavers' irresolutely between Buenos Aires and Paris in a permanent alternation of 'now here' and 'now there'. Between the manifest brutal reality of Buenos Aires and the familiar, left behind, can be located a glimmer of a politic, concerned with factors of alienation, and an inner imagined or remembered landscape. The imaginary and the manifest begin to construct a space around which tango can be situated.

Buenos Aires during this period is likewise afflicted by similar contradictory factors. The city is in essence an elaborate construct. It does not exist in the sense that it is constituted from citizens. What binds the immigrants together, therefore, is only a common displacement from Europe. Society exists as an intention, an imagined utopia governed under the guise of the modern project, a state-run and controlled enterprise that imagines Buenos Aires to be a city such as Paris: European, civilized,

dignified. The city as an imaginary construct or even fictional construct by no means stems wholly from this period. Its foundation is based on a similar gap or rupture.

Searching for a veritable fortune, Juan de Solis sailed into the Rio de la Plata,[11] the River of Silver, in 1516. A vast flat sea, which, upon tasting, he named the Mar Dulce, 'freshwater sea'. Solis noted in his journal that the endless adjoining plains were an 'ocean of grass', the pampas that were later to become the fount of wealth for Argentina. Upon landing, native Indians attacked de Solis and his crew, and, apparently, devoured them. Some time later, Sebastian Cabot,

> *sought the treasure of King Solomon sailing up this Plate River—so innocent of its silvery name—which has only mud on one bank and sand on the other. While his soldiers, maddened by hunger, ate each other, the captain read Virgil and Erasmus and made pronouncements for immortality.*[12]

Claiming to have discovered El Dorado on the basis of a few trinkets of silver, Cabot could easily appeal to the greed of the Spanish kingdom.

In 1536, on royal command and with an army of 1,600 men, Don Pedro Mendoza, whilst searching for a cure for syphilis in *guaiacum* (a plant he mistakenly thought grew in the River Plata area) 'founded a city, a fortress surrounded by huts, and upriver from here he went hunting for the silver mountain and the mysterious lake where the sun sleeps'. The city was called Buenos Aires, 'good air' and was located near what is now Barrio La Boca. The map of Buenos Aires drawn by its founder, Mendoza, shows a colonial grid surrounded by written script on all four sides—closer perhaps to a rhetorical or literary device. His map is emblematic of the gap between the inner landscape, an imagined utopia of riches and civilization, and a city that did not yet exist. Mendoza never found the cure for syphilis, silver or the lake and subsequently died from his illness. The city, similarly, was not as enduring as Mendoza wished and lasted for just five years, although the name endures until this day. Phoenix-like, in 1580, Buenos Aires was reborn, founded again, a foothold on a

continent perched between the flat plane of the sea and the endless plain of grass, and its second founder Juan de Garay drew the plan of the city, a Spanish colonial grid, on cow hide. Angel Rama in *The Lettered City* describes the relationship of literature to the origin of South American cities, in which the pre-existence of the city was in lettered form as edicts, laws, desires and codes, often issued from afar in colonial Spain. Looking at a map depicting Buenos Aires and surroundings in the beginning of the nineteenth century shows the grid laid upon the land and the existing buildings. The legal boundaries for the city settlement evolved in accordance with the planning ordinances of the Law of the Indies, and the Iberian conquerors created, in Ramas' clear words: 'a supposedly "blank slate", though the outright denial of impressive indigenous cultures.'[13] The implementation in the colonies of the Spanish cuadricula, and the rational urban grid from the late 19th century are very much alike. The lines drawn upon the supposed 'blank sheet of paper' are an imagined landscape not yet built, and not yet inhabited.

The city in its inception could be described more closely as an apparition, given apparent substance as if through a state of delirium. The equivocation of origin of the city, a precursor to the immense gap between the apparition and the manifest reality of the city—as Corbusier would discover much later—is evident. The dreams of immortality for a presence that is manifestly solid embody themselves in the words and actions of its founder Mendoza, and in the literature of Borges, who wrote: 'it seems impossible to me that Buenos Aires ever had a beginning. It is eternal, like the water and air.'[14] The city effectively was represented before existing in reality. It therefore had an *a priori* existence in the imaginary.

Yet as the names of the nation and its key city never managed to match the reality that promised 'silver' and 'good air', *Argentina* and *Buenos Aires*, so too is there an apparent gap, an absence between the image and the reality of the city. From this lack of substantial reality, of authority, one can understand why Buenos Aires, for example, desired to be the 'Paris of the South': 'in Buenos Aires...Sarmiento...imported sparrows so the city would seem more like Paris'[15]—Paris being deemed to be an

authentic origin and repository of culture, as if to make up for the absence of reality that the fictional identity could never attain. In terms of its cultural identity, the city appealed to elsewhere, to England for its model of society; to Europe for its authenticity; to Paris for an image of its desire and later to the *gauchos* of the *pampas* as a source of its mythology. The cutting of Hausmannesque *grands boulevards* through the colonial Spanish grid during the mid-nineteenth century, by Torcuato de Alvear, shifted the perception of the city from a former outpost of the Spanish colony to a centre of culture, belonging, therefore, to the same sphere as historic and 'civilized' Europe. Coupled with the construction of grand civic institutions such as the Congress Hall and the central plazas, the city was envisioned as exemplary and necessary in the on-going construction of the identity of the nation. Corbusier's invitation to Buenos Aires in 1929 can be understood as part of the same, using European culture as the model, and architecture as the emblematic representation of the new, modern metropolis.

Corbusier approached the city from the sea at night. He saw a southern sky full of stars, glittering mirage-like on the surface of the River Plata. The city 'hovered between these, suturing both, but not quite rooted—not quite of the earth.'[16] His lyrical description suggests a complete seduction by the appearance of things. However, Buenos Aires was duplicitous for Corbusier: a city that elicited both mirage-like apparitions and abject horror. He wrote: 'Buenos Aires is one of the most inhumane cities I have known; really, one's heart is martyred. For weeks I walked its streets without hope like a madman, oppressed, depressed, furious, desperate.'[17] In these terms his reactions mirror those of his surroundings. We can retrospectively view Corbusier's reaction as being an intrinsically European one, looking outwards, away from the pampas and metaphorically towards the origin of culture and of urbanism. As Collins writes:

> *in his ninth lecture (18 October, 1929) he advanced the possibility of adapting the Plan Voisin of Paris to Buenos Aires—or one might say, Buenos Aires to the Plan Voisin— affirming that Buenos Aires can transform itself into one of the great (dignas) cities of the world.*

Corbusier's plans for the city also embody a desire to shift Buenos Aires towards that which was emblematic of a European modernism, one which implicitly homogenized differences. In other words, the compass of the Plan Voisin pointed towards an implicit European centre, away from the intrinsic differences and cultural 'otherness' that were manifest in the social matrix of the city.[18]

It was to this city that immigrants arrived in the 1900s from Europe. They passed through the mouth of the harbour, across the threshold to the city, then flooded into the city itself. En route, most ships passed by La Boca, a harbour-side *barrio* that formed one edge of the port area. La Boca is the 'mouth' of the city.[19] La Boca, it is held, is the 'birthplace' of tango, according to its reconstructed and legitimized history. La Boca was built as a shanty town by immigrants from Liguria in the 1840s—50s,[20] but inhabited previously by the French Basques. It is situated on low-lying flood-lands where the Riachuelo river meets the Rio de la Plata. An area distinct from the unrelenting grid of the city, it evolved a particularly colourful corrugated-iron architecture and raised sidewalks to counter the frequent floods. La Boca is, in effect, a transitional area, half river and half land, inextricable from the port and its history of immigration, import and export, a threshold or liminal condition that characterizes Buenos Aires.

Thus during this period, it is possible to see the whole city spatially, culturally, historically and in terms of identity as a threshold between Europe and Argentina's interior,[21] between the Rio de la Plata and the pampas. The port and the city therefore link between two vast flat planes, one a body of water and the other a body of grass. The flatness of the city and its surroundings, which extend into the sea, meant that 'the bay's bottom is essentially a continuation of the *pampas*.'[22] Because of this, the sea is able to flow into the city in innumerable floods. Analogously, the city extends across the *pampas* like water. This duplicity marks the city's equivocation of import and export, sea and *pampas*, Europe and the interior, and, in essence, registers the spatial duality of the city in the form of a horizon. The flat plane on which the city is built, horizontal and without relief, is a specific characteristic that historically allowed for

speculative development and expansion of the city without physical constraints.

The modernist photographer Horacio Coppola's images of Buenos Aires of the 1930s show the ubiquitous grid receding into the *pampas*. The road is just one tentacle of the city grid, and is depicted as being wide as the land. No mere farmers' lane, but a road laid down as progress. The periphery here is not the left over nether-spaces of the city, but a frontier whose endurance in the beginning of the century is temporal, progressive, and as necessary as the influx of immigrants who flooded into the city from the sea. The flat *pampas* is the hinterland on which the economic future of Argentina was assured. The *pampas* was largely unwritten about until the nineteenth century. Upon this blank sheet, the speculations of the Modern project occurred. In these terms the Modern project that aimed to construct an Argentinean national identity is problematic against the background of massive change, urban growth and mass immigration that altered the demographic constitution.

The reality of Buenos Aires during this time—a city of fragments—is in essence counterposed against a desired image of the city and a desire to appropriate the 'interior' of the *pampas*. National identity, an authenticity as origin and foundation, therefore, became a fictionalized construct, and at times an imaginary entity, used to make up for the lack of stable referents, a projection put on a less than coherent body of immigrants. And parallel with this, the imaginary landscape of the immigrant is a solace from the brutality of everyday life in the raw city, through which their condition of displacement becomes evident, manifest in tango.

WHITENED CITY

> *America, instead of remaining abandoned to the savages, incapable of progress, is today occupied by the Caucasian race—the most perfect, the most intelligent, the most beautiful and the most progressive of those that people the earth.*[23]

> *Sarmiento, founder of the Animal Protection Society, preaches pure unabashed*

DRAWING (THIS PAGE)

1. The Washerwoman
2. The Porter
3. Barrio del Tambor
4. La Nacion Conga
5. The Crossing/Slave Route
6. The Mouth of the River Congo
7. The Interior

A. Mendoza's City
B. Second Slave Market
C. Plaza de la Residencia
D. Banco de la Residencia
E. "Muelle Recien Echo y Arruinado"
   Breakwater
F. Lowland

5.

7

6.

D

F
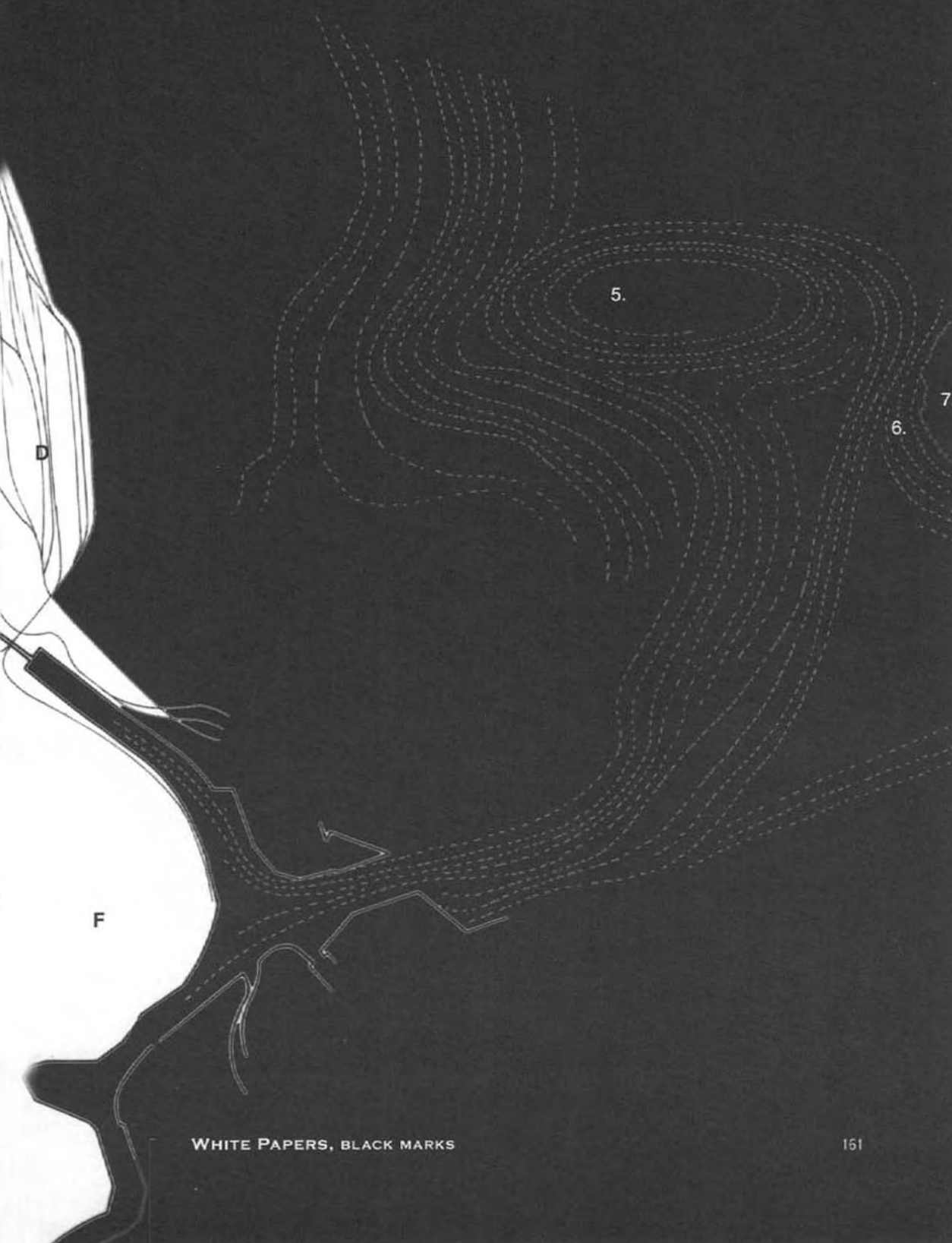
racism and practices it with untrembling hand. He admires the North Americans, free
from any mixture of inferior races, but from Mexico southwards he sees only barbarism,
dirt, superstition, chaos and madness. Those dark shadows terrify and fascinate him.
He goes for them with sword in one hand, lamp in the other. He publishes prose works
of great talent in favour of the extermination of gauchos, Indians, and blacks and their
replacement by white laborers from northern Europe.[24]

The history of slavery to the region pre-dates the founding of Buenos Aires by two years. Slavery was set up by royal decree—an *asiento*—granted in 1534, by the expansionist policy of the Spanish Empire. The decree assumed the necessity of African slaves who would work in the gold or silver mines they expected to find in the River Plate area. The implications of this decree in relation to the origins of Buenos Aires are astonishing: the 'black' city, at least on paper, intention and in the imagination, is the precursor to the city. It is significant that during the early years of Buenos Aires, in 1778 or thereabouts, African slaves and indigenous Indians[25] constituted about 30 per cent of the population, a figure that declined to less than 2 per cent of the total population by 1887.[26] This was due, in part, to *mestizaje* (miscegenation), but also due to the burgeoning white immigration policies of the Argentinean government. This miscegenation, which Andrews refers to as the 'whitening of Buenos Aires'[27] occurred primarily after the ideologue, forefather and future president of modern Argentina (1868–74), Domingo Sarmiento, came to power. In essence, Sarmiento was poised to change Argentina, to usher out colonialism as dominated by the Spanish and bring about a grand project of modernization in an era on the verge of independence. Sarmiento and his 'social Darwinist' predecessors, Bunge, Alberdi and Ingenieros, adopted a 'progressive' set of beliefs, based on 'scientific' racism and on the assumption that European models of society and progress were the desirable evolution of Argentinean society. Sarmiento's vision of an urban and 'civilized' cultivated utopia proclaimed that 'the *pampas* is an immense sheet of paper upon which a poem of prosperity and culture will be

imposed.'[28] In the banishing or whitewashing of the 'barbaric' elements, Sarmiento played upon the dramaturgy of this tableau in describing the pre-modern *pampas* as 'shadow' and the River Plata as 'light.'[29]

The project for the modern independent Argentina required a civilized European population that would evolve into a policy-aligned, market-driven economy with a white national identity and white immigration policies to match. The immigration policy aimed at erasing the tensions between the country and the colonial city that clung to the edge of the continent,[30] 'progressively annihilating ethnic differences between the people of the interior and those of the littoral.'[31] This policy was effected deliberately and carefully, attempting to fulfil the desire that, 'there will be only one unique Argentinean type, as imaginative as the aborigine of the tropics and as practical as the dweller of the cold climates, one complex and complete type, which could appear to be the total man, the model of the modern man: *ecce homo!*'[32] as Bunge wrote. The ideologues wanted a (pure) national identity, set apart from their Latin American neighbours who were 'mongrelised'—the flooding of Argentina with immigrants from the North would alter the balance of skin colour and assimilation and intermarriage would take care of the rest, to the extent that Argentina could fulfil for Ingenieros 'a tutelary function over the other republics of the continent.'[33]

The modern project here was the construction of identity, scaled appropriately to 'blank' out the past. Considered in the context of other colonial countries of the time (or, indeed, the future), the fact of the drive towards independence and modernization was not surprising—the scale and deliberation of the construction of a post-colonial identity predicated on whiteness, was: 'by the 1880s, Domingo Sarmiento could write that the banners of the African nations that one used to see at the old Carnival celebrations had been replaced by the flags of the various French, Italian and Spanish clubs and societies.'[34] Curiously, though, as the whitewashing of the city and of the black population was occurring, the disappearance of the Indian and African people was puzzling to the ideologues and ascribed as 'natural.' As Helg tells us:

> *Sarmiento, in his desire to see a white America, attributed the process to the secret action of affinity and repulsion. Bunge imputed it to Buenos Aires' climate, to the inability of the blacks' lungs to resist the pampas winds, to intermarrying with whites, and to the waves of European immigration; elsewhere he blessed alcoholism, smallpox, and tuberculosis for having decimated the capital's non-white population. Ingenieros added the devastating effects of the wars of independence and the civil wars of the nineteenth century.*[35]

Henceforth, tango's origins are, as Savigliano points out, a 'popular and controversial topic',[36] not least because of tango's early illegitimacy—bastard offspring of a polygamous union, regarded initially as threatening and provocative, resulting in an unwritten history. The origin of tango as a construct of Argentinean national identity is said to have occurred in the 1880s, that this date coincides with the year of independence is hardly surprising. Tango is presented as a European phenomena, portrayed as the struggles of working class immigrants in the burgeoning 'wild west' atmosphere of the city in the 1900s, coupled with the cross-cultural fusion of the differences of those arriving from Italy, France or Spain. In its legitimized form, tango is presented as miscegenation occurring primarily between *white* and *white*, European and Rio Platense—a miscegenation that grew out of the *conventillos*[37] and *barrios*, peripheral and immigrant areas of the city, moving into the centre where it could be adopted as a national identity and presented as such. However, the construction of national identity is nothing other than a mask, as Andrews in *The Afro-Argentineans of Buenos Aires* elaborates, one that reveals as much as it conceals. Miscegenation, in the terms of Argentina and Buenos Aires, is not a simple matter.

The immigration waves of the nineteenth century did not consist solely of a bountiful supply of able and skilled labour, part of the greater economic imperatives of the Argentine government. In essence, the relationships between the black (African and native Indian) population and the later white Europeans is inextricable, their histories and lineages touch each other, similar to the relationship between *candombé* and tango. Tango, as its untraceable etymology reveals in the various Spanish and

African claims, cannot easily be pinned down to a specific time, place, cultural group or race. That tango originated in the 1880s seems fallacious, borne out by the following: 'an 1818 will [for a house and tango site] in which the property is mentioned refers to the "said lot situated in the neighborhood of the Parish of Concepcion Tango of the Blacks, by which name it is known"', seemingly locating 'tango' as a place name of the black population. Similarly, as Andrews points out, an ordnance considered by the Montevideo town council in 1807 proposed to 'prohibit the tango of the blacks, their weekly dances.'[38] This, a full sixty years before the historical claim for the 'white' origin of tango. This historical discrepancy is further substantiated by Rossi and Savigliano elsewhere. However, the point here is not to claim authenticity of origin, but rather to raise issues that problematize what we might term the 'cleansing' of this particular aspect of the history of tango and, by implication, of the city.

Andrews, writing of the participation of Afro-Argentines in cultural life in Buenos Aires, traces the relationship between *candombé*, the public dances of the African slave population, from the 1760s onwards and the later emergence of tango. He writes: 'whites were aware that the *candombé* were occasions at which the Africans performed their national dances, calling up memories of their homeland and recreating, even if only for an afternoon, a simulacrum of African society in the New World.'[39] During these times (1780s) the city council viewed these acts as being against Catholicism and against the republic as a whole. However, through the *candombé*, the Afro-Argentines kept a part of their lives free of the absolute control that a slave-owning society sought to exercise over them—an act of remembrance and resistance that was geographic, the dances were a way to maintain a sense of their identity despite their displacements.

As emancipation allowed the black population to have a second class existence, gradually the white and black populations intermingled during the mid-1800s. They met in dance halls called *academias de baile* which were located in lower-class, peripheral areas of the city. In these place 'poor whites and poor blacks met to drink and gamble, to fight and dance'. Out of this cross-racial contact was born the *milonga*, 'a dance

created by the young white toughs in mocking imitation of the *candombé*.'[40] This was a precursor to tango as we know it now, the *milonga* being described as a 'slow tango'. This cross-over, occurring on the eve of the death of the *candombé* and the whitewashing of the culture of the Afro-Argentines is ironically the birth of the *milonga* (and therefore tango) as a syncretic culture in its own right. Through 'simulation' or imitation across a racial divide this territorial process occurred.

The predominantly black areas of Buenos Aires were located in the parishes or *barrios* of Monserrat ('*barrio del tambor*'—the *barrio* of the drums) and San Telmo, low-lying lands along creeks adjacent to the river edge of Rio de la Plata. During the 1800s these areas were south of and peripheral to the gridded city centre. Later, as the harbour was constructed and grew, the river edge became incorporated into the more controlled city grid. The black populations of the time living in these areas predominantly served the arriving ships as porters or alternatively as washerwomen, until a yellow fever outbreak in 1871 decimated the population. In this area, excluded from any provision by the city, the blacks established their own community structures such as *La Nación Conga*, a significant organization that was responsible for the annual *candombé* carnival for the local population, a celebration of the African 'nations' that recalled their tribal and geographic roots. Spatially, San Telmo was sandwiched between the official city to the north and the slave market.

Immediately to the south of this area lies Parque Lezama, the site of Mendoza's first disastrous settlement, the short-lived 'first' or originary Buenos Aires. It was also the site of the first slave-market built by the French Guinea Company. Topographically, the park sits on an escarpment, perched just above La Boca where the bank of the Rio de la Plata curves inland as the Riachuelo river joins it, serving as a gateway between the formal grid city and low-lying river flats of La Boca with their different urban pattern. It also separates distinct layers of immigration into the city across this topographic line, delimiting the African *barrios* of the 1830s from the Ligurian and French–Basquean *barrios*. The complex relationship between tango and the city throws up a spatial coincidence of a tangled set of factors: race, slavery, the

threshold nature of the city, the official city versus the periphery, and the 'natural' topography.[41] Conjecturally, therefore, one may speculate that from this milieu, the touching line between the black and white population, between San Telmo or Monserrat and La Boca across the space of Parque Lezama, has led to the imitation and cross-over alluded to by Andrews that gave rise to tango, as we now know it occurred. Such touching lines are resonant with significance[42] yet, given the influx of the European immigrants, the social Darwinist policies of Sarmiento and his successors and the miscegenation of black and white, these have become sublimated in the whitening of Buenos Aires. The decline of the black population during these times and the supplantation by the incoming European white immigrants constitutes a tangential line, a cultural, racial and spatial tangent of differences. Tango, therefore, becomes a touching point of two races at which the two lineages of tango—black and white—meet.

DISPLACED CITY

Argentina's modern project depended, as did the city's growth, on expansionist trade. The rapid modernization programme of Buenos Aires as a modern state-sanctioned development generated the periphery as a progressive frontier, a grid of urbanity spreading over the *pampas*. The grid during this period served as a promissory note for an expansionist future envisaged by the planners of the modern project, a tool that, with civic and state impetus and drive, is enmeshed in a 'dense public, metropolitan space.'[43] The grid, like the periphery, was 'the promise of equality and integration',[44] projected, planned and unrolled, only to be quickly—if not immediately—filled with a diverse population. It served effectively to integrate cultural and social differences within the construct of the *arrabals* and *barrios*.[45] It was from the *barrio*,[46] the physical manifestation of the modern project—both culturally, socially, politically and in terms of urban form—that tango, in its modern form, emerged. The street thus became, in the absence of open space in a rapidly expanding city during this

1.

2.

3

E

B

C

A
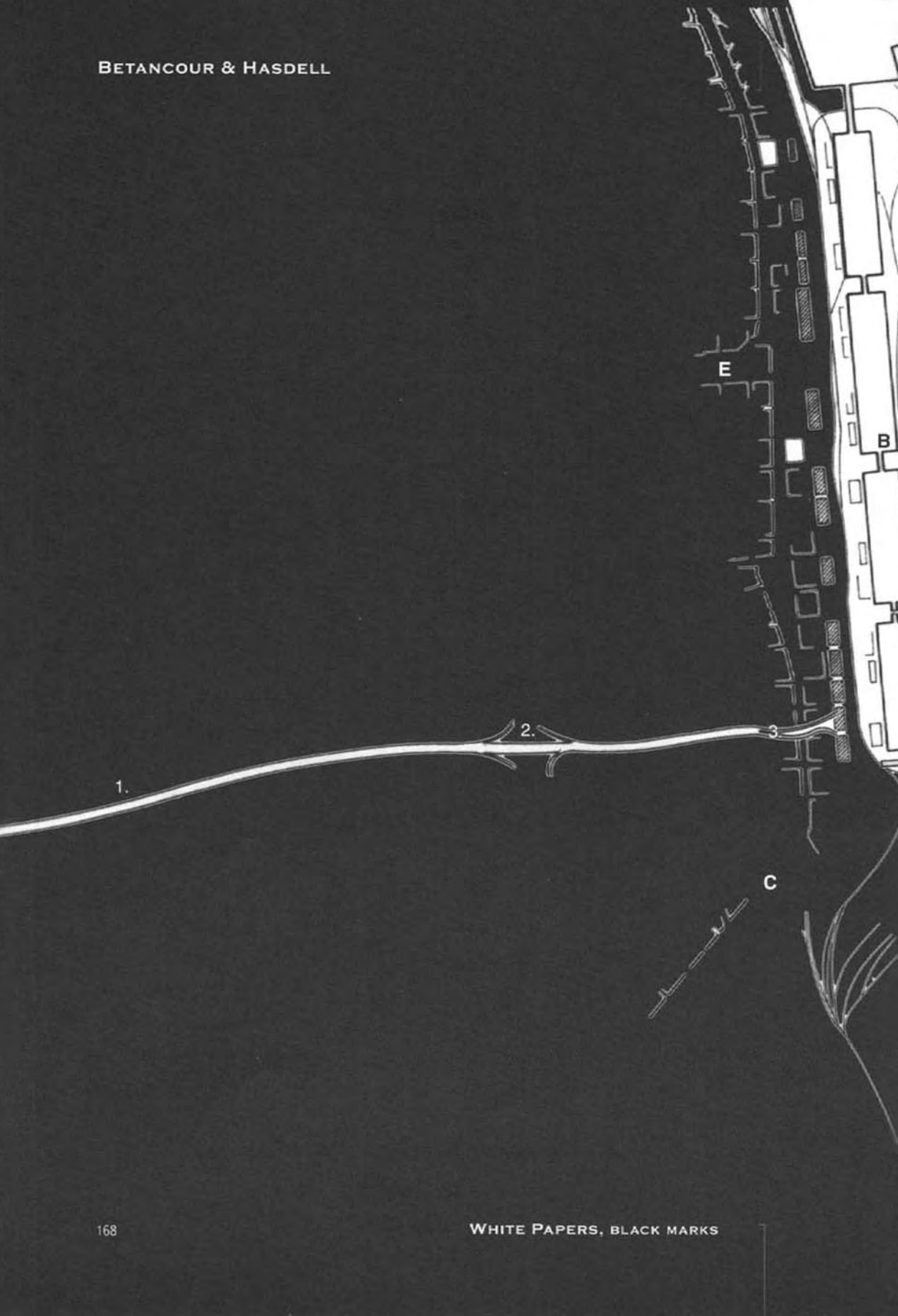
DRAWING (THIS PAGE)

1. Autopista 25 de Mayo
2. Avenida Nuevo de Julio
3. The Cut
4. Derelict Industry
5. Boca Juniors Training Ground

A. New Land
B. City Edge
C. Parque Lezama
D. The Origin of Tango
E. Madres de Playa de Mayo (The Difficult Years)

4.

5.

D

time, the provisional public space. This notwithstanding, since the Second World War commencing with the Peronist era, and in many ways exacerbated by the dictatorship of the 1970s, a shift occurred. The periphery became 'the gate to the city' with people flooding into the city from the interior. This shift coincided with the end of the expansionist relationship between the *pampas*, the city and the northern hemisphere. The external markets no longer required Argentina to produce to the same extent it once did. And the city as an import–export threshold that once extended into the *pampas* turns, in effect, inwards on itself, corresponding too with growing political instability that culminated in the dictatorship years during the 1970s. The failed 'promise' of the periphery has also led, in contemporary terms, to a crisis due to the disappearance or collapse of the state and all its manifestations. The decline of the dream of the *pampas*, a victim to global and historical shifts in the economy, has therefore had major repercussions on a city that depended solely on this ambition. Gorelik refers to this as the development of the 'second periphery', a periphery that is 'no longer inhabited by immigrants coming from Europe but by migrants coming from the provinces and neighboring countries.'[47] This, he indicates, has had a 'Latin-American-ising' effect on Buenos Aires since the 1970s, on what was once the most European of Latin American cities, whose external immigration from Europe 'staved off' the effects that have characterized other South American cities such as Lima or Mexico City, but is now witnessing the emergence of a migration from the interior.

As this dream became increasingly unfulfilled, the periphery of the city became a receptacle for the increasingly poverty stricken, those fleeing the land. Similarly, the harbour edge became derelict. The modern project, built on the 'utopian' vision of Sarmiento and others half a century before, thus remains unfinished. As a consequence, the resulting urbanity now appears fragmentary 'like postcards containing unkept promises, in which *objets trouvés* and insignificant gaps alternate on the unvarying expanse of the *pampas*.'[48]

As Gorelik further elaborates, the idea of the periphery since the 1970s no longer corresponds to a notion of equality, progress and modernity as it once did, but

develops in a fragmentary or island-like way. The effect of this is evident in the wide disparities that have emerged between neighbouring areas and accordingly, the emblems of this shift have also been subject to change. If the street was once the domain within the grid system of the *barrio*, immortalized in tango or in literature by Borges (for example, 'The Street-Corner Man') as that place within a city where the charades of *machismo*[49] and ritual dance are enacted, then the emergence of shopping malls, enclosed and isolated, separates people from the clamorous and chaotic street where differences are constantly met. 'By cultural tradition, Argentineans have always been instinctively against supermarkets and closed spaces generally which can't be traversed [or] are cut off from the streets. All the same, the grave economic circumstances of the early 80s forced certain social classes to make use of mass-distribution stores.'[50] This retreat of public space under the dictatorship, out of fear and imposed curfews, has meant that the transition to a post-dictatorship free-market economy,[51] albeit under economic sanctions imposed from North America, naturally privatizes public space in a move that is almost a seamless transition between dictatorship and democratic process.

The Hausmannesque plans of the dictatorship cut through the fabric of the city grid and are part of a massive but aborted highways project during the 1970s. These highways, in particular, run through the outer-lying *barrio* areas, in what must surely have been part of a system of political control. One such highway cut is *Autopista 25 de Mayo* between San Telmo and La Boca, just north of Parque Lezama, running parallel to the route of an old creek that marks the southern edge of the city centre grid. This highway effectively separates the poorer barrios of La Boca from the more official city centre which had long since incorporated San Telmo in its official grid structure. New tensions across this line are now established that repeat, to some extent, the lines written in the urban fabric of earlier times.

The rubble from these cuts was dumped into the river on the Banco de la Boca, a sandbank just outside of the Puerto Madero harbour, creating new islands in the Rio de la Plata and accidentally manifesting Corbusier's plan of fifty years earlier for an

island in the river. Over time, the new islands have become a natural wasteland, attracting all kinds of wildlife who dwell amongst the bricks and rubble. This new land separates the city and its port from the Rio de la Plata. At the same time it grafts a strange new mask on to the city in the form of beaches and ecological habitats. This is now an area witnessing transformation in the form of the construction of enclaves for the economic élite, and in effect privatizing public space, as they have done globally in various cities in the past decade or so. Speculative developments, removed from the city, are proposed for this displaced land that have more to do with globalization than local factors. At the same time, in conjunction with these developments, government policy is encouraging economic immigration as a possible panacea to Argentina's post-dictatorship economic situation, whilst controlling internal migration. This migration policy is exemplified in an advertisement published in the following London newspaper:

> *The National State Ministry of the Interior announcement for public, national and international bid (Number 01/96) for the full, indivisible contract of a service for the design, start-up and support of a System of Migration Control and Identification of Individuals and of Electoral Information.*
>
> *Ministry of the Interior, Advertisement in the Guardian newspaper, 26 August 1996, London*

A form perhaps of economic whitening coupled with the implementation of the generic city, a city that is removed from place and ground.[52]

These actions are emblematic of the incompleteness of the Buenos Aires modern project, and part of the '*tradición de ruptura*',[53] that Octavio Paz has written about. The rupture between modernity and centralized economic and cultural policy that has occurred implies a shift of the order of things, leading to new displacements and disruptions. The ideological neo-conservative privatization of the city and of public spaces implemented under the present government[54] borrows heavily on the

one hand from Thatcher's Britain of the 1980s, as indicative in the calling for tenders for control mechanisms by the Ministry of the Interior, whilst on the other hand, as in other Latin American countries, national policy becomes increasingly dictated by external North American agencies such as the Brady Plan and the IMF,[55] with its now familiar austerity or restructuring impositions of free-market economy, biased towards a North–South free trade zone. These are factors which, although derived from global extraneous influences, have transformative effects on cities and similarly on urban culture. They are factors that are by no means new to the Rio de la Plata region, whose culture has always been geographic in some way and influenced by sources outside its physical domain, but the repercussions become manifested locally as physical ruptures in the city fabric, the contraction and privatization of public space. We can view the current large structurally changing North–South emphasis of USA–Latin America and the effects of this (structural economic adjustment, internal migration, etc.) in terms of a politic of memory that constructs and overrides the old order: the execution of a new set of global forces impacting upon the urban, physical and cultural, social structures, and, moreover, beginning to touch on the inner conditions of those whom it effects.

Thus, if Buenos Aires is becoming Latin-Americanised, then the proposed global city, on the new island of displaced land and rubble, is somehow symbolic of the same factors that marginalized the areas of La Boca and San Telmo previously, given by immigration in relation to the state. It becomes external to the city yet connected spatially across a touching line, a part of the city that desires to be elsewhere.

The touching lines between each of these areas, their cultures, and the city itself manifest similar patterns. The same figures reoccur in the unfolding of the city; the erasure or displacement of one body (one cultural layer) within, coupled with an appeal to an external body to provide impetus or identity; the spatial connections between the geographic and the localized across the specific thresholds of Buenos Aires. Bound in an intertwined relationship, this dynamic is a tangoing movement of two bodies.

LIBERTANGO[56]

The touching line, we postulate, enables us to understand a horizon of identity located in a specific place at a particular time, where cultural factors meet with spatial; where two radically incommensurable, different figures, entities or bodies touch and an emotional landscape, buried under the surface, emerges. At these points, assumptions of raw emotions, ill-defined identities, cultures and raw urbanity give rise to new form as ephemeral phenomena that may well be erased, forgotten, disappeared, blanked-out. It results in spatial stories, rather than 'history' or hard-line urbanism, that deal with the affect and effect of the geographic and large-scale factors (the modern project and post-colonial issues, for example) meeting with everyday conditions, the interior and the imaginary.

Tango's legitimization, we argue, is therefore not based on part of a reinterpretation of history or a revisionist understanding, nor as authenticity or lament. Instead it is more potent to see it as tango-ing, with the mechanic of the touching line as the understanding of submerged emotional conditions and allied with specific urban place and conditions in the development of a cultural identity, attempting to understand the touching of the local, the barrios, daily life (everyday life) with immense geographic or global phenomena. It is an approach open to interpretation that considers the potential of place whose emotional intensity is a dynamic and potent urban condition that manifests a collective understanding and is therefore a constituent of a possible new culture. Intervening in such a locale then may articulate strange links, allow heterogeneous bodies to touch, choreograph their tensions and make their qualities into a collective expression; an urbanity.

What is touched upon, *taconeando*, a footnote[57] of the dance, is a choreography of bodies held in tension.

Gone is the arrabal with all its lustre,
perhaps its history is the crucifix of the dagger
The arrabal is gone that spoke of love,
and the stamp of the heels is gone.

Taconeando (Tango song from 1930)[58]

1:1,250

DISPLACEMENTS/DIASPORA

Section 2 may be described as an uncomfortable section, deliberately so. The authors in this section were chosen for their ability to convey this sense of unease. As the title scale, 1:1,250 suggests, this is an 'in-between' scale, neither large nor detailed. The essays reflect the authors hybrid conditions: operating at once removed from yet connected to the diasporic condition. Many of the texts are hybrid: both in terms of content and context. Issues of authenticity (Dovey, Jacobs and Lochert); black representation (Daniels) and black identity Ihejirika) are laid open—as is Asgedom's investigation into the creative possibilities of that condition.

The opening chapter, *Chapter 6,* 'Intensive Continuity' by Edward Ihejirika, is a provocative and open-ended inquiry into the argument for the assertion of cultural identity for the black practitioner. As he states, this argument,

> *'cannot yet be overstated because of what seems to be a slow materialization of ideas about black and African self-definition and history, particularly in an increasingly interconnected world. Is it inevitable that a critical theory should develop about the effect of dominant Western culture on the nature of the architectural representation of other cultures, particularly where economic and political colonization have been primary modes of this domination? And that such critical theory should develop strategies for resistance and intervention in the making of architectural space? Critiques which engage with various received orthodoxies are emerging within writings in the context of race and gender, and within the general context of notions of identity—architectural theory has had a continuing preoccupation with meaning and has borrowed paradigms for critical analysis from linguistics. From this emerge two distinct and occasionally convergent tendencies. The first is a tendency towards an emphatic categorization of cultural difference and the second is a tendency towards thematic cultural analysis. Praxis, as the phenomenal, cultural and social experience of architecture for both the architect and the community, is contingent upon the latter.'*

Ihejirika's chapter examines the role of continuity as a theme in the search for a critical black architectural perspective.

As part of the same search for identity and representation, *Chapter 7,* J. Yolande

Daniels' piece, 'Black Bodies, Black Space: a-Waiting Spectacle' references Meaghan Morris' work, 'Great Moments in Social Climbing: King Kong and the Human Fly', but uses films like King Kong and the carnivalesque to open up questions of the tradition site of black spatial experience. Daniels uses Foucault's definition of two primary types of heterotopias: those of crisis and those of deviance. Heterotopias of crisis, she argues, are defined relative to 'primitive' societies, as places where people, as a result of a natural process, are segregated from the community temporarily. Foucault believed these heterotopias to be vanishing, to be replaced by 'heterotopias of deviance, occupied by individuals whose behaviour deviates from the current average or standard'. Daniels shows how the spectacle is itself heterotopic to society: the place of projection from the centre to the margin that in turn, reflects back, transforming 'being into having and having into appearing'.

The spectacle has figured, and continues to figure, in the African diasporic experience through elements of colonization: the ethno(zoo)logical exhibition; the slave auction; the lynching; the minstrel show. It is through such spectacles that the African diaspora (and diasporic—i.e. colonial/controlled space) has come to take shape. The African diasporic experience is largely one of superimposition. Through the colonial mirror, she argues, we can never be ordinary: we are either party to the exposé, or, in Ralph Ellison's words, invisible. The mirror, 'down there, where I am not, a sort of shadow that makes my appearance visible to myself, allowing me to look at where I do not exist: the utopia of the mirror.' In the context of the diaspora, the mirror is the utopic space, distilling 'whiteness' in the purge and deluge on to the Other: the mirror becomes the heterotopic entry to colonial civilization.

Marginalized peoples, she claims, fit in marginalized spaces: 'the fairs, those marvelous empty zones, outside the city limits, that fill up twice a year with booths, showcases, miscellaneous objects, wrestlers, snake-women, optimistic fortune-tellers, etc.'. The diasporicized are the 'etc.' of 'traditional' society: all those peoples displaced as a result of Western colonial productivity. Daniels uses two cultural icons as a bridge from the heterotopia of the spectacle to the heterotopia of the African diaspora.

Saartje Baartman (the Hottentot Venus) and King Kong: the most absolute otherness to the white utopic construction. They are, by definition, criminal: Baartman (actual woman reconstructed as beast) and Kong (virtual man framed as beast). The most basic crime is their Otherness; this is also their most marketable attribute. In exploring the spaces in which the Hottentot and Kong are constructed in Paris and in New York, respectively, Daniels interrogates the architecture of the urban African diaspora.

Chapter 8, 'Authorizing Aboriginality in Architecture', travels across the globe, to Australia and to a team of interdisciplinary scholars seeking answers to a similar set of questions, this time against the colonial/settler-society backdrop. Jane M. Jacobs, Mathilde Lochert and Kim Dovey are an interdisciplinary team of architect, geographer and planner, respectively. Their essay focuses on a number of high-profile buildings recently constructed in Australia which claim to represent Aboriginal identity in architectural form. Given the relative absence of Aboriginal architects and any fixed architectural traditions, they question the authorization of such an 'Aboriginal' architecture. Their chapter examines four such buildings located in tourist destinations of northern Australia. To what extent, they ask, are such buildings forms of cultural appropriation or legitimating gestures of reconciliation? What do such developments mean for Aboriginal cultural expression and empowerment? The Gagadju Hotel and the Waradjun Aboriginal Cultural Centre are both situated in Kakadu National Park. Both buildings are 'totemic' in plan form and imagery. The hotel is in the distinctive shape of a crocodile (jaws as port cochère and belly as swimming pool), while the cultural centre represents a giant turtle. Both buildings are controlled by traditional owners who had a strong involvement in their design. These buildings present dilemmas in terms of the way they enter into mainstream adjudications of 'aesthetic value'—a value which circulates uneasily between a critical distance embodied in a judgement of 'kitsch' and an enthralled primitivism which sees such forms only as 'totems'.

They also examine two recent prize-winning buildings by leading Australian architects (Murcutt and Burgess) which have become emblems of an emergent

'Aboriginal architecture'. The Bowali Visitor Centre, also at Kakadu National Park, was not conceived of as representing Aboriginality, yet it has become encoded as 'Aboriginal' in form, logic and function. It is seen as 'Aboriginal' by its visitors but not by traditional owners. Their last example, the Uluru Cultural Centre at Uluru (Ayers Rock), is a self-conscious effort to produce a building which embodies the local Aboriginal people, culture and land. It is a 'totemic' design in the form of two snakes, undertaken in close collaboration with the local Anangu community. Their approval of the design of the building and its forms of representation is coupled with a certain sadness at how little the architecture has changed anything.

This chapter, relating the unruly development histories of these buildings, raises important questions about how 'Aboriginality' can be expressed and validated through built form, questioning regimes of tourist desire which enable the emergence of this 'indigenous' architecture.

The final chapter in this section, 'The Unsounded Space' by Araya Asgedom is a challenging and provocative essay, due not only to its length, but to its subject matter: the aural. As Asgedom states:

> within African and diasporic spaces (and in the context of architectural theory and practice) notions of transference and cultural integration are a particularly timely concern. Within the modern African cultural space, models of architectural production have been transferred without having undergone the fundamental cultural integration that would interrogate the ways in which the transferred discipline is constructed. It is critical that we nourish cultural integration of models and methods of architectural theory and practice within African and diasporic spaces. For architects of African descent, the very reliance of our discipline on European histories and models for its discourse could mean, amongst other readings, that we are occupying two different spaces. On the one side, a hegemony of vision as practiced (literally and metaphorically) in the construction of architectural discourse: on the other, an African musical idiom's open and dynamic structure of rhythm that embraces difference, polyvocality and improvisation. Balancing the constructive side of our vision with creative interpretations of our sonorous cultures will lead to a critical embrace of African and European precedents, as well as open the discourse of

architecture for radical innovation.

This chapter, written by an African political refugee, residing, teaching and 'making' in the USA, draws on a wide range of sources to support its argument. Ranging from Eisenmann to Kant, from Zuckerkandl and jazz to repetitive drumming of the Ewe peoples of Ghana and Togo, Asgedom skillfully weaves contemporary Western architectural theory and practice together with spatio-musical interpretation in the making (literally) of new kinds of space.

1:1,250

BIOGRAPHY

EDWARD IHEJIRIKA was born in Sheffield in 1960 of Nigerian parents. His primary and secondary education were completed in Nigeria in the city of Benin. He received his professional degree in Architecture from the University of Miami School of Architecture in 1983 and in 1985, a post-graduate diploma in History and Theory from the Architectural Association, London. He has taught at the Canterbury School of Architecture and currently teaches at Kingston University. He is involved in private architectural practice as Ted Hejik Design and also conducts CAD workshops for the RIBA South East region as part of their Continuing Professional Development programme.

6

INTENSIVE CONTINUITY

IDENTITY AS INTENSIVE CONTINUITY

The term 'intensive continuity' serves as a metaphor for the cultural processes which form the context of an architectural paradigm. It allows for the mapping of ideas and design strategies for a critical intervention in architectural discourse and in the making of the city. Further, it takes on themes invariably associated with cultural studies such as questions of current and evolved identities; meaning; experience and representation. Intensive continuity also refers to the density of the cultural field through the continuity of the past and present in African and Asian perspectives. If it is assumed that architecture embodies meaning through experience, then an appreciation of the nature of such generic notions of meaning takes on an urgency for the designer and those who experience it. This urgency is even more vital for a black perspective and requires reflection on the condition of black artistic and intellectual production in the New World Order. Although this writing is introspective in tone, its primary purpose is to focus on architecture in ways that are not dwelt on in current debates. Its application, therefore, goes beyond the particularities of a black perspective to embrace architecture itself.

In the current climate of liberal relativism, speculating on notions of meaning in architecture may well be considered presumptuous. However, the repudiation of such speculation renders other attempts at critical analysis redundant. Architecture, whatever its other attributes, becomes an unnecessary luxury, easily dispensed with. Conversely, it may be argued that not only does architecture embody symbolic and functional meaning but it also serves as a heuristic of the experiential, by emitting clues and signals which validate experience as praxis. Looking at the latter argument from a black perspective, it is not surprising why issues of identity and culture should be debated and asserted, given the example of the corrosive sentiments as expressed in the following quotations from Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew in an interview for the RIBA Journal.

Maxwell Fry:

A Nigerian aesthetic? On what would it be based that is as solid as the plywood techniques, the old timber traditions of Finland?
Jane Drew:

If a Nigerian genius were to be born, upon what deeply-felt indigenous art might it not feed—and be better digested, perhaps, than Picasso's reactions?

ON IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Culture holds a strategic position in the relationship under consideration. Practically speaking, it refers to the following operational concepts. Firstly, it is aspirational, stemming from the idea that culture enables society to aim at approximating a more perfect model of itself. Secondly, it consists of those elements and structures by which we comprehend the relationships of cultural phenomena to their apparent and underlying 'reasons'. And thirdly, as a 'discourse' where 'unities of discourses' are seen as analogous to the density of cultural meaning with respect to the notion of hidden and apparent meanings.[1] However, since culture is itself cumulative, its use here could be described as a set of references: to collective notions of the ideal in the relationship between humanity and the cosmos from which we derive religion, politics and all the varied hierarchies and figures of social existence.[2] In other words, culture energizes a field of communication. An architectural dimension is evoked by the notion of a cultural aesthetic which mediates between a work of art, as both object and process, and its actual conception and practice. Within this schema we become aware of architecture not only as a product but as cultural process—and expression. Works of art open up insight and reinforce mytho-ethical conceptions of human life. Returning to the question of 'black' culture, it should be noted that the term 'black' refers to Africans, Asians and those of a non-European outlook or descent. The term actually carries a cultural and political significance far beyond the narrow confines of race and racism, although no discussion of race is devoid of political rhetoric.

Essential to the notion of identity is a perception of one's own existence in the world—a frame of reference by which the individual or group is able to receive, interpret, formulate and communicate modes of behavior and engagement. However, the autonomy of the discipline of architecture requires that it continues to develop an internal logic by which it defines itself amongst other human endeavors. But a discussion of these issues may enable a considered reconnecting of the various fragments of the architectural project with respect to meaning.

It is inevitable that the black perspective should continue to question the underlying notions of contemporary architecture. A paradox exists in that architectural discourse remains exclusive of alternative notions of identity, despite a prevailing sense of the cultural pluralism and relativism of Western society. The common experience of black students in the schools of architecture in Europe and North America points to this exclusivity. Their cultural experiences, analyses, observations—part of the 'baggage' that all students bring to a course—are emphatically not the stuff of which it (architecture) is made. Most students are urged by their design tutors to disregard these experiences, particularly if they are not formed within the Western context, prior to arriving in Europe. Questions of identity, belonging, representation and difference are not within the scope of most curricula—it is not surprising that very few of the black students who begin their architectural education are able to persevere until completion of the course. For those who do continue, there is often a schism between a sense of 'roots' and a rejected or failed adoption. This critique is not limited to the diaspora but addresses the continuing struggle to 're-make' and re-evaluate identity within Africa and Asia.

The colonial experience took a deep bite out of the cultural consciousness of the colonized, which years of independence have not addressed or healed. How often do prospective clients, both within Africa and Asia and in the diaspora, focus on Western forms of architecture as their project briefs. The issue of identity surfaces occasionally, an irritating itch, like skin stretching over a healing wound—but the uncertainty of that question remains. The colonial experience did not inflict a

distortion in the colonized alone, for the proximity between colonizer and colonized created for both various distortions in their cultural and political relationships, going far beyond that of oppressor and oppressed. Each define themselves in relative opposition to the other, precluding other forms of engagement between cultures in envisaging a future for humanity. Part of the legacy of the colonial experience for Western culture is the burden of conservatism, particularly in the way in which it continues to define itself in relation to all other cultures.

The colonial program of Europe over Asia, Africa and America effected massive discontinuities in the economic, political and cultural life of those affected. It is small wonder that the mythology of liberation struggles are constructed as conflicts between the forces of progress against those of European conservatism. Such an interpretation of history does not allow for a humanistic view of Europeans. However, what is at stake is the development of cultural strategies where the central theme in discussing the black experience in the latter part of the twentieth century is the struggle against dissolution, disintegration and annihilation over the past 200 years. That there are black identities is not in doubt. On the contrary, the expression of individual and collective black identity flourishes in various diverse cultural endeavors. However, architecture seems to have been circumvented by this program of intense cultural expression: one wonders whether this is a result of a latent bias within the processes of architectural discourse or merely a time-lag before an important and creative awakening.

But there is an urgency, which cannot await a favorable resolution of either circumstance, for the assertion of black identities in architectural discourse. Subsequently, the project for a black perspective will require the development and articulation of such identities through deliberate action in raising these issues, both within and outside current architectural debates. How do we organize our activity to be independent and able to analyze its own complicity in order to move to a position of strength? A failed adoption mentioned previously refers to an acquired Euro-sympathetic identity to the exclusion of a non-European heritage. This tendency exists

with both indigenous and diasporic Africans and is often marked by frustration since it demands the rewriting of individual or group histories as allied to the new sympathies. This may also be described as the tenuous appropriation of eurocentric affinities. Symptoms of this tendency are found mostly in social interaction where European and Western credentials are exhibited through a series of complex and intimate codes: language; dress; cuisine; the rewriting of family histories, etc.

Historical facts are what they are—but the crafting of our identities to suit a legitimizing social status implicates such attempts in the emasculation of 'other' world views which might otherwise be offered as alternatives to current Euro—Western orthodoxies. Further, they obscure socio-political judgment and the ethical basis of artistic representation. The pursuit of cultural identity may, by default, lead to a narcissistic preoccupation with all things African or non-European to the exclusion of the development of analytical models, but the consequence of ignoring its implications is cultural annihilation and permanent dependency. Without such models for thinking and making, critiques on collective and individual identity will dwell, in large part, on the issue of 'meaning', particularly in a discipline such as architecture, where notions of meaning are variously contested.

ARCHITECTURE, MEANING AND EXPERIENCE

A paradigm of architecture, from which meaning is derived, is one centered on the dialectic between culture and experience. This paradigm presents a model for examining the relationship between the experiencing subject, culture and meaning. Its position derives from the idea that the act of experiencing architecture possesses the means of evaluating the conditions in which we find ourselves. In this sense, the requirements for building and accommodation become accessory to architecture: architecture becomes praxis. We can, therefore, appreciate the sense in which architecture can be said to be both a process and an event through the dynamics of experience. In this dynamic, the form of an object—its surfaces, textures, mass, color

and spatial extension (which constitute a significant part of the perceptual field of the experiencing subject)—is incorporated within the cultural milieu in which the experience is interpreted. The event, therefore, takes on architectural significance when judged to be 'meaningful'. This idea of meaning is connotative since the event actually speaks of other realities, to which it refers. The subject deals through the object as well as with the physical attributes of the object's reality. The association of architecture and culture in hermeneutic terms thus reveals the capacity of architecture to enable the deciphering of hidden meanings from apparent ones.

I find this to be coincident with a world view that is concerned with understanding the motives for public and private acts as they affect individuals, communities and cultures. Consequently, it is possible to reposition oneself away from the periphery of cultural discourse and its orthodoxies, towards a validation of other alternative agendas. The Modern Movement and Western architecture, alongside their own direct references, are also contextualized within a wider body politic, predicated on the same cultural history. This is not to say that the Greco-Roman tradition remains a monolithic, edifying whole. However, it does present a continuity which has not had to deal with the massive dislocation as witnessed in Africa and Asia. The Greco-Roman tradition has endured and asserted a dominance over world affairs, particularly in the wake of the military and economic triumphs of Western European powers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A world 'view', defined by the attitudes, morality and ethics through which the tradition manifests itself, has become the significant element of this domination. Consequently, its historiography has been one of unbroken continuity in which architectural practice and criticism has continued to position itself relative to the themes of identity, economy and production. A retrospective look at the buildings of the late British architect James Sterling, for example, reveals the density of the cultural 'material' which nurtured his work. This is but one confirmation of the coherence which cultural continuity engenders. However, this is not to imply that the history of Western architectural culture has been without conflict—there have, of course, been shifts, riots and rebellions in the interpretations

of the themes mentioned, which brings me to a discussion of the Modern Movement and its crisis.

The Modern Movement was not necessarily a break with the past or with tradition, but rather a repositioning of architectural practice relative to socio-economic realities in terms of being able to intervene in sociological processes. Modernism, with historical hindsight, was hardly surprising, given the contraindications of industrialization and the overwhelming need to participate in the prevailing radical thinking of the time. In architecture, it appeared to deny the primacy of language and representation as the core of the architectural paradigm in preference for the new orthodoxy of the International Style. It was subsequently developed and projected around the world in the first half of the twentieth century at precisely the moment when the colonial machinery was at its most efficient, decimating the cultural means of resistance. Our forbears had little opportunity to resist: the promise of a Brave New Tomorrow was irresistible—from Chandigargh to Abuja, we became accomplices in the fragmentation of our cultural heritage.

A corollary to this argument regarding the legacy of the Modern Movement is the denial of the possibility of 'meaning' in architecture and, consequently, its universal 'appropriateness' as the modus operandi for the architecture produced for (not by) Africa and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Asia. Speculation on the nature of the object has dominated architectural theory of the twentieth century. These speculations and the manifestos of this period dwelt considerably on the development of a formal language of architectural objects. The syntactic identification of the architectonic elements of this new language (pilotis, flat slabs and the credos of functionalism and new methods of construction) became de rigueur. Mario Gandelsonas, in his article 'From Structure to Subject', has sufficiently described this predilection of the Modern Movement through issues of syntax and has hinted at a broader inclusion of the experiencing subject in architectural theory.[3] The sentiments of Fry and Drew, as quoted earlier in this chapter, can be viewed as misguided, culturally illiterate. However, they reveal the urgency of finding a new way of overcoming the

fragmentation of black identity and revealing (although implicitly understood) the arrogance of the colonial agenda in architectural discourses. What is being described here is therefore not a history of the Modern Movement, but an opening up of the challenge of architecture. It is worth considering that the loss of meaning leaves a void, mostly filled by formalistic gestures and expressions. I liken such a response to the beating of drums outside the context of the ritual which gives meaning to each beat. This potentially empty celebration of cultural difference goes no further—as it should and must—to engage with contemporary socio-economic, political and cultural realities. The moral and ethical basis, within which architecture operates, is today tenuous because the very notion of ethics and morals has been emasculated by current relativistic pluralism. The desire for 'identity' can lead to a premature condition where the tools of action are not fully developed. This has more to do with posture— architecture leading to performance—a nihilistic preoccupation with the peculiarities of the object as to what it 'does' and lacks the density of European cultural output, refusing to reconnect to a body of cultural association and reference. What is desired is much more. The project for articulating black identities in architecture is more than a narcissistic preoccupation with cultural difference. It is a the authentic continuation of non-Western traditions in the context of the orthodoxy of popular culture.

A deliberate engagement with the cultural predilections of the subject affords the means of reconnection with possible meaning in architecture through cultural analysis. Foucault refers to the subject as 'a position to be filled by various individuals according to circumstances.'[4] Architecturally, the subject is conceived as being synonymous with one or many identities. One might ask, therefore, what modes exist for the construction of identities in relation to architectural discourse. It is instructive to note the issues reviewed in Kwame Anthony Appiah's appraisal of recent developments in African identity and the falsehoods of race-based rhetoric.[5] Speculation about possible black perspectives in architecture addresses the generative themes in architecture. As practitioners, the development of a critical consciousness in the thinking and making of architecture is a significant step in affirming positive self-

identities. The concept of 'intensive continuity' is applicable to the appreciation of the formal and figurative synthetic qualities of architecture.

Although the deficit of the preoccupation of the Modern Movement with formal considerations has been discussed as non-interpretative, issues of form invariably remain a significant aspect of perception, to which the notion of a geophysical/architectonic syntax refers.[6] Conversely, a normative syntax of figurative representation is constituted by derived themes, based on values, ontological beliefs and aspirations as conceptualized in culture. A creative notion of syntax also predicates a sense of cultural knowledge and identity in the subject. It is significant that architecture operates as a verb rather than a noun by giving meaning to experience, in the sense of the in-between, as an interlocutor between concept and reality. There is correspondence between this idea and the awareness of the idiomatic character of language and representation in culture.

One consequence of 'intensive continuity' in the proposed architectural paradigm is an identification of generative themes which engender continuity and architecture. A thematic study of 'architecture as representation' brings notions of spatial and material configuration, narrative, power, cultural aspiration and teleology into the dynamic of the subject's experience. This list is not meant to circumscribe a finite scope for dealing with the issues of representation, but acts as indicative of the possibilities. 'Intensive continuity' also refers to a characteristic which permeates, but not exclusively, many African cultures—that of social and spatial organization through political and social institutions, relationships and cosmology. An example of this is taken from the architecture of the traditional Benin and Yoruba house. The figure of the house translates the aspirations of a family, including its social dynamic, into material reality, and in so doing reveals a synthesis in which the elements of form are incidental to figurative/representational requirements. For if the cultural milieu of the traditional household was communal (intensive) in terms of the positive values given to its ontology then it follows that the formal attributes of the architecture reveal a spatial and emblematic configuration which affirms the ideals of its inhabitants.

However, it is worth noting that, as with the Modern Movement, the adoption of a particular set of working hypotheses may have the undesirable effect of limiting the incisive quality of the critical issues at hand or of emasculating them forever. This may also be described as the danger of the medium becoming the message.

An underlying theme of this chapter is a desire to bring the subject into the purview of architectural discourse. In practical terms, it means focusing on the social, political and economic as well as the notional and aesthetic aspects of culture. Politically, there is an urgency for a critique of the New World Order, particularly after the Cold War, where radicalism and opposition remain incapable of engagement. We may wish to examine the ethos of maximizing public welfare through competition among individuals and to situate architectural conception within this and other contexts. As practitioners, critical analysis would be indispensable in identifying significant cultural and political conditions, their nuances and ontological systems of beliefs and values which bear upon possible meanings and outcomes in architecture. The significance of cultural criticism is its contextual role in art and design; its role as the medium of social consciousness, whereby the metaphors of architecture are about the subject explaining, confirming, projecting and discovering itself.

A way forward may be glimpsed from the thoughts of Bruce Onobrakpeya, particularly in his notion of the synthesis of the past and present through the evidence of one's own heritage as expressed through new working methods.[7] The emotive genus for a black perspective in this particular architectural discourse is invariably caught between anxiety and hope—an anxiety that is the product of a fractured collective past in which the means of assignation and validation are precarious and uncertain, and hope in the freshness and vibrancy which mark the remaking of individual and group identities.

1:1,250

BIOGRAPHY

J. YOLANDE DANIELS is an architect currently enrolled at the Whitney American Museum of Art Independent Study Program. She studied at Columbia University where she completed the MArch in 1990, and at City College of the City University of New York, where she completed the BSc Arch in 1987. She is presently on the faculty at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She has taught at City College and practised in New York with several design firms; currently she and Sunil Bald collaborate as studioSUMO. In 1996, she was a contributor to the ALARA (African Latin American Research Association) Conference in Bahia, Brazil; she was awarded an AIA Travel Grant to research spaces of slavery in Brazil and was a contributor to the JAZZ Architectural Workshop at Tulane University in New Orleans. She contributed to an OpEd article on the workshop published in ANY16 (September 1996). She has entered a number of competitions, with Honorable Mentions for both the Charlottenberg Jewish School (with Leonardo Zylberberg) and the Mobile Alabama Courthouse (with Amy Anderson & Associates).

7

BLACK BODIES, BLACK SPACE: A-WAITING SPECTACLE

'Los quales dhos Negros vendemos con todos sus tachas, males o buenas, alma en voca, costal de huesos...con todos sus enferedades ocultus y manifiestas.'[1]

ORIGINS...
KINGS AND
COURTESANS...
COURTS........

...KONG

1

Existence is framed in space. For the African diaspora, this existence has always been located at societal margins, defined and reinforced as the color-line. 'Blackness' has a corporeal nature—more than 'otherness', for while the 'other' may be exotic, the 'black' is base. It is primarily through the body that the 'Black Other' has been defined and explored. Trapped within an undeniably volumetric incarceration, the black body—the 'black-as-body'—is the subaltern of the matter—mind dialectic.[2]

Amer-European societal practices define corporeal practices and manifestations in opposition to 'civilization'. Oppositional myths of order/chaos; savagery/civilization; nature/man; normative/deviant; center/margin, of bodies as distinct from the earth, of the earth as distinct from space are all symptoms of a

process of metaphysical object fetishism. These constructions are also to be found in heterotopic extremities.

Foucault defined heterotopias of crisis and deviance as primary heterotopias. Heterotopias of crisis he situated relative to 'primitive' societies, as places where people, as a result of a natural process (such as birthing or aging rituals), are temporarily segregated from a community. Heterotopias of deviance, which he believed to be on the rise, are occupied by individuals whose behavior deviates from the societal average or norm (mental hospitals, prisons, etc.).[3]

Aberrations to societal norms are typically transcribed as deviant: that the 'norms' are often constructed from a male and white perspective has had lasting implications on the reading of the 'other'. There exists no better emphasis of this than in the spatial and categorical marginalization in Amer-European civilization of the 'black'.

2

Heterotopic constructions are defined in their spatial localization and marginalization. They are also spaces of segregation. Heterotopic classifications occur in both physical and metaphysical space: 'other' worlds, open, yet closed, they involve projection and mediation; they reflect time and are activated in space. They may have

'space presents itself in the form of patterns of ordering.'[4]

'mass' as in heterotopias of consumptive accumulation: museums and libraries, or be fleeting, as in heterotopias of celebration: rituals, festivals, spectacles.

It is through the spectacle that the African diaspora and diasporic (i.e. colonial) controlled space has come to take shape: the ethnological exhibition, the slave auction, lynchings, entertainment, the minstrel show, the speakeasy, competitive sports,

televised crime dramas, etc. The spectacle is the archetypal construct through which Western 'civilization' has viewed the black. Ironically, the opportunity for individual 'other' expression has often been found in spectacles. The spectacle, in its capacity to transcend the corporeal, is linked to the metaphysical. As process, the spectacle and the spectator transcend the individual and collective body: they merge. The spectacle has the capacity to subvert heterotopic constructions, yet its value as a hegemonic signifier is its tendency to keep them in place. Indeed, physical separation is reinforced.

The spectacle, as compared to the ritual, has a public nature: it must be viewed and, by its nature, involves an 'other'. The distance of the spectator assigns the space of the spectacle as heterotopic to society. It is the place of projection from the center to the margin that in turn reflects back. The spectacle transforms 'being into having and having into appearing' and, as defined by Debord, it is a negation of life that 'has invented a visual form for itself.'[5]

3.

The African Diasporic experience is largely one of superimposition. 'He…creates for himself a space in which he can find ways of using the constraining order of the place or of the language.'[7] The place that is other and is yet localizable: heterotopia.

'The spectacle erases the dividing line between self and world, in that the self, under siege by the presence/absence of the world, is eventually overwhelmed; it likewise erases the dividing line between true and false, repressing all directly lived truth beneath the "real presence" of the falsehood maintained by the organization of appearances.'[6]

The place that can never be localized: utopia. And of the space in-between…

The mirror. 'Down there where I am not, a sort of shadow that makes my appearance visible to myself, allowing me to look at where I do not exist: utopia of the mirror.' Foucault continues, however, 'starting from it, in fact, I find myself absent from the place where I am, in that I see myself in there.' The heterotopic experience is one of loss. In the context of the African diaspora, the mirror is the utopic space distilling 'whiteness' in the purge and deluge on to the 'Black.'

Through the colonial mirror we can never be ordinary, we are either party to the exposé—or in Ralph Ellison's words—invisible. The mirrored 'black other' is a projection in reverse. This phenomenon of reverse projection can be identified, as

'…woven into the dream world of goods was a hierarchical continuum of material and racial progress that signified nothing so much as the distance travelled from "savagery" to "civilisation".[13]

well, in the phenomenon of black-face[8]—a masking device which allowed the concealed 'white' to transgress—a practice that would otherwise be socially unacceptable. Thus, not only has the 'black' been a necessary element in the definition of the 'white', but a necessary impetus for Amer-European civilization. Importantly, the nature of this construction is cathartic. All of the contradictions within the self are simplified and purified as corporeal nature is purged on to the 'other.'

In an act of transference, the black body becomes a medium…a body-double. The 'black-as-body': Fanon's 'corporeal malediction…the image of the biological–sexual–sensual–genital–nigger has imposed itself on you and you do not know how to get free of it.'[9] The machine–animal-man–the things one can do to a

black body!

The spectacle is the medium of hegemonic discourse: the mirror reflects the heterotopic division of civilization, the camera or gun projects its representative gaze and the exhibition provides proof of prowess.

'The question of the arrangement of the earth's inhabitants is not just one of knowing whether there will be enough room for all of them...but also one of knowing what are the relations of vicinity, what kind of storage, circulation, reference and classification of human elements should take preference in this or that situation.'[10]

THE FAIR

4.

The mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the rise of the Great Exhibitions, spectacles which can be viewed as public meditations on 'civilization' in the emerging Industrial Age. They were intensely political promotionals for colonial powers. The exhibitions displayed the achievements of nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial and industrial practices, as they promoted cohesion and purpose in a modern industrial future.[11] As 'the sites of pilgrimage to the commodity fetish', the Great Exhibitions also served to educate and acculturate the emerging consumerist middle class.[12] The exhibitions were models of classification, representing the known/owned world. Exhibition displays incorporated the pleasure of the voyeur into the context of enlightenment by integrating industrial innovation, amusement and

education. One type of 'educational' display was the ethnological exhibit. The precursor to the familiar museum diorama, the ethnological exhibit, contained live people in their 'natural' environments.

5.

The display of the 'natural' (people, artefact, site) is mediated by the preconceptions of the public. People will pay to see scantily clad 'natives' (irregardless of the climate), performing 'primitive' tasks—singing and dancing are of more 'interest' than basket weaving. The display of 'resource-rich natives', in an international context, only glorified modern industrial abundance and colonial expansion.

At the Paris Exposition Universelles of 1867, Bedouins were exhibited alongside Egyptian wares. At the Exposition Universelles of 1889, a panorama of Egypt was constructed, complete with a harem and a mosque which masqueraded as a bazaar.[14] In 1904, at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St Louis, peopled displays, representing the American Indian and Philippine Reservations, were located opposite each other, thus positing the American expansionist past and future.[15] It was here that a defeated Geronimo sold his autograph for ten cents. This display practice was continued in the 1933 Chicago 'Century of Progress' Exposition, in the 'Darkest Africa' exhibit (against which the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People protested).[16] The presence of exhibition ghettos of 'primitive' peoples (the spoils of colonial expansion) in the context of a 'culture of abundance and pleasure', has had lasting influence in the spatial localization of the 'other' within the dominant order.[17] Not only does the exhibition of 'savage' peoples occur concurrent with European colonial expansion in the South and West in the eighteenth, nineteenth and as late as the early twentieth centuries, but it is also the by-product of the European scientific revolution at home.

The accumulation and exhibition of animals, wares, technologies and people created the need for the classification of such. Collections, the spoils of colonialism, gathered by traders and merchants in Africa, Asia, the Americas, etc., laid the ground in which scientific determination and methodology (financed by imperial crowns) would flourish. The scientific revolution was also a revolution of rationalism—of the civilized forces of nature over the savage.

6.

The colonial revolution has always been dependent upon dissemination: of language, of concepts, of identities. The 1933 Cooper–Shoedsack production, 'King Kong', is a vehicle for the patriarchism, colonialism, sexism and racism of the film makers and the 1933 white film audience to which the film was directed. Kong is also

'I tell you, there's something on that island that no white man's ever seen.'[18]

a mirror in which a depression-era fallen woman is reconstituted as a 'white', and thus pure, emblem.[19] She ceases to be a woman as she is transformed into an acculturation. The space of the spectacle is hinged on intrigue, allure...separation.

THE SAVAGE

7.

This tale of the collision between the primitive and civilization centers around three lovers (one man, one woman, one ape-man) and one profit/power hungry

ONE CANNOT EXPLAIN LONELINESS
TO ONE
NOR ARE THE POETRIES OF AN APE
NO MATTER HOW LARGE...
...FEASIBLE
FOR EVEN THE SMALLEST MOMENT.
NOT A BIT. [20]

adventurer/director.

'King Kong' is framed primarily as a rephrasing of the tale 'Beauty and the Beast'.[21] At the onset of our journey to Kong, the metropolis is shrouded in fog—the real activity being on board the embarking ship. The ship is the sacred space of exploration, the 'placeless place' from which 'beauty' is projected.[22] Yet, what is beauty but the most refined vestment of civilization?

Kong is king of an island overrun with primordial creatures and natives running wild, without the direction/definition of white rationalism. Ann Darrow, as she wrestled in the palm of Kong, represented the epitome of desire in white Western civilization and she, 'beauty', screams at the threat of defilement by 'blackness'. Kong and Ann fit into the stereotype of white society's fear of the rape of white women by black men: this fear also fits within the tradition of 'beauty and the beast'.

Part of the enduring appeal of Kong, 'the eighth wonder of the world', are his human characteristics which endear him to the film audience: the audience reconstructs Kong as bestial man, for in all characteristics, he is a magnified human. Kong is the embodiment of base masculinity, the phallus itself: musculature and functionalism.[23] Despite his gigantism, however, Kong was constructed castrated. Domesticated for the civilized viewer, he is both monster and pet.[24]

8.

Primates were a fascination to the European well before evolutionary theory. They represented the 'primitive', the 'bestial', the 'other' to civilization. The depiction of the primate as man existed in medieval religious texts and scientific illustrations. One example is in the various depictions of Mary Magdalene (a black woman) with a hirsute body, another, in Edward Tyson's 'Orang-Outang', or Sive Homos Silvestris' 'The Anatomy of a Pygmy Compared with that of a Monkey, an Ape and a Man', is a depiction of an upright chimpanzee with a walking stick.[26] The distinction between Pygmy and Man (he was 'other') and the implied similarity of Pygmy and Primate (they were one), as in the latter, has been incorporated in early 'scientific' texts. This synonymy resurfaces in the construction of Kong and it continues to resurface in media depictions of black men today.

'Must the anthropologist always dream animal dreams? Must we?' [25]

9.

The ape's primitiveness represented licentious sexuality; however, it was the sexuality of the white European that was released in the negative, through the ape and in turn the black.[28] The 'missing link' in Linneas' 'Great Chain of Being', the African, was *a priori* monstrous due to difference.

'Blackness' has been perceived as an abnormality, just as femaleness has been a studied aberration to the rational 'white' male. Yet the black was perceived as low, bestial, perverse and unredeeming. In the Bible, the mark upon Cain for slaying Abel and the condemnation of Ham to be the 'servant of servants' have been used to explain the origin of the black.[29] The linking of the black with degeneracy in the Bible

was further written into scientific texts and used as justification, in the Romantic

The interval which separates the monkey from the Negro is hard to understand.'[27]

reconstruction of the world, in colonialist expansionism and in the *a posteriori* appropriation of the globe.

Kong is the phantasmogoric black. Our first view of Kong, before he has been 'civilized' by the reluctant touch of 'beauty', is of his face, with teeth bared, eyes gleaming or bulging and nostrils flared. Kong bares his teeth often, to instill fear, or, occasionally to grin. There is little distinction between the two: this is his characteristic 'look.' To the white, theater-going public of 1933, this apparition would have been a familiar reconstruction from decorative household knickknacks: ashtrays, cookie jars, lawn ornaments, etc. It is the face of Sambo, his grin twisted into a grimace.[30] The construction, Kong, also fits into the tradition of 'white' men portraying black men in 'black-face'. However, Kong is animal, made man.

10.

Gas bombs and an unseen raft project Kong into the future (past) and to an expectant audience. Unseen is the cage in which Kong unwillingly awaits his spectacularization on the stage. Kong is an anachronism compressed into prehistory by technologically advanced surroundings. Though King Kong plays out the depression fears of an industrialized urban modernity, there is revelry in the barrage of battles, blasts and blood. Horror amidst fascination: the spectacle.

The fugitive Kong, having fled the stage (scene of his public defilement), goes in search of 'beauty'. As he scales the metropolitian fabric, we view him peering through windows, his mammoth face a nightmare to women sleeping alone. He grabs

one out of bed, arresting her dreams as he rushes her to dangle in the exterior heights, where, upon inspection, dissatisfied with his catch—a brunette in men's pajamas—

'He said: "why did I ever leave Africa?"—and then, as if someone had just passed a washcloth over his face,—"but I've had a very good marriage."'[31]

Kong discards her to plunge into the depths of vertical urban space. In this scene, multiple voyeurisms and libidinal dream realities collapse: the view of Kong through the frame of modern speculative architecture, the view of the woman who awakens to return his gaze, the view of the audience superimposed atop it all. The bogey man is real, his name is Kong and he is unleashed in the metropolis.

'The great ape is never the same size. Who is? It depends on his mood and who's doing the looking.'[32]

11.

Kong's scale is relative to his setting (and the director's point of view). As a menacing cannibalistic god he is mammoth—as he scales the Empire State Building, he appears shrunken. Kong represents savage violence, of the order of an earthquake: he is the Old World/pre-technology and he is outmoded. What power have the forces of the Earth, in comparison to technological civilization?

Kong is in death a flowing horizontal miasma, the looter felled by the spectacle of the metropolis.

Cranial measurements

crowd my notebook pages,

and I am moving closer,

close to how these numbers

signify aspects of

national character.

Her genitalia will float

inside a labeled

pickling jar in the Musée de l' Homme on a shelf

above Broca's brain... [33]

12

The inscription of the female on to the earth has naturalized the subjugation of the procreative in the service of gender, domestic and national constructions.[34] Within the movement of scientific rationalism, the female was not synonymous with the 'feminine'; for the feminine construction was shaped by Western patriarchal definitions of civility. The woman 'other' views her 'dark' self, the othered 'other'— the status of both were structured through 'blackening.'

Saartjie Baartman (Sarah Bartman, the Hottentot Venus), enframed by the Dutch and the English, the phenomenon, exhibited in London from 1810 and then in France from 1814 to her death in 1815, was arguably not a Hottentot. Hottentot referred to a people, distinguished from, yet confused with the 'bushmen' from the coastal regions in South Africa. However, by the late 1600s, the 'Hottentots' were Christianized, scattered, bred into extinction.[35]

Bartman was not the sole Hottentot female to have been exhibited or dissected in the early nineteenth century, or to receive the distinction Hottentot Venus. Thus, to write of the Hottentot Venus is to invoke a construction which originated and grew

within the European psyche, was classified in nineteeth-century scientific texts and elaborated on in dailies, popular song and theater in the nineteenth-century urban centers of London and Paris.

In 1809–10, at Piccadilly Circus and in the Egyptian Hall, Bartman was exhibited 'on a stage two feet high, along which she was led by her keeper...being obliged to walk, stand, or sit as he ordered her.'[36] The decency of the exhibition was questioned by some viewers and resulted in a hearing by the attorney general, in the Court of Chancery in November 1810. Although the court decided against an indecency ruling, the hearing and the publicity it drew sped the departure of the Hottentot Venus attraction from London.

'on a stage two feet high, along which she was led by her keeper, being obliged to walk, stand or sit as he ordered her.'[36]

In March 1815, the exhibition, implicitly regarded as indecent, was offered to the prurient gaze of scientific rationalism. The zoologists and physiologists from the *Musée d'Histoire Naturelle*, examined Bartman in the King's Garden for three days. Here, we enter the space of Bartman's corporeal dissection by scientific inquiry, although it was preceded by a spiritual dissection under the consuming colonialist gaze. The scientific classification of the Hottentot physiognomy as degenerate occurs in several texts authored by Baron Georges Cuvier.

In an oral report to the *Societé Philomatique de Paris* in 1815, Cuvier's assistant, de Blainville, described their intentions to make 'a detailed comparison of this woman with the lowest race of humans, the Negro race and with the highest race of monkeys, the orangutan' and to provide 'the most complete account of her reproductive organs.'[37] Thus, the Hottentot/Bartman was separated from other 'blacks' and her body (exterior traits and interior systems) compared to those of an orangutan.

Although Cuvier and de Blainville were most interested in the inspection of the 'Hottentot apron', it was Bartman's steatophygia (protruding buttocks) that figured in the public imagination.[38] The butt: the foul, the fecund, the abject, the seductive.

Bartman's projected bestiality made her the object of popular curiosity and sexual projection. One very popular French vaudeville play, 'The Hottentot Venus or the Hatred of Frenchwomen', involved the masquerade of a European belle as a Hottentot to get the attention of the gentleman she desired (who had declared he could only love an 'exotic'); the required plot twists notwithstanding, the play ended with the gentleman enamored with his 'othered' lover. As in the film 'King Kong', the spectacularized Hottentot serves the society in which she was projected as a liberatory medium.

'...a detailed comparison of this woman with the lowest race of humans, the Negro race, and with the highest race of monkeys, the orangutan' and to provide 'the most complete account of her reproductive organs.'[37]

Paris, 1829—another Hottentot Venus was exhibited in the accepted Hottentot costume, at a party of the Duchess du Barry. As depicted in a tabloid illustration, the Hottentot stands beyond two Parisian couples, separated by a rope which seems to connect the three women in a tripartite construction. The bodies of the Parisian ladies are revealed, through a thinness of material, as they turn away from the Hottentot. One male peers through a magnifying glass at the attraction, the other points. In the age of the scientific construction of (white) female sexuality as an anomaly to the (white) male ideal, the Hottentot represented the latent sexuality within the European feminine ideal.[39]

13.

Civilized femininity was contrasted by a Bartman clothed in only a beaded apron about her hips. The 'Beauty and the Beast' theme arises again. Bartman was a woman reconstructed bestial. The primitive serves as a body double. In 1830, fifteen years after the metropolitan appropriation and consumption of the Hottentot, Victorian women adopted the posterior housing which amplified and masked the 'posterior': the bustle.[41]

The illustrations of the Hottentot Venus remain curiosities with sexual connotations intact upon viewing today. The physical characteristics of the Hottentot Venus (like the body of Kong) remain in flux. The characteristics of her physique grow or shrink, while remaining within the range of the 'abnormal', depending on the context in which she is described, displayed, caricatured, desired. The monstrous are

'Everyone may agree that Africa should never have been treated as a void or a blank, but the study of colonialism shows that it was.'[43]

presented primarily as a problem of scale; the Hottentot is too big, too dusky...too black and yet Cuvier could not help commenting on the delicacy of her hands.[42] Bartman would have been elevated in such a manner on the stage in London that her sexual physiognomy would have been within view of the greatest number of spectators, her height having been four feet-seven inches tall. She was exhibited for 'tuppence' or three francs. Was it a salon or a tent or a cage, in which she worked eleven hours each day until her death? Was she accompanied by a representation of a 'primitive reality'? More than any artifact, the Hottentot body qualified the exhibit.

'He's offering to trade six of his women for Ann.'[40]

Was there sunlight? Enough to see her by. What did she, the object of the gaze, view

in those eleven hours? Did she care to view those who viewed her? Did she speak? Could she disrupt the point of view of the voyeur? Did she sit, stand and perform as directed? What liberty has a free black possession? What meaning could physical surroundings have for one who is alienated from their physical body by a voyeuristic gaze for up to twelve hours a day? When the first physical house, the body, is divorced from the mind, does the cage, or for that matter the city, register? What meaning could architecture have had in this life?

14.

Since the European expansion into Africa and beyond, the private space of the black has been subject to public review. Dancing, in the diaspora, was first a slave-ship imperative.[44] The spectacularization of the black was initiated by the travelogue, the bill of sale, the 'scientific' text and continues with the welfare state. The white witch doctor going between the 'native' and 'civilization' has played an important role. In King Kong, the director, Carl Denham, and the skipper–linguist are filmic representations of the adventurer–trader: those who traveled to 'dark' uncharted lands and lived to bring back accounts of 'mastery.' Recorded accounts were undertaken as imperial pursuits and underwritten by static heterotopias such as the Museum of Natural History, the Museum of Man, etc., and incorporated into early scientific discourse as part of the process of nation building. Language is the frame for encasing, encoding and classification—for the objectification of the 'other.' Language is the structure through which we situate the visual frame.

Both Kong and Hottentot are framed by the 'natural' site, the place of internment, the viewing platform and the vehicle of spectacularization (film, the exposition, theory). Each space, a construction, relegated by a foreign mediator, is imposed upon Kong/Hottentot/the 'other' and frames the spectacle through which they are defined.

BRIDGING THE 'BLACK' CITY
BORDERS/**S**URROUNDS/**P**ENETRATIONS

'...once the prisoner is naked, the visiting-room guard spits out a familiar cadence—

Open yer mouth...
Stick out your tongue...
You wear dentures?...
Lemme see both sides of your hands...
Pull your foreskin back...
Lift your sac...
Turn around. Bend over...
Spread your cheeks...
Bottom of yer feet...
Get dressed...'[45]

15.

In the 'black' city/'black' architecture/the 'black' community/'black' space, the localization of 'otherness' has always been and continues to be the major determinant. The spectacle of the black is removed from within the urban landscape only to be

projected back into it through mnemonic devices. The separation, a heterotopic division of civic space, is also psychological. The media serves society by reinforcing the physical separation, as it penetrates the zone of separation in search of 'truth'.

'In the post-industrial urban context of dwindling low-income housing, a trickle of meaningless jobs for young people, mounting police brutality and increasingly draconian depictions of young inner city residents, hip hop is black urban renewal.'[46]

Today, paranoia is projected into suburban American living rooms in images of

'Men were not created in order to obey laws. Laws are created to obey men...they are established by men and should serve men. There is no disagreement about this function of law in any circle—the disagreement arises from the question of which men laws are to serve...'[47]

graphic violence from a remote location or involving remote 'others'. The true horror is reserved for when the remote 'other' is white—by implication, pure and undeserving. What, then, of the constitution of black urban architecture: the ghetto, the 'projects., the welfare office, the street, the prison—the heterotopically marginalized space of the urban spectacle? Spaces set for a waiting spectacle...

Ruptures/Release/Openings

16.

Lexan dividers; chain link fences; hand-cuffs; barbed wire; attack dogs; penal codes; coffles; slave codes; brands; cages: mediations within 'free' space. Crime is the vehicle by which the heterotopic space of the black is objectified and spectacularized as this evening's media spectacle. It is also the justification for twentieth-century enslavement of suspicious 'others'. Prisons are employed to tame societal 'others' thereby producing the illusion of a more secure utopia for the status quo. Yet utopia cannot exist in real space. The public spectacle is privatized in the criminal or 'other' act. Prisons are a-spectacular; the spectacular act gets you there, then you are stored and, once this 'status' is achieved (and for blacks, it is nearly inscribed), humanity is *de facto* denied. Crime and sex are titillating, every spectacle relies on either, or both. In its physical marginalization from the metropolis, the black city exists as a latent site of projection via the spectacle into the 'white' house or psyche to sate 'white' horror,

'it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me, they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me.'[48]

paranoia and desire. Western bipolar constructs: 'beauty vs. beast', 'civilized vs. primitive', 'light vs. dark', 'good vs. evil', reflect the 'rational' partitioning of the real.

TROPES/SHADOWS/PHANTOMS

The great national exhibitions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries framed dialectics as truth in the service of a modernizing consumerist culture. Today, in the service of postmodern, sanitized cities, prisons are being built to enforce these

separations. What can be said of the denial, nurtured alongside the 'American' mytho-poesis of independence and democracy, which has transformed race into poverty, poverty into criminalization and race into criminalization, through the recurrent scientific pathologization of race (whether by calibrating and comparing skull sizes or graphing physiognomic variations) or through genetic or chemical decomposition?

Black space has become the site for the latent spectacle. Categorization and classification are a means by which the private is made public. The black ghetto and the Projects represent the classification and marginalization of physical space: they have been enforced through mediation and are spectacularized as pathological. The ghetto pervades Amer-European culture. There are the non-identified ghettos of academia, of Park Avenue, of Capitol Hill. There was the infamous and original Jewish ghetto under the reign of Nazi terror. However, it is the black that has become synonymous with the urban ghetto and the ghetto that has 'blackened' urbanity.

Storage/Layering/Doubling

17.

Within the urban fabric, 'Nature' has been controlled so as to exist only in representational form. This humanized landscape is often edited out of the black city, as the black, linked to 'primitive' nature, has been 'rationally' denied 'human' nature. Early in King Kong the natives emerge from the inanimate dark to steal 'beauty' away to present her in sacrifice to Kong. As represented, the dark is a latent site of corruption. 'Darkness' is one of the forces of Nature to be resisted. More than representations of 'darkness', Kong and Hottentot embody the unbridled and

indeterminate. They are 'Nature.'

Skull Island, Kong's home, mirrors the metropolis in reverse; it is the trope of 'the dark continent.' The island interior is gated to hold in the monstrous. A great wall separates the 'primitive' interior, here a 'savage' paralysis exists which 'beauty' shatters. From the arrival on the island, the film set threatens to erupt: the natives are not docile, the camera cannot be set up, the crew is slaughtered. This is not the stasis of the jungle diorama, but, a thick and reeking prehistory. In its animation and indeterminacy, the street is, perhaps, the most 'natural' urban space. It is a place of contradictory possibilities: of convergence, of signification, of provocation, of the anonymous and accidental. Blacks inhabit the street in an intimate manner, public space is transformed by private acts and this is 'unnatural.' The normative street is enforced as the linear or 'straight' path—to stray from it is to enter black space. The tendency of the street is to defy visual incorporation; it harbors the 'dark.' The street is public, private and communal space. The street is a site of crime, paranoia and titillation.

18

The metropolis is a result of the political forces of power and representation; the powerful choose to represent dominant societal flaws as issuing from darkness, rather than from a flawed 'reason'. White utopic psychosis is played out—given spectacular form—in the deviant black.

Architecture largely fails the inhabitants of the black city: it is something to be surpassed, for the localization of poverty, which is a political maneuver, is accomplished through architecture. In the black city, the architectural client is most often not black, but a legislator; this is one manifestation of the publicization of private black lives. Architectural structuring has historically been aligned with power politics and policies. The black city has continually been uprooted and razed in the guise of

the latest urban renewal project to improve the normative quality of life. These and other factors such as integrationary remarginalization of mobile 'blacks' within the 'white' normative body, coupled with the debilitating cycle of criminalization and the influx of drugs marketed at and by those at the poverty level, cause thriving black communities to disappear, as they are ghettoized, spectacularized, 'blackened.'

19.

The spectacle is tricky. It feeds off the corporeal and transmits the surface. As a device, it provides fascination, consumption and profit, yet this heterotopically fleeting heterotopia is also utopian. Despite its negating aspects, positivist constructions continue to occur, for the spectacle when viewed through the mirror of the 'other' also serves as a temporal site for community. Although the power of the returned gaze is denied in ghettoistic proscriptions of space, creative inscriptions, though often through or around a mediator, have allowed the black to subvert (although not allude), the primacy of the Western gaze.

The black community is not housed in a material body; it is transcendent and spiritual, for it has had to transmogrify, to mutate, to be carried through hybridization and innovation and yet, go unnoticed. In superimpositional slippages, the 'Black Other', has mirrored hegemonic enframement so as to transform appearing into having and having into being and in the process has forced from Debord's 'negation of life' that is the spectacle, not only visual form, but generative forces manifested through, in and around the heterogeneity that is Space.

20.

Black separates and binds. Black is 'other' and it is Self.

1:1,250

BIOGRAPHIES

JANE M. JACOBS is a lecturer in geography and environmental studies with the University of Melbourne, Australia. She has written widely on the cultural politics of urban heritage and indigenous rights and on post-colonial geographies. She is the sole author of *Edge of Empire* (1996) and has co-authored, with Fay Gale, *Tourism and the Protection of Aboriginal Cultural Sites* (1994) and, with Ken Gelder, *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness, Modernity and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation* (1997).

KIM DOVEY is an associate professor of architecture at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He has published widely on the phenomenology of semiotics and the politics of architecture and urban design.

MATHILDE LOCHERT teaches architectural design and history and theory at the University of Melbourne and at RMIT University, Australia.

8

Authorizing Aboriginality in Architecture

INTRODUCTION

Australia is a nation founded upon the spatial violence contained within the eighteenth-century declaration of *terra nullius*—land unoccupied. In the struggle to occupy and settle the land, indigenous Australians were dispossessed, displaced and decimated. Nineteenth-century imperialism was based upon a construct of social development which positioned Europe at the endpoint of a social evolutionary teleology. The indigenous peoples of Australia were viewed as primitive residuals in a modernizing, imperial world. The lack of an identifiable architectural tradition was evidence of this 'primitive' state. Yet this lack of a formal 'architectural tradition' in Eurocentric eyes contrasts with the more recent recognition of the varied and complex spatiality of Aboriginal culture. Within that culture, the investment of spatial meaning was more often in constructions of landscape, than of shelter.

The nation's struggle to turn away from its colonial past towards a post-colonial future is currently at a crucial stage. The *terra nullius* judgement has been legally overturned, yet many gains are under threat. There are sites which speak to the quest for such a future, in particular, the many tracts of land which have been successfully reclaimed by indigenous Australians since the introduction of land-rights legislation in the 1970s. However, the benefits of these legal provisions have been experienced unevenly. In practice, it has been those Aborigines who conform to pre-existing stereotypes of 'traditionality' who have been most successful in reclaiming their land. In this sense, the land-rights provisions in Australia reflect a broader predicament: underlying many of the legal and social provisions are assumptions about what constitutes authentic Aboriginality. Even the most recent and radically reformist Native Title legislation, which has dispensed with the notion of *terra nullius*, tends to favour claims by those who can prove traditional links.

Australia's ambivalent attitude towards its post-colonial future has been exposed during this process of land reform: some of the more significant tracts of land to be claimed were only 'returned' on the condition that they be released to the

government for use as national parks. The far-north park of Kakadu was one such tract of land, with a staged handback from 1979. Kakadu is both officially recognized as Aboriginal land, but is also a national park, which is available, by law, for 'public enjoyment'. It is both a place of particular significance to local Aborigines and is also a World Heritage site. Nearly a quarter of a million visitors per year are attracted to the area's extraordinary escarpment landscapes, wetlands wildlife and Aboriginal rock art sites.

In contexts such as this—where Aboriginal lands coincide with large-scale tourism—'new' forms of architecture are emerging. At a functional level, this architecture essentially serves the needs of tourists by housing accommodation and visitor interpretation facilities. Yet it is an architecture which is also asked to represent, at some level, Aboriginal identity or Aboriginal culture. The architectural fraternity shows considerable interest in some of these buildings which are lauded for their formal expression of Aboriginal themes. These themes are framed by the media as being both sympathetic to Aboriginal interests and harbingers of an emergent 'indigenous' national architecture. In one sense, these buildings are called upon to frame spaces of cultural exchange, to 'bridge between cultures', to serve as gestures of reconciliation. In another, the architectural discourse celebrates them as examples of an emergent 'indigenous' architecture, defined by a certain creative hybridization of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal style. It is an architecture which is both understood as peculiarly 'Aboriginal' but which is also incorporated into a growing body of work which seeks a distinctive architectural expression for the nation.

Yet, at the same time, there are other buildings which are produced under similar conditions and for similar purposes which, somehow, do not 'qualify' as worthy of attention in this search. These are buildings that rest uneasily between Aboriginal 'tradition' and non-Aboriginal adjudications of 'kitsch'. These buildings are often zoomorphic, although this in itself is not the problem. Indeed, one of the most celebrated buildings in this emergent 'indigenous' national architecture is the Uluru Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre, designed by Greg Burgess in collaboration with traditional

owners, which takes the form of two snakes about to do battle with each other.

This chapter concerns itself with the complex cultural politics of this emergent 'Aboriginal' architecture with a focus on three buildings in Kakadu National Park: the Gagadju Crocodile Hotel, the Bowali Visitor Centre and the Warradjun Cultural Centre. These buildings all serve different functions within the context of the park, yet each of them speaks to the vexed intersections of Aboriginal interests, architecture and the tourist industry. Aboriginality is expressed architecturally partly through its form and partly through the symbolic associations of that form. We examine the ways in which the forms of these buildings are at once recognized as 'Aboriginal' but also placed within non-Aboriginal adjudications of aesthetic value and architectural integrity. We also examine the significance of the often unseen processes of producing these buildings: the consultations, the budgets, the design histories. Consideration of these processes opens out the questions which arise around 'Aboriginality' being expressed in architecture. In particular, it directs attention towards the important question of who authorizes the production of 'Aboriginal architecture'.

GAGADJU CROCODILE HOTEL

The Gagadju Crocodile Hotel is a 110-bed tourist hotel built in 1989 in Jabiru, a small town within Kakadu National Park. The building is a literal representation of a saltwater crocodile, about 250 metres long. The main entry is through the 'jaws' forming a port cochère with splayed steel columns as symbolic 'teeth'. The foyer is the 'head', shaped to read as a crocodile from the ground. Large vents represent 'eyes', which glow with a red light at night. The 'trunk' of the crocodile is formed by two-storey wings of hotel rooms flanking a central courtyard. The 'legs' are staircases leading from the rooms to the car park, designed as a series of 'egg nests'. The 'jaws' effect of the main entry is repeated in these 'legs' where the 'teeth' become 'claws'. A slate-coloured and crimped roofing steel wraps the building like a 'skin'.

The courtyard is landscaped accordingly. The swimming pool is the 'heart' and

the creek an 'intestine' which winds its way through the elongated courtyard. It is paved with striped tiling patterns derived from a widely recognized style of local Aboriginal art. The 'tail' of the building, housing the services, is formed of a sawtooth roof, representing the distinctive protrusions on the tails of saltwater crocodiles. Inside the hotel foyer, high-quality Aboriginal artworks hang on the walls, waiting to be sold. A large ornamental rock, chosen especially by the traditional owners, stands as the 'natural' centrepiece. Didgeridoo music plays in the bistro/bar.

The form of the crocodile is not immediately apparent at ground level. Yet the publicity material always depicts it from the air where the zoomorphic form is obvious and tourists would rarely visit without such a preconception. One brochure frames the building as a 'reptile lurking beside the banks of Lake Jabiru'. You enter the complex by the jaws, then through to an expansive marble foyer that resembles a cool green oasis. Here the 'reptile by the lake' is constructed as 'natural' rather than 'Aboriginal'. The crocodiles are a major natural feature of the park, human predators which are seen at close distance on boat tours. The film Crocodile Dundee has played a key role in framing tourist expectations of this part of Australia. The hotel symbolically enacts the thrill in this encounter with the wild—to be consumed by the predator. The metaphor of the 'oasis' also suggests an opposition to the landscape: it keys into the marketing of the international hotel as a protected space from which one can safely explore the exotic. The 'crocodile' both consumes and protects.

Yet the 'nature' suggested by the way this zoomorphic hotel is framed never quite stands alone from the Aboriginal presence in Kakadu. Another tourist

Photo credit:
Gagadju
Crocodile Hotel,
seen from the
air. Jacobs,
Dovey & Lochert

brochure promoting the hotel, headed with a reproduction of an Aboriginal painting of a crocodile, explains the significance: 'Ginga, the giant crocodile is the spirit ancestor of the Gagadju people and commands great respect in their lives.' The Gagadju Association, the body which formally represents the traditional owners of this northern part of Kakadu National Park, was the client for this building. The original land-rights claim included the Ranger Uranium Mine, which has delivered royalties back to the traditional owners, much of it invested in tourist-related developments. The Gagadju Hotel was the flagship venture of this kind. From the beginning, then, the building was asked to be more that a hotel: it had also to stand for emerging Gagadju initiatives in the tourism industry.

The saltwater crocodile is not only an important animal to local Aborigines, it is also the official logo of the Gagadju Association, appearing on letterheads, uniforms and other markers of this modern Aboriginal bureaucracy. In this sense, the crocodile image was already circulating between these poles of the traditional and the modern. In such circumstances it was entirely understandable for the new hotel venture to engage with the possibility of a crocodile form. Traditional owners had input to the emerging design, including the courtyard and car-park landscaping. There was some initial resistance from those who saw a 'spiritual' image being misused but the design proposal was formally approved at an Annual General Meeting of the Gagadju Association. The hotel remains in the ownership of the Association with the management sub-leased to a professional hotel chain.

The architects were Wilkins, Klemm and Morrison and their architects' statement published in *Architecture Australia* in 1989 argues that they perceived a challenge to create an instantly recognizable 'symbol for the Territory'. A solution was proposed using the symbolic configuration of a crocodile similar to the stylized rock art and bark paintings of the Kakadu region. Thus they base the authority for the design on Aboriginal rock art and not the client community. The hotel is from the outset 'Aboriginal' and at the same time it also aims to collapse the landscape of the 'territory' into an iconic image for the tourist industry.

The building has met with limited architectural approval. Despite a minor award for innovation, the building fails within the professional paradigm where it was (and is) regarded as commercial kitsch. From this view, it is like the roadside architecture of Venturi's 'duck' in the Australian bush. Apart from short pieces in *Architecture Australia* and *Bauwelt* the building has not appeared in the architecture media. Kitsch generally means a pretentious and shallow form of expression which aims for popular appeal, but it is a highly problematic term, generally relying on a presumed hierarchy of taste cultures. Overturning such hierarchies has long been the task of the avant-garde but no such task is taken up here. The zoomorphic conception makes the building interesting, yet it has been simplified and reduced to meet the tourist market. With its 'jaws' propped permanently open for tour buses, the building has a certain fascination. But the imagery is expressed too literally, functional relations are not resolved and the design composition and detailing are poor.

The building seamlessly conflates three meanings of the crocodile in the mind of the tourist as wild predator, as 'spiritual totem', and as landscape icon. It becomes a signifier of Aboriginality which collapses those meanings into a neat package for consumption. One consumes and is consumed by the 'crocodile' too easily: in Barthes' terms, it is too 'readerly'. It reinforces a dominant ideology about Aboriginality which operates to distance the tourist from the landscape and its lively Aboriginal traditions. Its foyer and courtyard are sectioned off as international hotel space but they are dressed up as Aboriginal. After a humid walk to the rock art, one can return to swim in the heart of the totem, the 'belly of the beast'. This is not to suggest that this would be a better building if it were stripped of Aboriginal references: it would then be reduced to a cheaply designed, modernist hotel. The failure lies not in the impulse to architectural difference, but in the failure of architectural engagement. The rock art sites are major attractions in Kakadu National Park. Some have layer upon layer of paintings, with later paintings obscuring earlier ones, one style succumbing to another. They range in age from 12 to 60,000 years. With Aboriginal rock art, the act of painting is as important as the artwork itself. Rock art paintings were never static, they

were overpainted, renovated and erased, many eroded and faded away. The architects of the Gagadju Hotel may well have taken inspiration from such artwork, but they took little of the flexibility which inheres in such practice. The hotel is a finished design that cannot be added to, functionally or semantically. It fixes meanings in a static and tectonic manner, at odds with its stated source. It lacks the fluidity and flexibility of the ongoing palimpsest.

BOWALI VISITOR CENTRE

The Bowali Visitor Centre was completed in 1994, designed by Glenn Murcutt and Troppo Architects in collaboration. It is a major addition to an existing visitor centre and park headquarters. This building was primarily intended as an environmental interpretation centre for the park and not to display or represent Aboriginal culture. Yet the programme asked for the design to incorporate an 'understanding of the cultural, environmental and management aspects of the park', a visitor centre that would 'complement' the cultural display of the Warradjun centre.

The scenic beauty of the park derives mainly from a dramatic escarpment of rock walls, extending for hundreds of kilometres, and from the profusion of wet-season wildlife. The Bowali Visitor Centre responds to this landscape with great imagination and skill. The building is linear in plan form, organized along a spine of open walkways more than 100 metres long. Major internal spaces are hung off this spine and surrounded by the circulation space as covered shelter with cross-ventilation

and views into the bushland. Most of the formal inspiration is from the Kakadu escarpment. The linearity of the plan reflects the linear rock walls and the roof form is inspired by rock shelters. The roof collects water in a huge valley gutter, a 'creek' which shoots out into waterfalls at the extremities of the building. The rain also disgorges through the buildings into a pool and down rusty steel panels in the rammed earth walls. The rainstorms here are torrential and this building offers visitors both shelter from and close proximity to such large volumes of water pouring through, off and under the building.

The success of this building stems from the formal quality of response to the landscape. However, it was 'Aboriginalized' in the architectural press even before it was built. In an interview published in *Architecture Australia* in 1992, Murcutt described the building as both 'for the Gagadju people' yet 'not a cultural centre'. He described the design primarily in terms of Aboriginal occupation:

> *The aboriginal [sic] people...lived at the escarpment. In the shelter they told their stories and passed their culture to their children, and the times spent under shelter were the times likely for initiation. The cave was approached from above or from the end, never from the front. You went to one end and called out to the guardian spirits, announcing you're there and could you please come inside. So this has a big influence on how I go about designing this building...you'll be experiencing this building essentially between the wall, as it were the escarpment, and the landscape. You'll go through the initiation which will be the core, in terms of understanding the Aboriginal's perception of the landscape...the building will read as an interpretation centre for the landscape.*

Murcutt thus throws a certain Aboriginal authority over the building as he casts its visitors on to the path of Aboriginal approach. He begins to conflate 'interpretation' with 'initiation'. For him, to 'stand under' this great slanting roof is in a sense to 'understand'. Murcutt casts himself as the mediator who brings an Aboriginal vision to the tourist.

There are several ways in which the Bowali Centre has become 'Aboriginalized'. The rammed earth wall of the central café area has been sprayed with a series of hand outlines in a literal representation of Aboriginal rock paintings. The effect is to represent the rammed earth as more than simply rockface. These hand paintings were intended by the architects to be undertaken through the authority of traditional owners. However, this did not happen and the hands were stencilled on the wall during an opening party, causing consternation in both Aborigines and architects. The toilet signage directs visitors to male and female toilets with images of 'hunter' and 'gatherer', with spear and dilly bag, respectively. Designed by the display designers, these images are cut from plates of steel and hung silhouetted against the landscape with the Aboriginal figures framed by the rusty steel plate. Unsawn timber branches are used as balustrade railings, door handles and entry portals, enforcing a tactile encounter with natural forms from the landscape. The internal pool is conceived as a 'billabong' and features a traditional Aboriginal canoe. Photographs of this canoe within the building are a very common representation of the building in the design literature. The building is publicized not just as landscape but in terms of Aboriginal occupation. A set of natural and cultural signifiers throughout the building serve to construct and complete a continuum of significations from escarpment to trees to Aborigines. Although conceived in terms of landscape, the building becomes easily enculturated and issues of authority are easily swept aside.

Traditional owners were consulted closely on the display but their participation on the building design was limited. Aborigines do not use the new building unless they work there or attend meetings. They avoid the public areas where they become subjects of the tourist gaze as cultural display: their term for it is 'feeling humbugged'.

The main Aboriginal use is a meeting room which opens to a separate verandah area and overlooks the bushland.

In 1994, this building won architectural awards for the best building in Australia, at both state and national level. Judges comments did not mention any connection with Aboriginality. The building has been published elsewhere and the Aboriginality of the oblique entry is often mentioned but it does not dominate the discourse. It is a very fine building which shows results of a good collaboration between architects, display consultants and clients. The fascination for landscape sources for architecture which Troppo and Murcutt share is very evident in the design. Yet it is a building designed neither in collaboration with, nor for the use of, Aboriginal people. The nature/culture division does not hold and it is layered with cultural signifiers.

WARRADJAN CULTURAL CENTRE

The Warradjan Cultural Centre opened in May 1995, thirteen years after the idea was first promoted by traditional owners and the director of national parks. The main impetus for the project was the traditional owners' desire to tell their story to their children and to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people visiting the park. Although the most recent of the three buildings we discuss, it was the earliest in conception. Through all stages of the project, there was a highly participatory process which was considered as 'important, if not more important than the finished product'. The 'open' time frame allowed Aboriginal protocols, including those around authorization, to be followed. Funding was from the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. While it was agreed that the Gagadju Association would manage it, the cultural centre was also very much the concern of all clans.

The process of choosing a site and designing the building progressed together. The original concept for the cultural centre included a 'Keeping Place' but the problem of keeping secret and sacred items in one clan's country created an impasse.

The project was only able to proceed once it was agreed that the Keeping Place would be treated as a separate project (which remains under discussion). The site for the centre in the Yellow Water–Cooinda area, 50 kilometres south west of Jabiru, was chosen from an aerial search. It is a geographical centre of the park and brings attention to the importance of the wetlands for the traditional owners. The cultural centre is a focal point on a number of levels.

The architects for the building were decided by tender and won by Australian Construction Services, a government agency. Design meetings included the project architect Graham Lockerby, the display designer David Lancashire, the traditional
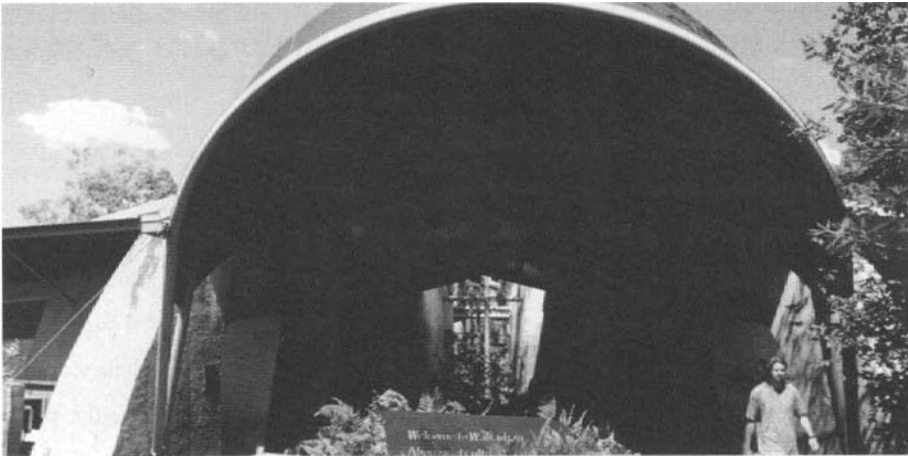
owners and park's staff. The suggestion was made that a circular building would reflect the manner in which the participants tended to sit in a circle. A response to one of these early circular designs was that it suggested a *warradjan*—a freshwater pig-nosed turtle. The *warradjan* is important as a food source, and Kakadu National Park provides its only protected habitat. The architect developed this idea and applied *warradjan*-like features to the external aspect of the building. The reception to the idea of the *warradjan* was also influenced by the success of the crocodile hotel among both tourists and traditional owners. It may also have been influenced by the use of concept models which were indispensable in communicating ideas, but which privilege an aerial

perspective of the project wherein the zoomorphic form is highly apparent.

There were some concerns with using the *warradjan*, particularly for such a public building: 'traditional owners wished to be satisfied that there was no business (i.e. religious significance) for the *warradjan*, particularly in the context of ceremonies'. These concerns were checked with people experienced in ceremonial life from different areas and were cleared. Again, this raises issues of authorization already of concern in the production/reproduction of Aboriginal art. Such authorization is not only negotiated between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants, but also between different Aboriginal communities. These negotiations take place in particularly

modern conditions such as the marketplace, or when a national park brings various and previously loosely connected groups together.

The *warradjan* is barely legible from ground level. Like the crocodile, there is a need for the mental image of the aerial perspective in order to see it as a turtle. The circular plan is formed from two 'D' shaped halves back to back. These 'also reflect[ing] the cultural imperative of the two halves of society, the Dua and Yirritja division of the cultural and natural landscapes of Bining cosmology'. The separation between the two halves forms a landscaped 'gully' between 'rock walls', evoking the nearby escarpment. These walls splay out to flank the entrance area as 'legs'. The roof,

which extends to create a verandah on all sides, represents the 'carapace' of the turtle and the 'head' is suggested by a tensioned fabric canopy over the entry foyer.

The path through the building leads visitors on a loop from the entrance through the display, which occupies one half, returning through the shop and service areas which occupy the other half. There is also a path around the exterior of the building under the verandah. The rear lobby faces the bush and provides an inviting resting place. Functionally, the building works well with the possible exception that it is very clearly a finished 'whole', making it very difficult to extend should the need arise. The building is generally disappointing in its level of detailing and in the materials used. Unlike the rammed earth walls at Bowali, these rather flat external walls are clad in compressed fibre cement with a textured finish 'to suggest both the light underbelly of a turtle and the sandstone rock walls found in the park'. These verandah walls have also been signed with ochre-coloured hand stencils. But, in this case, the authors were members of the ten clans who participated in the project.

There is a sense in which the architecture of the Warradjan Centre is not as important as the story it encloses. Traditional owners are telling their story in rather than through the building. The building holds the stories and protects the artefacts in an air-conditioned, internal and private environment, which cannot be glimpsed from outside. From our discussions with park's staff, this is a successful cultural centre from the tourist point of view: it answers their questions about Aboriginal culture. But the role the building plays in this is unclear. The state Tourism Commission had lobbied during construction to ensure that the centre: 'does not become another museum and there are "live" exhibits and displays by traditional people. It is important that the mechanism is in place for visitors to be able to have direct contact with aboriginal [sic] people through this centre'. This is a revealing quote which situates architecture as part of a 'mechanism' which places Aborigines in 'direct contact' with visitors. The intention was for arts and crafts demonstrations to be held on the surrounding verandah during peak season, making this the most likely site within the park for such contact. Yet servicing a market for 'authenticity' has certain contradictions. Given the

problem with traditional owners being 'humbugged', this seems likely to be a staged economic exchange. What is being learnt, by whom, and in whose interest, remains unclear.

This non-Aboriginal desire to fix the Aboriginal in a tourist gaze has been reflected in the architecture. This is not only on the verandah space where Aborigines have been programmed to appear, undertaking 'traditional' activities, but also in the fixity of the turtle imagery. The disappointment here is that an opening was created for a highly participative process: preconceptions were not imposed, but neither were ideas developed with sufficient creativity. The design does not fit definitions of kitsch: there is no semantic replication, yet it slides easily into such a judgement. Despite winning an award as a tourist development, the Warradjan Cultural Centre has thus far attracted no interest in the architectural press. Like the crocodile, it evokes a sense of closure. It is finally, and only, a turtle.

DISCUSSION

There is no simple way to close this discussion. It is perhaps more interesting to speculate on the questions these buildings have begun to open. Under what conditions, both architectural and managerial, are traditional owners willing to conduct forms of cultural and economic exchange with tourists? What are the prospects for an architecture which both engages with Aboriginal cosmology and constructs a place of ongoing cultural exchange, responsive to the complex cultural politics of post-colonial reconciliation?

The hotel, the visitor centre and the cultural centre: each construct certain notions of 'Aboriginality' in architecture. The 'crocodile', 'escarpment' and 'turtle' are each metaphors of 'nature' which slide seamlessly into 'culture'. This division between 'nature' and 'culture', which has been constructed into the architectural division between Bowali and Warradjan is problematic. And the contrast is further revealed in that the budget for Bowali was far more generous than that for Warradjan, a

distinction which shows in the quality of both design and construction. The lowest acceptable tender from the range of architects was enforced for Warradjan; higher bids by award-winning architects Troppo/Murcutt and Greg Burgess were rejected. By contrast, the Bowali budget was substantially increased as Troppo Murcutt were able to demonstrate the potential of the project. While the budgets are not directly comparable because these are quite differently sized buildings, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the cultural centre was the poorer cousin.

The primary traditional form of shelter in Kakadu was the rock escarpment: not a constructed space or artefact but a shallow cave. Yet this space was constructed semantically through ritual use and the various forms and layers of rock art. It was the 'rock wall as shelter' that inspired the Bowali centre. Ironically this was the one building which was not programmed to represent Aboriginality, hence the low levels of Aboriginal participation, authorization and use. Architecturally, it is the most successful.

The higher levels of Aboriginal authorization at Gagadju and Warradjan have yielded totemic imagery in the crocodile and the turtle—derived from the rock art rather than the rock wall. Yet the architects have found this engagement difficult. The literal zoomorphic figure is, in one sense, the antithesis of the abstract figure of the 'modern' which has dominated twentieth-century architectural discourse. Yet the 'totemic' architecture of Kakadu is also a modern development, conceived under modern conditions of bureaucracy, land rights and tourism.

These buildings tell a story in process, and they embody in their architecture some aspects of broader race relations in Australia. While purporting to speak with an Aboriginal voice, they often say more about the non-Aboriginal. Buildings are commissioned and designed under conditions of Aboriginal authorization, but they are also (and inevitably) constructions of the architectural and tourist markets. They can be read as both an emergence of Aboriginality in architecture, but also as an on-going appropriation of Aboriginal culture. These are liminal buildings, at once modern/postmodern, authentic/kitsch, black/white. While their forms are fixed, their

meanings are slippery. They raise more questions than we can currently answer about the possibilities for an 'Aboriginal architecture'.

1:1,250

BIOGRAPHY

ARAYA ASGEDOM was born and grew up in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia. He left for Cairo as a political refugee in 1984 and later landed in Vancouver, British Columbia, as an immigrant. He completed his architectural studies at Carlton University School of Architecture in 1987 and is currently on the faculty at Hampton University. He has held numerous workshops and seminars at different schools of architecture and was part of the team that won the First Progressive Architecture Research Annual Award in 1994.

9

THE UNSOUNDED SPACE

Frontispiece photo credit:
'Incandescent Croon',
detail of concrete wall
cast in red satin fabric.
Araya Asgedom

This page photo credit:
as above

If 'being-as-having-been' is authentic, we call it repetition.

Martin Heidegger, Being and Time

Order emanates from repetition...ritual orders both 'life' and 'art'. Since each repeated event occupies a unique place in ontological time, repetition subtends both stasis or consistency and dynamism.

Kofi Agawu, African Rhythm: a Northern Ewe Perspective

As long as subjectivity (the self) and objectivity (the world of things) are conceived as mutually exclusive, music can only refer to subjectivity, the self. Were the inner world wholly devoid of objectivity the outer world nothing but object, the music's theme could only be an inner life devoid of objectivity. But this is the crux of the matter: the existence of music puts these categories and antithesis in question.

Victor Zuckerkandl, Man the Musician

If there is a lesson in the broad shape of the circulation of cultures, it is surely that we are already contaminated by each other, that there is no longer a fully autochthnous echt-African culture awaiting our salvage by our artists (just as there is, of course, no American culture without African roots). And there is a clear sense in some post-colonial writing that the postulation of a unitary Africa over against a monolithic West—the binarism of the Self and Other—is the last of the shibboleths of the modernisers that we must learn to live without.

KwameAnthony Appiah

THE CONTAMINATED SPACE

One of the most fashionable items that a young person could wear in revolutionary Ethopia was *berebaso*, a sandal made from used tires. Geja Sefer, my neighborhood, was not far from the edges of the central market, known as *merkato*—from the Latin *mercatus*, named by the generals of the Italian army (who, by the way, took an interest in the planning of several cities during their 1935–39 invasion of the country)—where such items and countless others were traded under open skies or improvised shade. I used to walk for about forty-five minutes to the crowded shoe market and get myself a pair of these used-tire sandals. The material for the sandals was made for a strength and friction beyond the human foot, which, incidentally, gives the pair a feet-life of their own. A sturdy bottom, with two wide laces—the threads still visible from the cross-section of the tire—form an 'X' over the foot, while another, equally wide lace hugs the foot just below the Achilles tendon. Perhaps wearing a used-tire sandal was an unconscious identification with the peasant, on whose behalf the young of Ethiopia called for the return of the land to the tiller? The sandal was ridiculously affordable. What was fashionable to me (though with a tinge of class consciousness) was of course necessary to the urban and rural poor. In time, its appeal wore out, the youngster matured and went onto other things. Except for two events: some two decades after what I might call my 'used-tire sandal period', I came upon Kwame Anthony Appiah's account of James Baldwin's choice of *Yoruba Man With a Bicycle*, a sculpture who 'is very jaunty, very authoritative [whose] errand might prove to be impossible, [yet] grounded in immediate reality by the bicycle.'[1] Appiah extends Baldwin's assessment by saying that the sculpture 'is produced by someone who does not care that the bicycle is the white man's invention—it [the sculpture] is not there to be an Other to the Yoruba self.'[2]

The other event, Steven Jay Gould's article *Creating the Creators*, is a meditation on Darwin's (or our interpretation of Darwin's thoughts) on evolutionary process. Gould claims that, unlike that which we are led to believe (i.e. evolution's work as the

ever-refining of oneself and one's work on the road to progress), evolution is characterized by unpredictability and change, which could not have been imagined by say, the original event, production or performance. Gould puts the matter this way:

> Precise [evolutionary] adaptation, with each part finely honed to perform a definite function in an optimal way, can only lead to blind alleys, dead ends, and extinction. In our world of radically and unpredictably changing environments, an evolutionary potential for creative response requires that organisms possess an opposite set of attributes usually devalued in our culture: flexibility, not admirable precision.[3]

The common thread that I want to draw out of *Yoruba Man* and the used-tire sandal example is the profound necessity of improvisation in the conduct of our lives and its indispensability when it comes to questions of creative cultural productions, in particular. Whether it is the radical shift from a used Goodyear or Michelin tire into a sandal, or the transformation of the traditional Yoruba person into what James Baldwin has characterized as a 'sort of polyglot...on his way to confront the city' where 'nothing looks like it fits him too well',[4] we are witnessing a strategy—a way of beholding the lived world, and a predisposition to cultural artifacts whose language and meaning arise out of improvisation. The Michelin of 'admirable precision' to borrow Gould's phrase, meets the radical imagination of the sandalmaker—and the human gestures skillfully directing the knife's blade to turn this potentially disposable product of scientific culture into a ubiquitous, yet linguistically and culturally charged commodity. In evolutionary lingua, the improvisation of the sandalmaker is understood as a 'quirky shift and latent potential'.[5] Original purpose, utility and meaning are signified upon by the radical
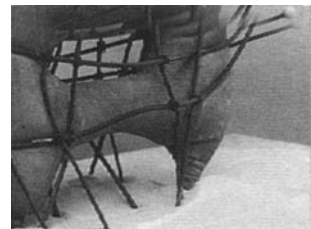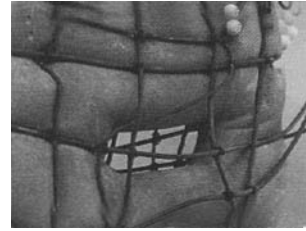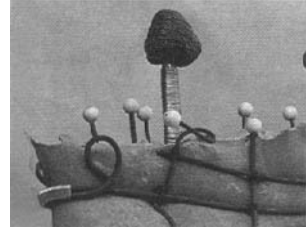
shift of imagination that the sandalmaker brings to the nature and assigned meaning of of tires. Improvisation thrives within the space of contamination, the dynamic interaction that rises out of formal (and presently) separated spheres.

> *The outstanding fact of the twentieth century European culture is its ongoing reconciliation with black culture. The mystery may be that it took so long to discern the elements of black culture already there in latent form and to realise that the separation between cultures was perhaps all along not one of nature, but one of force.*
>
> *James A. Snead, Repetition as a Figure of Black Culture*

Improvisations of this kind make sense when one places these and other cultural products of the contaminated space within a field of repetition. Again, in the case of repetition, I am not making a case for identical repetition. Rather, I am concerned with what Amiri Baraka has called 'the changing same'[6] that sense of belonging to two realms, of tradition and innovation; of affirming one's creative lineage, but also knowing that traditions are the inventions of consensus.

I will further interpret the notion of non-objectivity and 'deep' meaning by looking at polyphony, whose practice is found mainly in musical productions, but whose lessons might help us envision (or sound) potential positions within architectural thought. For the moment, however, let me mention that the condition of operating from within two or more cultures, or essentially moving in the contaminated space (used-tire/sandal; bicycle/Yoruba man; city/rural; scientific/non-scientific; literate/oral) and thus engendering more than a binary consciousness has been foreshadowed (or foresounded) by the polyphonic/polyrhythmic music of Africa.

Thus there are essentially three (architectural) phenomena which support the notion of the contaminated space: improvisation, repetition and polyphony/polyrhythmy. The story that follows, then, is the working out of these questions from a number of different directions. Our African experiences are as polyglot as Yoruba Man, as radically transformed as the used-tire sandal, as polyphonic

and polyrhythmic as traditional and contemporary music.

One is tantalizingly humbled by Appiah's observation that the Yoruba Man sculpture, and by extension a substantial measure of Africa's art, 'is not there to be an Other to the Yoruba [African] self...'.[7] Nor is the used-tire sandal endowed by the makers and traders of it with the kind of meaning that I claim for it here. It works both ways. The inescapable condition is that the African, as well as the Westerner, is living in a culturally and artistically contaminated space. To further complicate things, we are educated in the ocular language of Western architecture, which raises two questions: one, to what extent do we need the library of Western architecture, and two, how do we build a truly polyphonic African library which does not reduce the architectures of Africans either to a pre-colonial status, or to the developmental 'box'? These are large questions which cannot be dealt with adequately solely within the context of this essay. But they are questions which have provoked and which continue to provoke this architect, who cares for the contaminated space. This essay reflects my own contaminated space: my African experiences, my major disciplinary training whose historical and theoretical loci are of European origin, and the affecting presence of African and African–American sonorous cultures. In recognizing these crossings, I hope to make a case for an architecture which will be informed by embodied, productive vision as well as the sonorous space of the audible.

BEATS OF SILENCE

'The most important issues of improvisation in African musical idioms', John Chernoff writes, 'are matters of repetition and change.'[8] As a framework through which notions of innovation and change are made possible, repetition is characterized by the following set of conditions:

    (1) repetition provides a continuous beat;

    (2) by providing a stable basis of rhythmic response, repetition clarifies changing rhythms;

(3) repetition brings out rhythmic tension between two or more rhythms;

(4) repetition is a key factor which focuses the organization of rhythms in an ensemble;

(5) repetition locks a rhythm and makes possible the occurrence of dynamic and open structure.[9]

Paraphrasing the above five points, one arrives at a working definition of this phenomenon: in providing a stable chorus of beats and organizing rhythms into an ensemble, repetition produces tension and clarification between rhythms while allowing for the emergence of dynamic and open structures. Allow me to expand on what this definition might suggest. The provision of a stable chorus of beats enables the building of underlying structures, a sort of rhythmic grid of reference into which one weaves other possibilities. The dimensions of this underlying structure infuse, as Kofi Agawu has demonstrated, the various individual and collective strands of a community from its language to its song, from its drumming and dance, to its musical
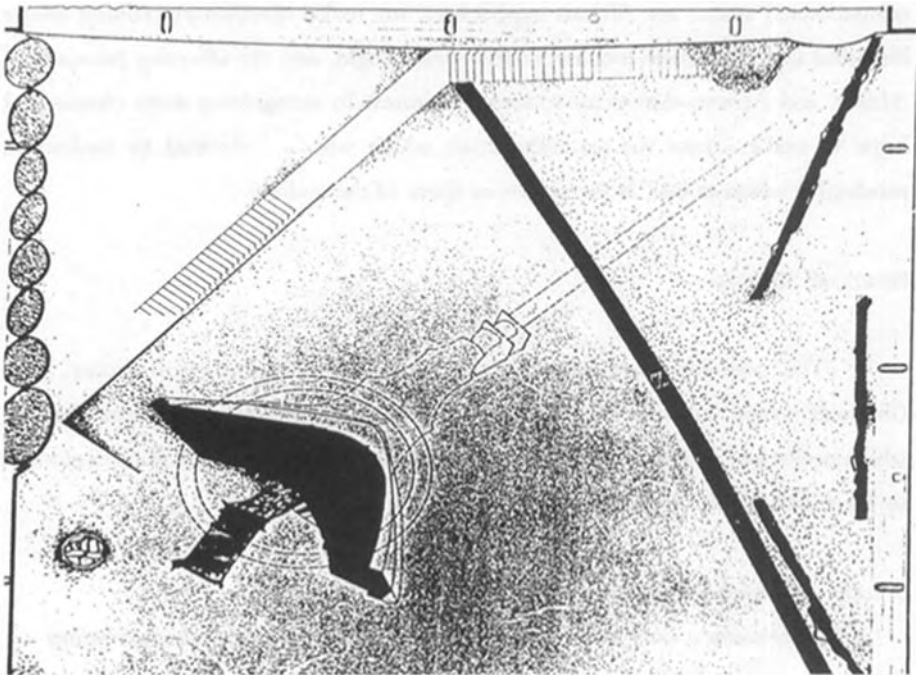
Illustration credit
'Theatre of Forces' drawing, by Araya Asgedom.

and folk-tale performances.[10] In a society where there is a profound sensibility of rhythmic dimensions to life, labour and love, the necessity of such an underlying structure cannot be diminished. It is the plane of reference, the field where possibilities for a serious play of difference are organized. Without the organization of a structure that allows for repetition, stasis or consistency, the possibility of imagining and thus recognizing dynamic events will be diminished. The power of rhythmic difference can only be felt fully when there is a structured background beat. Agawu rightly points out that 'the overriding characteristic of repetition is a form of unity produced by the convergence, or at least mutual existence, of certain opposed tendencies.'[11] The anticipation or invitation of opposition within an organized rhythmic structure is best understood in light of the principle of cross-rhythming. In the performance of African traditional drumming, the lead drummer is usually seen as the organizer of rhythms. His drumming points to the opening where other drummers may enter or leave a particular performance. The openings made possible by the lead drummer allow other rhythms to cut across different beats. From this point of view, 'the African drummer concerns himself as much with the notes he does not play as with the accents he delivers.'[12] This is to say that silence is as much a part of the music as the sounded beat—having a structured beat thus allows for dynamic relationships and open structures.

What we have come across in this characterization of African musical idioms is a focused, structured and important relationship between the background beats and solos and the space created by the opening of the background to give voice to the solo drum. In this sense we have been aware of music as only one part of the sonorous consciousness which enables the emergence of other possible voices. Recent scholarship has focused far wider attention on the presence of rhythmic consciousness, not only in musical events and productions, but also in how the ordered rituals of daily life are connected by what the scholarship names as the 'soundscape'. Kofi Agawu's work on rhythm's role in Northern Ewe, Ghana, is a good starting point for the discussion of such issues.

The Gesture of Sound

Northern Ewes find meaning and order in daily 'rhythmic exertions', where the rhythms of the day and night are divided into seven periods: dawn, morning, afternoon, late afternoon, evening, night, and middle of night. The day begins with the cock's predawn crow and proceeds to the singing, by devout Christians of 'morning devotional' accompanied by drums, rattles, bells and castanets in the local church. The rolling of household mats ushers in the morning chores, where after breakfast 'the rhythms of grinding, pounding, chopping, and fanning combine to define one large, staggered pulse,' and where sometimes, walking in the rural neighborhoods, according to Agawu, 'you can tell what is being cooked from how the pounding sounds.' Market days offer 'the scene of the greatest rhythmic expression'.[13] Because of this profusely rhythmic expression, where life in all its guises unfolds in both motivated and unmotivated ritual, it is necessary that the notion of 'repetition' provides a key to understanding [these] rituals.[14] This is not to say that Northern Ewes do not invite change, rather it means that change is always understood within the context of the ritualized rhythms of their society, where repetition provides 'a forum for the creative interpretation and reinterpretation of culture.' Given a set of cultural events, providing a creative interpretation (or as Northern Ewes would say) 'to do things according to today's open eyes'[15] means that one is confronted with both anticipated and unanticipated conditions of relations. To resolve the conflict of interpretation inherent in a given condition calls for improvisation. Agawu gives us a good example of such improvisation in the construction of form in a song that exploits repetition as a device for change.

A singer–composer of the village of Mátse, Adjei Komi, performs songs during funerals and wakes, as well as providing inspirational songs for those going into battle, or simply for entertainment. He relies, for his improvisations, on a 'stock of verbal and musical phrases which he arranges in a particular order to fit a particular performance context.'[16] We might read 'stock' song material as being the formal and informal

structures of understanding that Adjei Komi shares with his cultural and social milieu. The examples (see Appendix A) below were 'improvised one afternoon in September of 1986', and in addition, he 'relies...on the contour of speech tones and the rhythm of individual words.'[17]

While these two songs provide us with particular examples of the role that repetition plays in the construction of an artistic form (and moreover recognize the inseparability of repetition from improvisation), we can further examine the context of such a song by looking at the larger cultural framework of Northern Ewe rhythmic organization. The two examples are part of a wider rhythmic structure that, according to Agawu, 'can be analyzed either "two-dimensionally" as a succession of beats or groups of beats, or "three-dimensionally" as the projections of a two-dimensional process into gestural space.' The problem—one which Agawu first formulates and then advances its potential resolution—is that as soon as we begin to speak of musical structures, we are entangled with metaphorical expressions which can only be accessed through concepts, and these concepts in turn are available only through language. In the end our analysis is 'trapped in...metaphorical space.' Agawu recommends that if we take this metaphorical or 'governing space' not as a 'constraint but as an enabling condition', then one can construct 'degrees of semiotic transfer across the realms of symbolic activity'[18] which, as I have said, exists in the Northern Ewe's rhythmic organization of daily activities or performances.

For Agawu, the primordial rhythmic event is encapsulated in gesture. Gesture 'is the physical manifestation of a more fundamental communicative urge....[and because of its temporal nature] when deployed within a clearly defined context, its communicative potential and intention cannot be doubted.'[19] Accordingly Agawu's construction of a conceptual model that would help make the dynamic relationship between the various elements of Northern Ewe rhythmic expression begins with gesture as the primordial rhythmic event and concludes with dance or stylized gesture. In this model, the spoken word is a unit of normal, hierarchically ordered language with attributes of tone (pitch) and rhythm. It takes place within a two-dimensional

space, and generates vocal music. Vocal music (song), in its autonomous existence as a self-regulating semiotic system, manifests two rhythms: free rhythm which is unmeasured and recitative-like, more accurately described as 'speech rhythm', while strict rhythm is measured and 'song-like' and organized into recurring groups

describable with respect to meter.[20]

     Instrumental music takes over the rhythmic and tonal attributes of song but leaves behind the verbal component. Like vocal music instrumental music is made up of free rhythms, where the rhythms and tonal patterns of performed speech or oration (when drums are used as speech surrogates) are replicated. Strict rhythm prevails when

its meters are structured. Instrumental music has the capacity to be performed as an autonomous creative process. Dance music is a form of stylized gesture and is characterized by its sympathetic movement to instrumental music.[21] The conclusions that Agawu draws from the five generative stages articulated in the model are that:

(1) Rhythmic expression originates in gesture, terminates in stylized gestures and starts anew.

(2) Instrumental drumming (music) has its origins in language and gesture.

(3) The true meaning of dance emerges only from a consideration of its linguistic bases.

(4) Language and gesture are the bases of rhythmic expression.

(5) The generative model has synchronic as well as diachronic aspects.

The first allows the freezing of a slice of Ewe expressive culture for observation while the latter is the generation of successive stages by previous ones. The diachronicity of the expressions in the model means that the generation is also a process that can be reversed, not only from the end, that is from the stylized gesture back to the first stage gesture, but from any one of the intermediate stages, going back and forth between the others. The dynamic nature of rhythmic expression is a reflection of how easily our bodies—through gestural articulation—move from speech to music, from dance to song, from rhythmic walking to rhythmic speech.[22]

We have seen in the two song examples by Adjei Komi that repetition in Northern Ewe community plays a very significant binding force. But the other concomitant role that repetition plays is the stress on improvisation, the creative adaptability that accompanies, on the one hand, the successive lines or meters of a song (the shift in the sequence and content shown in the paradigmatic arrangement of Adjei Komi's songs), and on the other hand, the dynamic shift of the rhythmic event, as seen from the rhythmic expression model—from one stage to another, sometimes in a linear fashion but at other times breaking away from this sequence. We are also reminded how these rhythmic events (and their forms) are fundamentally ritualized events. As ritual events, their grid of expression is heavily ordered. Rituals, however

they are transformed, always speak of time past, present and future. For Northern Ewes, the past, as recreated in ritual, gives them 'assurance of the known and the familiar'; as a ritual that sheds light on the present, it 'enables them to take stock of what has been achieved'; and as an indication of future possibilities it 'provides a forum for creative interpretation and reinterpretation of culture.' Embedded within this interpretation of culture is that order 'emanates from repetition [and that] since each repeated event occupies a unique place in ontological time, repetition subtends both stasis or consistency and dynamism.'[23] In other words, repetition overrides stagnation and aspires towards change and improvisation. Transformation and repetition are close to each other to the extent that a viable order emerges out of repetition, and that it is in repetition that we apprehend improvisation. What is opened at this moment is the uniqueness of the temporality of repetition, its place in the existential temporality of the rhythmic individual and society. Does participating in the past through ritual entail that repetition is solely a re-enactment of past events? Yes, in the sense that we are taking part in events, actions and rituals that have been part of our world prior to our coming on to the event's stage. In this we are grafting ourselves on the continuous chain that was made up by our ancestors. In the grafting on to our rituals to ancestral spaces we often believe that we are reliving, replaying and recelebrating the lived times and celebrated events of our past. From this point of view we hold on to realized time at the expense of potentiality (the possible lives, the possible plays, the possible celebrations) of those events that we try to enact in the ritualized events. Having broached the possibility of a potential past—as opposed to the realized past—which we do not usually associate with our ritualized actions and thoughts—does this mean that we might approach time's possibilities in a different way? In repeating the past, even the 'usable past', are we just recalling a by-gone event, or are we involved in an interpretation of the past within our present frames?

THE DESTINY OF REPETITION

It is imperative that we ask what kind of temporality is involved when we, along with Kofi Agawu, say that 'each repeated event occupies a unique place in ontological time [and that] repetition subtends both stasis or consistency and dynamism.' The consistency of things known is joined together with the dynamism of things hoped for. The assurance of familiar events travels together with movement of the future. The coming together of dynamic and static events is located in the now, where we are obliged to act—in the present. Does this mean that the past, present and future have not only a potential, but also a concrete manifestation of being collapsed in this moment? Or does the fact that repetition subtends both stasis and dynamism point to the existence of two temporal frames, one of which might be called 'clock' time and the other something that is very basic in its fundamental unity, or may even lie outside of 'clock' time? Martin Heidegger's contribution to the understanding of the question of temporality invites another reading of repetition which I believe expands our notion of the past. Heidegger's great insight is that our relationship with the past is the retrieving of 'former possibilities and handing them down to the present.'[24] This present in its 'authentic' form is also the 'moment of vision...an ecstatic moment...with which *Dasein* is carried away to whatever possibilities and circumstances are encountered in the Situation as possible objects of concern'.[25] This ecstatic 'moment of vision', I would argue, is the moment of improvisation, where former possibilities of ancestral models are extended, interpreted and reinterpreted in the present to be projected as understanding in the future. If, in temporality, the past, present and future have characters of being fundamentally united, how do we understand repetition? One of the fundamental aspects of repetition after all is the re-enacting of the 'the known and the familiar' through rituals. How do we interpret our understanding of repetition as our joining of the soundscape of our ancestors? And if repetition is also marked by change, conflict and dynamism, what is the significance of it in the light of temporality where the past and the future are already prefigured in the *en*-presenting, the Heideggerian 'now'?

To explore these questions, we need to examine Heidegger's insights into the

nature of temporality, understood as an existential temporality. Let me invoke Heidegger's definition of what constitutes present, past and future. The primary concept of the future is our 'peculiar capacity to be...[that is] to be expectant.' In expecting, we are ahead of ourselves, and from this point that is ahead of ourselves, we come back to ourselves. This 'coming towards itself [the *Dasein*]...from one's most peculiar possibility, a coming-toward which is implicit in the *Dasein*'s existence and of which all expecting is a specific mode, is the primary concept of the future.'[26] The past, or *having-been*-ness, is characterized by modes of 'retaining, forgetting, repressing, and suppressing.' Heidegger is emphatic about our mistaken attitude that the past is something of a by-gone:

> *That which we are as having-been [past] has not gone by, passed away, in the sense in which we say that we could shuffle off our past like a garment. The Dasein can as little get rid of its [past as] bygone-ness as escape its death. In every sense and every case everything we have been is an essential determination of our existence....I myself am my own having-been-ness...it [Dasein] can be as having-been only as it exists.*[27]

Existentially, the present is not the same as presence or as extantness. We are surrounded, as Beings, by other beings of the world. The world that is extant around us is the furniture of our existence. Only as *en*-presenting, 'the comportment of myself toward... something present [at hand] which is in my present', do I make my presence as *en*-presencing.

Heidegger's conclusion is that 'the future, the past [*having-been*-ness] and present, in a more original (existential) sense...are employing these three determinations in a signification that lies in advance of common time.' Here is the crucial difference between, on the one hand, the existential temporality of the future as *capacity-to-be*, the past as *having-been*-ness, and the present as *en*-presence and, on the other hand, common time, as then, *at-the-time*, and present respectively. 'The latter time determinations', Heidegger says, 'are what they are only by originating in temporality',

which is the former. The common times are the expressions of temporality. 'Expecting, the future, retaining the past, and *en*-presenting the present—all of these express themselves by means of the now, then, and *at-the-time*.'[28] The fundamental constitution of temporality, then, is that 'the future lies in *coming-toward-oneself*; that the past [*having–been-ness*] lies in *going-back-to*; and that of the present in *staying-with, dwelling-with, being-with*.'[29] But these constituents of temporality seem to stand apart as we just put them. Not so. Their coming together as belonging in an original temporal moment is in the condition where *Dasein* is determined by the '*toward, back-to,* and *with*' of temporality, and that this temporality as the originator of future, past and present (understood as common time) 'stands outside itself....[and] is carried away within itself'.[30]

What does the following phrase mean—that temporality 'stands outside itself...[and] is carried away within itself'? 'As future, the *Dasein* is carried away to its past [*has-been*] *capacity-to-be*; as past [*having-been*], it is carried away to its *having-been*-ness; and as *en*-presenting, it is carried away to some other being or beings. Temporality, as the unity of future, past and present does not carry the *Dasein* away—just at times and occasionally. Instead, as temporality, it is itself the original *outside-itself*.' This *outside-itself-*ness of temporality we call *ekstatikon*, or the 'ecstatic character of time.'[31] In calling the future, past and present 'the three ecstases of temporality', and in their 'belong[ing] together intrinsically with co-equal originality,' Heidegger opens another possibility where we might consider the repetition of the past [of *having-been*-ness], of participating in events that have been part of our ancestral horizon as belonging with co-equal originality with the present and the future. For the moment let us recall Agawu's definition of repetition: 'repetition subtends both stasis or consistency and dynamism'; or his identification that 'the overriding characteristic order that grows out of repetition is a form of unity produced by the convergence, or at least mutual existence, of certain opposed tendencies.' Let us remember that Adjei Komi, in performing his songs 'relies on a stock of verbal phrases' on his way to improvisation through repetition. Let us heed John Chernoff's remark that 'the most important issues of

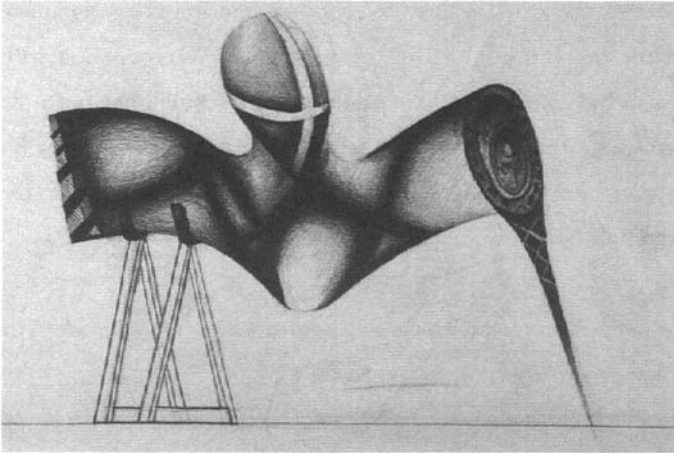improvisation in African musical idioms, are matters of repetition and change.'

I would like to sketch a mutual theoretical signifyin(g) between what Heidegger has called 'the moment of vision' and what I will name as the 'moment of hearkening'—that moment of attentive listening that is one of the preconditions of improvisation in jazz music. What I mean by a 'moment of attentive listening' is not only the hearkening that is required of us as everyday listeners, but that which also arises out of the hearkening of the moment of attentive and creative musical production. I will cite Heidegger's 'moment of vision' from *Being and Time* in order to provide a background 'beat' within which we might thread our understanding of jazz music's 'moment of hearkening'. That 'present' which is held in authentic temporality (and which thus is authentic itself), we call the 'moment of vision'. This term must be understood in the active sense of an ecstasis. It means the resolute rapture with which *Dasein* is carried away to whatever possibilities and circumstances are encountered in the Situation as possible objects of concern, but is also a rapture which is held in resoluteness. The moment of vision is a phenomenon which in principle cannot be clarified in terms of the 'now'. The 'now' is a temporal phenomenon which belongs to time as *within-time*-ness: the 'now' in which something arises, passes away or is *present-at-hand*. 'In the moment of vision' nothing can occur but as an authentic present or *waiting-towards*, the moment of vision permits us to encounter for the first time what can be 'in a time' as *ready-to-hand* or *present-at-hand*.[32]

The 'eternal cycle' between improvisation and precomposition is that journey between ancestral sites of musical productions and the possibilities in the moment of creation. Typically, jazz musicians define improvisation in two ways. Firstly, it is the 'focus on the product's precise relationship to the original models that inspired them'. The musician approaches the original musical models as 'theoretical materials and vocabulary patterns'. Secondly, it is the coming together of 'dynamic conditions and processes underlying the transformation [of the original model's theoretical and vocabulary patterns] and creation'[33] of new ideas and performances.

In establishing a precise relationship between the original models and

improvisation, the improvisor is thrown in the path of repetition and revision where the past [having-been-ness] is brought forward (retrieved) to the present—not for its past material but for its possibilities. In the dynamic conditions and processes that the improvisor engenders within a musical performance, the improvisor is 'carried away to whatever possibilities and circumstances are encountered in the Situation as possible objects of concern'. The performative Situation, having been informed by the theoretical possibilities of the past, leads to 'developing personal sounds, expanding repertories, creating melodic ideas, and experimenting with varied applications in solo constructions, [where] improvisers live at the threshold of new possibilities for invention, possibilities that e x p a n d dramatically with every discovery.'[34] The moment of discovery and expansion of new possibilities arising out of the mastery of the potentials of *having-been*-ness is pushed towards a zone of vision that 'permits us to encounter for the first-time what can be "in a time" a *ready-to-hand* or *present-at-hand*.' What is crucial in this 'moment of hearkening' is the encounter for the first time with *what can be*. When I say 'for the first time', I do not mean the kind of record-breaking feat associated with a number or certain quantity, but rather the discovery and realization of the potential, on the one hand, of ancestral phrases, licks, ideas and arrangements, and on the other hand, of the possibilities of that discovery as it flourishes in the improvisor's current interpretation. This *can-be-ness* in the first-time encounter is 'the unpredictable quality of the band's

musical negotiations.' And as 'a fundamental ingredient in every performance', this 'moment of hearkening' is 'the product of all that players have experienced' and where 'musical decisions that take place during improvisations are made instantly.'[35] This action of making decisions does not depend on the 'making something out of nothing' (that popular perception of improvisation), but is in fact the reliance 'on thinkers having absorbed a broad base of musical knowledge, including myriad conventions that contribute to formulating ideas logically, cogently, and expressively.'[36]

On the one side, there exist conventions and on the other, free formulations of musical ideas whose 'moment of vision' and 'moment of hearkening' is always informed by the formal possibilities presented by houses of traditions. This is to say that there are conversations (or as musicians prefer to say, 'musical conversations'), between the past and the present, but also in the moment of improvisation with various other sources who will contribute to the production. In forming the outcome of a particular performance, Paul Berliner tells us that 'the improvisor enters [in musical conversation] on many different levels simultaneously.' Some of the constituents of these multiple conversations that we read from Berliner are:

(1) *The conversation with the underlying composition—conversing with its formal features—the player converses with predecessors within the jazz tradition;*

(2) *A conversation with self where the inner dialogue by which individual band members develop the logic of their own specific parts;*

(3) *The player converses with the instrument, to the extent to which expression is shaped by idiomatic features of playing technique, or by idiosyncratic feature of an instrument's responsiveness;*

(4) *The musician also enters into a personal historical conversation where the player's unfolding ideas grow, moment by moment, out of a cumulative lifetime of performance and musical thinking;*

(5) *The conversation among band members constitutes another group conversation, and finally;*

(6) *The conversation that takes place between the audience and the individual as well as the group*

of improvisors.[37]

If all these musical conversations lead to a successful interpretation of musical ideas through the masterful workings of improvisation, then, an 'extraordinarily transcendental experience takes place in which the players feel, if only momentarily, "in touch with the big picture" where their "moment of hearkening" becomes "timeless, peaceful, yet energizing and euphoric"'.[38]

The moment of timeless production and being engulfed by its energy, I suggest, is that kind of time which Heidegger has called the 'moment of vision', that 'phenomenon which, in principle, cannot be clarified in terms of the 'now', but is "an understanding...existing in the *potentiality-for-Being*"' whose temporalization 'is determined with equal primordiality by having-been and by the present.'[39] We have also said that this 'moment of hearkening', in being 'carried away to whatever possibilities and circumstances that are encountered in the Situation as possible objects of concern', and in its projection of its potentials, is intimately tied with ancestral models, and arises out of the mastery of the model's conventions. The 'moment of hearkening' and above all the mastery of conventions takes place through repetition. But does this mean that repetition is the re-enactment of past conventions? How can one avoid repeating the past in repetition?

The answer might lie in our consideration of repetition not as the inheritance of the actual past, but as a way of seeking the potentialities of the past. Heidegger suggests that we understand repetition in the following terms:

> *arising, as it does, from a resolute projection of oneself, repetition does not let itself be persuaded of something by what is 'past', just in order that this, as something which was formerly actual, may recur. Rather, repetition makes a reciprocative rejoinder to the possibility of that existence which has-been-there. But when such a rejoinder is made to this possibility in a resolution, it is made in a moment of vision.*[40]

In the reciprocative rejoinder that one proffers to the past, we reaffirm that the improvisor is seeking not to repeat the past, but to extend its possibilities. The improvisor, in repeating the work of ancestral models, is not replicating the past, but affirming its potential. With their unique temporal character which subtends the static and the dynamic, and arising out of moments of repetition, the 'moment of vision' and the 'moment of hearkening' are the deep spaces of improvisation for the transformations of creative works.
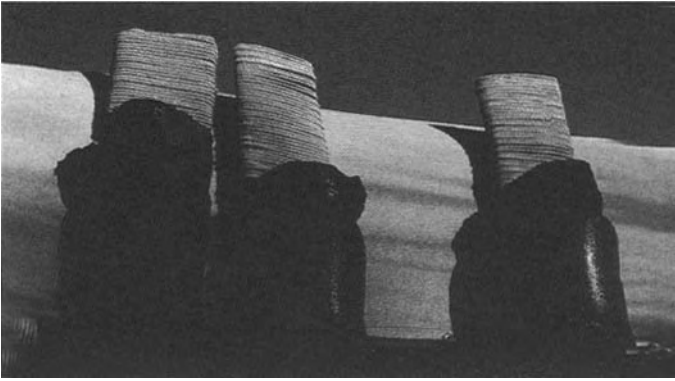
THE AUDIBLE SPATIALITY OF HOMO MUSICUS

In that society where music cannot be thought of as separate from words, where poets chanted and sung their verses, the father of Western philosophy, Socrates, finds himself desiring one thing: to make music. This twinge of conscience, this hesitation as to whether one has lived one's life to the fullest, makes itself felt as Socrates spends the last days of his condemned life in the confines of a prison cell. His friends ask him about a current rumour in Athens: that he has turned his great intellectual power to the composition of verses. Throughout his life, Socrates confesses, he had been instructed through dreams to 'cultivate and make music'.[41]

The great dialogues of Socrates, the logic of arguments that he taught his

Athenian students, and for which he stood accused and condemned to die by poison, were not enough for the philosopher. To the end, he remained a scrupulous philosopher. In his last hours, he realized that his life-long quest of logical reasoning alone had failed to provide insight into the reasons of the heart. He turns to a dream, to a series of 'intimations in dreams' to reason whether he has not fulfilled one significant part of being a human: that of being a *homo musicus*. His words should have been chanted and sung. He wanted to explore, at long last, the validity of constructing a sonorous being alongside the logical man. Victor Zuckerkandl, the philosopher of music, takes this occasion of Socratic doubt as a metaphor for Western man's repression of his musicality, his sonority. Among the various issues that Zuckerkandl explores, in his remarkable two-volume work, is the inclusion of what he called 'the order of auditory space' as being the counterpart of the order of visual–geometrico haptic space. In Zuckerkandl's account, music is an avenue to a non-conceptual, non-referential mode of knowing the external world, and we cannot afford not to allow musicality to affect our predilection for guidance by scientific conceptions of space. The order of auditory space emerging out of the tones themselves and progressing to form chords finds its fullest expression in the ensemble. The simultaneous motion of tones in the ensemble, in the polyphony, according to Zuckerkandl, is the greatest demonstration of the order of the audible space.
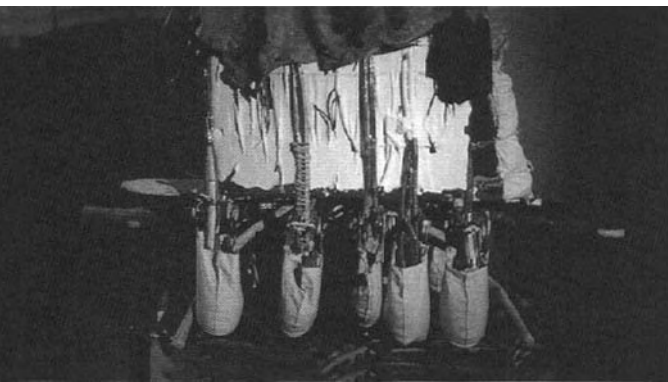
Though spoken from within European musical thought, polyphony is also one of the major outcomes of musical organization in the music of sub-Saharan Africa. Polyphony, according to Simha Arom's study of Central African Republic music, is a procedure that has four basic elements to it: first, it is 'multi-part, i.e. made up of several (at least two) melodic or rhythmic lines that are different and superimposed;'

second, it is 'simultaneous,' that is, it happens in the same space and time; third, 'heterorhythmic,' where there is 'rhythmic articulation [that] is different for each separate part'; and fourth, the parts of the music are 'non-parallel, because of the independent development of each part vis-a-vis the others, where both contrary or divergent movements occur, as opposed to parallel movements.'[42] These four elements, then, are the constituents of the auditory space whose ramifications we would like to understand for architectural thought.

One of the best examples of a polyphonic music, or as Zuckerkandl puts it, 'a type, with almost epigrammatic pointedness, [which] exemplifies how, when tones sound, we enter a different order in the "whence of encounter and the where of relation"', is the quartet in Act II of Verdi's *Othello*. The point with which Verdi assembles the multiple voices of Desdemona, Iago, Othello and Emilia through the 'return of chaos' symbolized by the handkerchief which is the vehicle of their tangled web of love, friendship, power and betrayal. Shakespeare composes his literary spaces and dialogues in 'the scene between Desdemona and Othello, the conversation between Emilia and Iago, which Verdi has brought together.' The literary form itself obliges the writer to follow the linear unfolding of events. In Verdi's production 'the four voices are to sound simultaneously; the four melodic lines are to be woven together into one texture.' Verdi's intention, though arising out of the articulated and clear voices of the four characters 'each obeying its own urgency', is the 'combination of the lines, the tonal unity that proceeds from their union [which makes possible] what is happening between these people and to them, what is about them and above them.'[43] Verdi makes the actors not speak but sing 'the single fate twisted from four life threads'. Polyphony makes the efficacy of simultaneous singing, simultaneous music making, simultaneous musical conversations preferable to simultaneous speech. For in simultaneous speech, what comes out is disorder—the nonsense, of four voices. We will make perfect sense out of the individual speeches, but only as long as they remain

separate. The space of the four voices speaking simultaneously, though belonging to the world of the auditory, 'does not [yet] share in the specific order of the auditory space'.[44] They can stand and make sense individually, but they will not be meaningful once the voices are spoken simultaneously. The case changes, dramatically, when the voices stop speaking and begin singing.

The order of auditory space for the four singing voices is found not in their separate but in their unified states. A unified state does not imply that the four voices (actors) sing in the same tone. Their tones may be different, but their happening together is what makes the order of the polyphonic space. In other words, it is the presentation of four different positions, four different interpretations of a given condition, but sounded in simultaneous space and time, and producing the polyphonic ensemble that speaks of a different order of space. Seen from here, might we consider that Socrates's point was that he did not fully grasp the meaning of the external world, the objectivity of the world through the speech of philosophy? Could his dialogues, for all their sophistication in logical constructions of 'why things are the way they are' have been sorely tested by the return of the dream that beseeched him all along—to sing, to put tones to his words? What do the tones that are put to words indicate? The four voices of Verdi's *Othello*, in singing the words of Shakespeare's characters, have put tones together with words and transformed them into unified polyphonic statements of 'what is happening between these people and to them.'[45] Does this mean that the tones point to something that exists outside of the inner world of the singers?

As Zuckerkandl puts it, it was Hegel, among all modern philosophers, who tried to seal music's fate as belonging to the inner world of the singer, as a phenomenon that is turned 'inward'.

In tone, music forsakes the element of external form. For the musical expression, only the inner life of the soul that is wholly devoid of an object...is appropriate....the fundamental task of music will therefore consist in giving a resonant reflection, not to objectivity in its ordinary

material sense, but to the mode and modifications under which the most intimate self of the soul, from the point of its subjective life and ideality, is essentially moved....the tones merely resound in the depths of the soul, which are thereby seized upon in their ideal substance, and suffused with emotion....it is precisely this sphere, the intimacy of soul-life, the abstract appropriation of its own reality, which is grasped by music.[46]

Hegel's words were composed at a time 'when [Western] music had moved very far from its origins and was within sight of its supreme achievement in Beethoven.' This is to say that the chasm between sung words and musical tones had never been greater than at this time. It was a time when 'vast structures consisting of nothing but tones, overwhelming manifestations of energy divorced from matter, capable of arousing the highest admiration and the deepest emotions had become facts of musical life.'[47] With music's reliance on the unworded tone, this late phase of Western music seems to completely engulf the world of subjectivity. As far as the word refers to an objectivity (to things that lie outside the naming subject), the dismantling of the union between word and tones in the sung word will accomplish the severance of the external world from the 'inwardness' of the subject, words and tones seem to have been on collision course. 'Words, naming things, referring to objects, turned outward; tones expressing the life of the soul wholly devoid of objects, referring to the purely subjective, turned inward.'[48] If the divorce between tones and words were to sustain itself as a true picture of the world, a number of things, chief among them the vernacular accent that folks put on their music, would not have been possible. Nor would such vernacularizing of musical phenomena point to something other than 'pure subjectivity'. Zuckerkandl considers folk song as a clue, not to the opposition, or their separation, but to the intimacy between word and tone. The crucial factor in this intimacy is that the tones point to something more than the object the word points to. Zuckerkandl puts across his point this way:

The tone the singer adds to the word is not at odds with the word, does not pull in the opposite direction, away from what the word says; rather, it accompanies the word on its way to the thing, to the object. Only, unlike the mere word, it does not stop at the object: it breaks through the dimension of objective existence, thus making it impossible for what the word denotes to the nothing but object, to remain frozen in its existences as object. The tone does not blur the word's meaning but rather deepens it.[49]

The deepening of the word's meaning is carried if we notice that 'sometimes, usually at the end of a line, or a stanza, the tones detach themselves from the words and the melodic movement continues freely on its own, but the wordless tones never turn their backs on the words preceding them; on the contrary, they serve to explore and savor their [the words'] meanings more deeply.'[50] The deep space into whose caverns the tones reach beyond the word is the space of 'non-objective' tone. The tones point, not to Hegel's 'soul,' where 'the most intimate self of the soul from the point of its subjective life and identity, is essentially moved' but to 'a non-objectivity behind the objects.'[51] To illustrate the point that tones point to an existence in the world, Zuckerkandl chooses two words, 'Beware' and 'Rejoice'. He asserts the incontestability of the difference between the sung 'Beware' as conveying more of a warning, and the sung 'Rejoice' more of a rejoicing than its spoken counterpart. Where is he going with this distinction? 'When the song resounds, when we hear the words "Beware" and "Rejoice" and words speaking of resignation and defiance, of reaping and falling,' Zuckerkandl asks, 'whose inner life is grasped here? Is it the singer, the composer who is warning, rejoicing, resigning himself to his fate, rebelling, reaping, falling?'[52] The answer: no. It is not the composer's or the singer's soul-life, but 'the inner life of warning and rejoicing, of resignation and defiance'. The dimension that is touched, disclosed by the sung 'Beware' and the sung 'Rejoice' encompassing as it were the non-objective beyond of 'Beware' and 'Rejoice'. This state is not the inwardness of Hegelian

subjectivity as opposed to the object, to something of the external world, but the inner life of things in the world. The inner life of tones belong to the external world as much as to the singer. It is the quality of being that is shared at the same time by the inner life of the self and the inner life of the thing in the world. When a singer sings the 'the inner life of warning and rejoicing, of resignation and defiance' he or she shares with the world of things those qualities of being, not as something that stands against him or her, but to whom he or she belongs.

What does this position augur for us? Does it mean the eclipsing of the dividing line between the external world of things and objects and of our body and the interior of our selves? Is this the categorical rejection of exteriority and interiority? Zuckerkandl suggests that we devise another way of looking at the division between the subjectivity of our existence and the objectivity of the external world. According to him, the new musicality of our existence will dictate that 'the antithesis of "inside" and "outside" is not...abolished, but it is, so to speak, turned on its side: the vertical [intellectual post that we set up for the division] becomes the horizontal. The wall separating the self from the world now runs straight across everything, becomes a bridge joining the two.'[53] Thanks to the delayed tone that runs after the word has been spoken, thanks to the tone that clings to the melody after the word has been pronounced, we come to partake in the inner life of things around us and reposition the old vertical barrier that separated the self from the external world, to a two-way horizontal bridge that connects us to the world of things behind, before, on the sides, and beyond our bodies.

The Excess of My Vision is the Limit of My Architecture

By articulating the interpenetration of the inner lives of the singing subject and the

external world Zuckerkandl suggests that the division between subject and object is henceforth marked not by a vertical post but by a horizontal bridge that connects the self with the world. This horizontal axis is not the 'X' axis of Cartesian logic where there is the always already implied existence of the vertical 'Y' axis. Rather it is the bridge of understanding which will speak of a different position of visualizing (or if I may be allowed to indulge in my own locution, of *resounding*) the connectedness of self and world, of subject and object.

But we know that we have been afflicted, since the ascendance of descriptive geometry, by this condition of grid, of being located at the intersection of instrumentally mathematized horizons, seemingly forever under the gaze of the hegemonic retina. The question is—in the light of what we have learned about the deepening of meaning made possible by the tone and its implication for the redefinition of our connection to and apprehension of the external world—where does such thought lead architecture? What is the state of architecture's discourse regarding its embeddedness within the ocularity of projected methods, albeit their technological sophistication?

In a 1992 essay entitled 'Vision's Unfolding: Architecture in the Age of Electronic Media'[54] Peter Eisenman, an eminent architect of the late twentieth century, poses a tantalizing possibility for architectural thought. Among the various strands of thought buried in this rather short and provocative essay is the notion of *excess*, and its being a necessary condition for the transformation of mere 'building' into 'architecture'.

Eisenman senses the shortcomings of our ocularity, our way of responding to the challenges of the 'electronic paradigm'. The electronic paradigm is contrasted with the mechanical paradigm, 'the *sine qua non* of architecture...the visible manifestation of the overcoming of natural forces such as gravity and weather by mechanical means' within which architecture had been operating for so long, and continues to do so today. The electronic paradigm, according to Eisenman, 'directs a powerful challenge to architecture because it defines reality in terms of media and simulation, it values

appearance over existence, *what can be seen over what is*' (emphasis added). What makes this value of appearance over existence a challenge to architecture, Eisenman tells us, is 'the mutual devaluation of both original and copy' where formerly with the presentation of the original 'the human subject...retains its function as interpreter, as a discursive function' while in the case of the copy, 'the subject is no longer called to interpret'.[55]

It is arguable whether, in this age of mechanical reproduction, the subject has given up on its interpretive agency. But more than this contention, it is Eisenman's ambiguous gesture towards overcoming the pre-eminence of sight in architectural ordering that I would like to examine. Eisenman correctly identifies the shortcomings of the discipline when he says that

> *architecture has resisted this question [the ambiguities of how and what we see] because, since the importation and absorption of perspective by architectural space in the fifteenth century, architecture has been dominated by the mechanics of vision...[and that] it is precisely this traditional concept of sight that the electronic paradigm questioned.*[56]

If the electronic paradigm has been responsible for such questioning, then Eisenman's choice of the fax as the image of such challenge is a poor one. The ground to test the viability of the challenge of the electronic paradigm to the hegemony of vision in architecture would have been to look at the complex and sophisticated ways of architectural representation made instrumental by design software. That the electronic paradigm prefers the appearance of things over their existence, traps Eisenman's proposition that the electronic paradigm offers a challenge to architectural representation within the web of the ocular, despite his wish to distance himself from his mechanical cousins, architects of the modern era and before.

Eisenman also proposes to make architecture look *back* at the subject, instead of the subject looking *at* architecture, thus setting in motion the universalizing gaze of the subject. Eisenman suggests two steps towards the possible reversal of the

subject/object dichotomy. The first, is 'to detach what one sees from what one knows—the eye from the mind', and the second, 'to inscribe space in such a way as to endow it with the possibility of looking back at the subject.' He does not elaborate on the first position, but offers, in the second case, the possibility to 'rethink the idea of inscription'[57] in architecture. For Eisenman, architecture is the embodiment of inscription—since we cannot think of the window, the door, the wall, the axis, without their corresponding idea of window, door, wall and axis. Citing the anomalous column at San Vitale and the column hanging above the staircase in his own project, Wexner Center, the idea of excess that is not mandated by function becomes for Eisenman a possibility of rethinking the idea of inscription in architecture.

Eisenman wonders how the translatability into architectural space of such an inscription that is 'the result of an outside text which is neither overly determined by design expression or function' could become possible. His response uses Gilles Deleuze's idea of the fold, or more correctly the folded space, that 'articulates a new relationship between vertical and horizontal, figure and ground, inside and out.' The fold, as theorized by Deleuze and extended into architectural theory, possibility by Eisenman, contains no narrative, linear sequence: it contains a quality of the unseen...it can be considered to be effective; it functions, it shelters, it is meaningful, it frames, it is aesthetic. Folding also constitutes a move from effective to affective space [and] is not another subject expressionism, a promiscuity, but rather unfolds in space along side of its functioning and its meaning in space—it has what might be called an excessive condition or affect.[58]
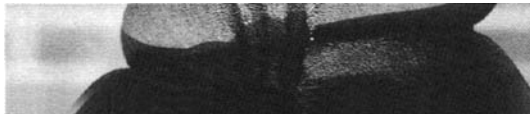
Though the condition of the fold is still thought of within the purview of vision, Eisenman ends his essay with the following statement, suggesting that he is open to other ideas of inscription that have the potential to disengage us from the hegemonic vision, the monocular vision that 'attaches seeing to thinking, the eye to the mind'. Architecture will continue to stand up, to deal with gravity, to have 'four

walls.' But these four walls no longer need be expressive of the mechanical paradigm. Rather they could deal with the possibility of these other discourses, the other affective senses of sound, touch, and of that light *within* the darkness (emphasis added).[59]

I mentioned earlier that there is the real possibility of partaking in the inner life of things in the external world because of the deep meaning that tones lend to our words in the act of singing. Making music, not just as a subjective expression, but as participation by the subject in the objective world of things has helped us, according to Zuckerkandl, to reposition the former vertical division between subject and object into a horizontal bridge whose result would be the interpenetration of the subject and object, the expression of the inner states of things through the subject's expression. This transformation of the intimacy between subject and object has been made possible because the sonorous human being as a music maker, as homo musicus, has revealed herself or himself to the intimacy of tones with words. It is an intimacy which, when the word expires, carries and deepens its meaning through tone. The tone's longevity of expression does not occlude the functionality of words, but transports them into a non-objective space where meaning deepens. We saw how the words 'Rejoice' and 'Beware' still remain functional, still hold on to their meaning and in addition deepen and strengthen their meaning as the tone is allowed to exceed the space of the functional and point to the beyond, to the non-objective.

While Eisenman's intimation of extending the effective functional space of architecture 'by an excessive condition of affect' is embraced through the Deleuzeian fold, I suggest that the excess that words acquire through tone analogously

accomplishes the potential extension of the effective into affective architecture. Though the electronic paradigm, properly understood, might be grounds to question the visuality of architecture's reliance on the 'eye as the mind', its embeddedness within the digital world of bits (whose localization, after everything is said and done, is still enmeshed within the cross of 'X', 'Y' and 'Z' coordinates) seems to make it still part of the world that we wish to overcome. Nor would the Deleuzeian space of curvature have much to do with the electronic age. Its conceptual validity seems to rest in its folding and unfolding, in its escaping from the rigidity of Durand's grid, in its power of lying in the fluidity of its curvature which cannot be normalized by the verticality and horizontality of Eisenman's 'mechanical age'.

If, as Eisenman suggests, 'to dislocate vision might require an inscription which is the result of an outside text which is neither overly determined by design expression or function,'[60] then the world of sonority is that outside text which cannot be overly determined, either by the mechanical, or by the electronic age of architecture. The question is not one of overcoming the mechanical in favor of the electronic, but one of breaking away from the equivalence of the visual, that connection of the eye to the mind with the architectural. And I argue that sonority offers a productive mode of thought analogous to an architecture of excess which, having fulfilled its effective functionality goes further, to endow the building with its affective non-objectivity—so that it becomes architecture. By non-objective, I am referring to its Heideggerian sense of the full medley of the 'tangible' and the 'perceptible;' the ever 'non-objective to which we are subjects' as well as the 'objective.' The 'world' is the many 'path[s] of birth and death, blessing and curse' that we transport ourselves into Being. The 'world' is the stage upon which our historical decisions are made. The 'world' is where we inquire about our discoveries, and our abandonment. Though non-objective, the 'world' nevertheless gives an object its 'guiding measures.' In a typical Heideggerian expression, the world means 'all things [which] gain their lingering and hastening, their remoteness and nearness, their scope and limits'.[61] The ever non-objective space to which the tone points to after the word has fulfilled its effectivity or functionality, is

the space of affective architecture whose non-objectivity is measured through the excess or deep meaning inscribed into it. The scope and limit of such an architecture will lie beyond its functionality and points to its constitution as excess. Its meaning is deep because, like tone, it 'is the result of an outside text which is neither overly determined by design expression or function.'[62] The architecture of excess that is aware of its sonority is neither of the mechanical, nor of the electronic age, but rather in its condition of excess—in its musicality, it speaks of the possibility of overcoming epistemological vision in favor of an ontological vision of architecture. It will be informed by an 'outside text' whose voice is doubled by a vision so that the effective (the functional and the objective) together with the affective (the excess and the non-objective) aspects of its creative production will inform each other.

THE TONE OF ARCHITECTURAL VISION

The key theoretical threads that I wish to draw out of the preceding discussion are: *first*, the importance of repetition; *second*, the strategy of improvisation; *third*, the significance of non-objectivity which would deepen the meaning of architecture; and *fourth*, the openness to and necessity of cultural contamination for creativity:

OF REPETITION

Repetition can be approached from:

(a) *repetition as 'having-been-ness';*
(b) *repetition as the articulation of the 'changing same', and*
(c) *repetition as occupying a unique ontological temporality.*

Repetition as 'having-been-ness' is the consideration of the past not as a static event, not as a chronologically fixed date which we can bring to our own age by mere

visual or formal invocation, but one of searching the possibilities that would have been in the creative work of our ancestors. We are approaching the model, not for its material, but for what it might suggest, and specifically, suggest possibilities of its own incompleteness. In its second sense, repetition is the recognition that when we participate in the act of creation through repetition, we are repeating not the thing itself but a repetition whose difference can be measured qualitatively—the 'same' thing, but at the same time different. That this character of the 'changing same' is a quality inherent in repetition also means that repetition participates, in its third form, in two different horizons of temporality, temporalities of time past, and temporalities of time present. Partaking within a time that was, a work or a culture reassures the continuity of former possibilities and the familiarity of the 'usable past'. In this it might seem to stand still, to reaffirm its own stability. But within its changing side of the same, the work participates in the interpretation of its own possibilities. Thus repetition comes to subtend both the dynamism of its present unstable world, as it makes sure that it is not cut off from its productive past.

Of Improvisation

Musical improvisation holds three fundamental notions of creativity that an architecture of improvisation learns from: the first is that creative work is made possible because improvisation is a simultaneous engagement of both moment-to-moment composition and precomposition. Second, that practising improvisation is enlisting multiple conversations within the spectrum of possibilities that, on the one hand, tradition bestows upon us, and on the other, of opening ourselves to the presence of, what Heidegger has identified as the 'possibilities and circumstances...encountered in the Situation as possible objects of concern.' Third, it will mean that the architect converses with the tools of the discipline, the materiality of architecture, and the craft of its constructive logic.

OF NON-OBJECTIVITY

One could perhaps speculate that one of the reasons for the difference between a building and an architecture is the presence or absence of deep meanings in the building. For an architecture of improvisation deep meanings arise out of a set of commitments which privilege the necessary excess in order to move the project from its state of being an effective building to an effective and affective architecture. This means that a building's effectiveness is not the only measure of its meaningfulness— rather like the best moments in Western and non-Western architectural traditions, it is the inscription, the embodiment of non-quantifiable meanings in the architecture, which holds. To put it in another way, the difference between a building and an architecture can be analogous to the difference between a speech and a song respectively.

OF CONTAMINATION

Despite the cultural wall that nations and cultures continually build in order to 'protect' the purity of their own cultural imaginations and products, and the denial by dominant institutions of art and culture to the contribution that marginal cultures have made to their fundamental transformation, cultural contamination has been going on far wider and longer than we would like to admit. This is not to deny that cultural contamination has been neither consensual, nor the manner of its transference and the degree of its impact been benign. The complexity of the contaminated space and our desire to neatly divide in a binary fashion the world of the Same from the Other will perhaps continue to be the disputed territory among culture. Indeed there is a mounting feeling that the neat division of the margin from what is assumed to be the institutional is another misreading of the interdependence of origin and ab-origin. What I attempted to say at the outset of this essay about the used-tire sandal affair and the *Yoruba Man with a Bicycle* sculpture and its attendant commentary by Baldwin seem

to me to be good examples of the contamination of cultures. Kwame Anthony Appiah, the Ghanaian philosopher, put this condition well when he observed that:

> *[if] there is a lesson in the broad shape of the circulation of cultures, it is surely that we are already contaminated by each other, that there is no longer a fully autochthonous* echt-*African culture awaiting our salvage by our artists (just as there is, of course, no American culture without African roots). And there is a clear sense in some post colonial writing that the postulation of a unitary Africa over against a monolithic West—the binarism of the Self and Other—is the last of the shibboleths of the modernizers that we must learn to live without.*[63]

Appiah's eloquent assessment of the condition of cultural contamination holds a great deal of truth about the state of our discipline. To say that there is 'no longer a fully autochthonous *echt*-African culture awaiting our salvage by our artists' is to speak of the complex interpretive work demanded of the truly conscious African architect. This demanding work, as I have argued throughout this chapter, is one of a contaminated sensibility where the sonority of black cultures must be brought together with the habit of ordering architectural thought from within Euro-and-ocular-centric philosophical, artistic and architectural traditions. The architecture of improvisation is an attempt to open ourselves to the sonority of being and thinking without relinquishing the constructive aspect of our embodied vision. It is a work that points towards the potential overcoming of the binarism of the architectural Self and Other in favor of an architecture of a sonorous vision.

APPENDIX A

The text for the songs performed by Adjei Komi and as transcribed and

analyzed by Agawu in *African Rhythm: A Northern Ewe Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1995, p74–6, is as follows:

1	*Okosi kpataku ee*
2	*Okosi kpataku ee*
3	*Okosi kpataku, ade mefoa ghe o, eto medegbe*
4	*Okosi kpataku, ade mefoa ghe o, eto medegbe*
5	*Vuotete, ategbleme hatsi ee*
6	*Okokoefe no, kpokutsiku kple agbetsia ghe ee*
7	*Okokoefe no, kpokutsiku kple agbetsia ghe ee*
8	*Samamu nu dio doto madi, vuo me di o, gao me die o, gbagba*
9	*Samamu nu dio doto madi, vuo me di o, gao me di o, dza o*
10	*Haio, haio, haio, haio*
11	*Ne mewo nu dio do tome*
12	*Ne vuo me di o ga me di o dza o*

PARADIGMATIC ARRANGEMENT:

```
1
2
3
4  5  6
   7  8
    9  10  11
               12
```

Agawu provides a good analysis of the song's reliance on repetition, and we need to listen to him in its entirety. Adjei Komi starts off with an idea *(1)*, repeats it by adding a little suffix *(2)*, extends it further by adding several more words *(3)*, and then repeats the extended version *(4)*. Although an additive or developmental process may be observed across units *1–4*, the units are grouped together under the same paradigmatic class because of their identical points of departure. Adjei Komi then

introduces a new idea *(5)*, and, without repeating it this time, moves to another idea *(6)*, which is immediately repeated *(7)*. Then comes yet another idea *(8)* which is also immediately repeated (9). The pattern of repetition is interrupted by a fourfold repetition of a single 'song word,' *haio (10)*; Adjei Komi seems to be 'killing time' here, taking a breath as he plans his next move. Then comes a new idea *(11)*, followed by a close musical variant *(12)*. The overall narrative process consists of a gradual accretion of 'new' units alternating with repetitions of 'old' units.

The text of the second song reads:

1	*Kpakpra ne xo madzi dzi ee*
2	*Kpakpra ne xo madzi dzi ee*
3	*Madzi drui ade dzo mado ghe, gbagba*
4	*Kpakpra ne xo madzi dzi ee*
5	*Madzi drui ade dzo mado ghe, haio*
6	*Haio, haio, haio*
7	*Kpakpra ne xo madzi dzi ee*
8	*Madzi drui ade dzo mado ghe, gbagba*
9	*Afi magbe kale gbo*
10	*Afi magbe kale gbo*
11	*Afi magbe kale gbo*
12	*Afi magbe kale gbo*
13	*Afi magbe kale gbo*
14	*Kale de nyo vivie menya woa, dzo me nu e*
15	*Ava kale e nyo vivie menya woa wo, dzo me nu e.*

PARADIGMATIC ARRANGEMENT:
 1
 2 3

4 5 6
7 8   9
    10
    11
    12
    13 14
      15

The compositional strategy of Example 2 is not dissimilar to that of Example 1. Adjei Komi signs an inaugural theme *(1)*, which he repeats immediately *(2)*. Then comes a new theme, *(3)* after which the composer returns to the earlier *(2–3)* succession *(4–5)*. As in *Unit 10* of Example 1 Adjei Komi next settles on a song word, *haio*, in order to regroup *(6)*. He continues by returning, for the second time, to the *(2–3)* succession *(7–8)* before adding a new theme *(9)*. This theme is repeated four times *(10–13)* after which Adjei Komi takes up his last theme *(14)*, which is also repeated immediately to conclude the narrative *(15)*.

Photo credit:
'Incandescent
Croon', model
detila. Araya
Asgedom.
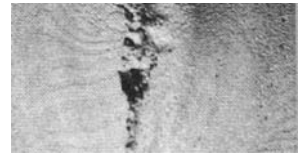
1 : 1

ONE ON ONE
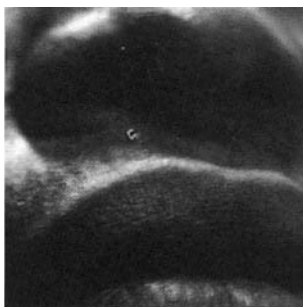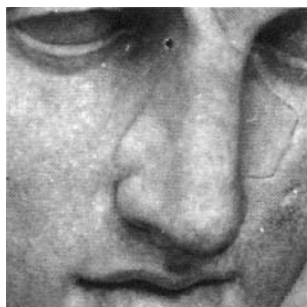
Section Three, 1:1, focuses on the detail, on the intimate, on a more elastic interpretation of architecture and the 'stuff' it is made of. The three authors in this section were chosen for their desire to use the material and formal possibilities suggested by the term 'race' for experimentation in the widest possible sense. The essays critique not only the material condition of 'race' but also the notion of practice, each providing very different explorative constructs. For obvious reasons, my commentary is restricted to a few sentences describing the overall parameters of each project.

Chapter 10, by Mitchell Squire, is a *visual–textual–oral–material* investigation, showing how 'race' is threaded in and out of a design project. 'Paris Done Burnt!' looks at how 'race' is made in the making of the text and how the slippage between drawing/word/building mimics the tension between orality (blackness) and textuality (whiteness). 'Downright murky', as he describes himself, his is an attempt to 'move on and show the ambivalent, interdependent relationship of blackness/whiteness.'

Imogen Ward Kouao's three-month journey to northern Ghana is the subject of *Chapter 11*, 'Anything Red Doesn't Come to the House.' At once a visual diary and text-based enquiry into the relationship(s) between building, material and gender in modern-day Ghana, her work hints at the suggestive power of texture, surface, light and dark (shadow). As someone deeply interested in and engaged on a daily basis with the practice of teaching design, her work speaks directly to the issue of pleasure in architecture: pleasure in detail, material, composition, recording.

Finally, providing metaphorical and literal closure to the section and to the anthology, *Chapter 12*, Felecia Davis' chapter, '(un)Covering/(re)Covering' details an interest in 'architectural representations that operate like the "X" in the name "Malcolm X"'. Making spatial and material use of the terms 'recover/uncover', she shows how it is possible to transform historical events, reconfiguring notions of 'Africa' and the many, coexistent 'American' identities.

1 : 1

BIOGRAPHY

MITCHELL SQUIRE was born in Mississippi in 1958. He studied architecture at Iowa State University, where he took his Bachelor of Architecture in 1994 and was awarded the Kocimski Prize for the best diploma project that year. He is currently working on his Masters Degree at Iowa State, where he is also on the faculty, teaching a design stuido. He is currently serving on the Architectural Advisory Council, a professional advisory group for the Department of Architecture at Iowa State University.

10

PARIS DONE BURNT!

PreFaçade

(the primer)

a create by the guys that got out;

he has only a black and doubtful presentiment,
brought closer and closer again to the force of immutability.
where?
where can he feel you, make him feel you
make me feel the queen of your soul.

instinctive of the natural world.
where the desire is vulnerable

erase the line, the fine line
and dare to accept the create of authorship.
He can't play the game 'write'
the handmaid's tale of treachery.

He only echoes people shadows
the shadows of people

tell him more, please tell him more
than can that hinderer alone

alas!

> *assimilate*
> *mask*
> *classificate*

I see you in the mirror with his eyes closed
using my senses to smell
there are no terrors in this darkness hold.

stand before the mirror.
suspend judgment
altered by something we learned true
if it ever existed for him, it began to fade
we all started to scratch out rules:

> *morality the convention*
> *concupiscence the beauty*
> *for the other people in stone.*

be a part of my house. come with me
who said
'ancient is the need of one being for another'
this is the *ecole* cold
the soul needs and cannot tell
the continuation of race

know them the way you know friends
she said to me in her beautiful salon
oddly chaste,
formally restrained,
awkward and somehow sad

a:
Paris Prize Project, 1995

b & c:
Paris Prize Project, 1995

Illustration credit:
Paris Prize
Project, 1995.
Mitchell Squire.
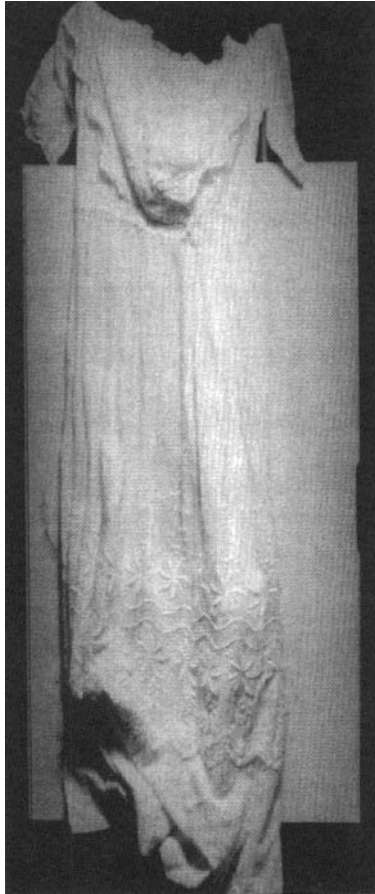
I feel my skin shedding forward to the consequences.
handsome and violent
a bad taste self

but there *are*, you know, don't you?
straight this. straight that. white this. white that
the beauty and prosperity of kinship
without psychological perks,
a realness ball, bold and subtle
in the image of tangible eroticism.

legendary?
yes, the grand edifice beneath the skin

and look!
there she is again!
and this time as my child and your mother

explore!
express!

the fundamental quality of existing
dream
act their mockery
defy my falsification
it is only an individual between society
clashed between

some may think I've erred
but he's read you plain and simple
sally
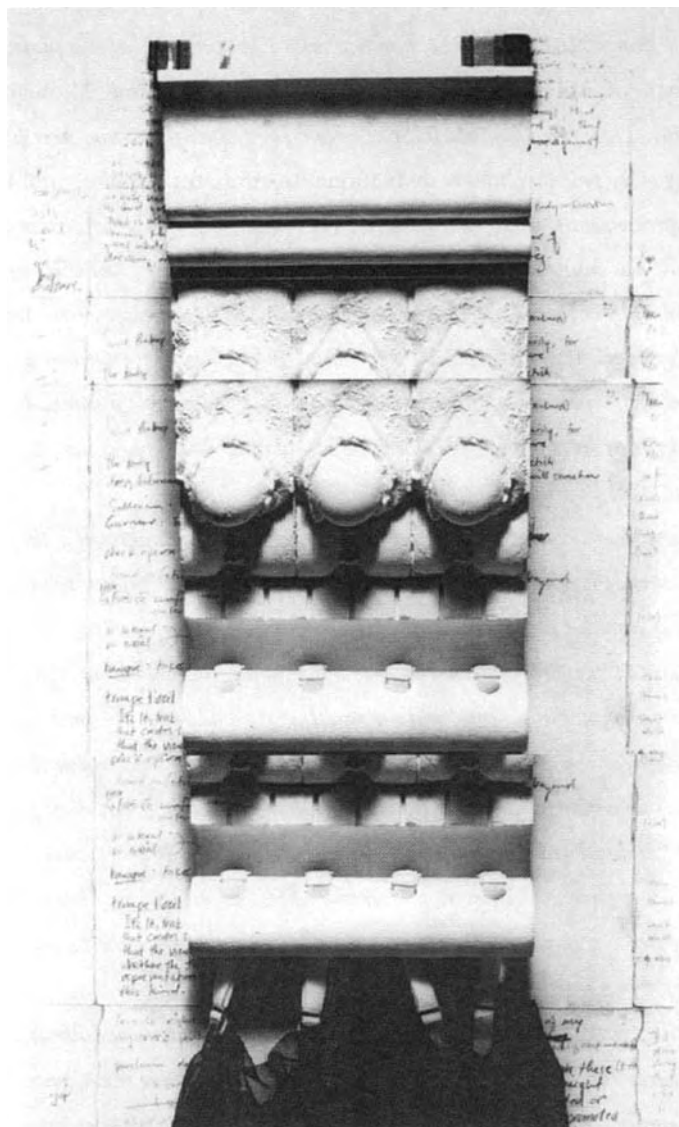
Dear Lesley,

The *following* Principal Façade *textually represents the project's critique of the attractive mystique of the Beaux-Arts architectural tradition (aka Paris persona), as it is played out in two American films,* An American in Paris *(MGM, 1951) and* Round Midnight *(Warner Brothers, 1986). These two films, which depict certain ideas of ex-patriotism, were helpful in the critical framing of the project relative to the* National Institute for Architectural Education *(NIAE) competition brief, which stated that an American Centre for Architecture in Paris, as the chosen topic, was intended to 'celebrate the centennial of the NIAE' (formerly known as the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, founded by the American Society of Beaux-Arts Architects) and to 're-establish the NIAE's historical ties with Paris.' In challenging the persona as it relates to the circumstances of expatriotism, I am challenging the so-called 'ties' of a wanna-be institution. Can an outsider truly know Paris? 'He enters the city, alien territory, on cat feet.' Is the NIAE's Paris the Paris of the Parisian?*

Because of its obvious parallels, an added stowaway on this critical vessel is the figuration of race; first seen here as innocent baggage, but eventually (throughout the project/text) grows beyond its crated hold to drive the project.

The Paris of the two films has been interpreted by this author as the complex and unresolvably ambivalent site of 'both/and', a model at the middle, at the interface of different systems of racial representation. Paris at once sets itself up as dominant subject, whose mystic persona provides for a convenient distantiation of the Other (while this Other, in ex-patrioted haste in one case and in disavowed allegiance in the other, strives so desperately to partake of its canonic and well-advertised virtues). However, the persona slips and reveals an ideological fault—its fetishisation of what is absent in its own reality, as bound in the fantastic pleasures and secret desires of its enemy-Other.

It is at this critical fault that the Other crystalises as an opposite and likewise ambivalent subject with desires and fetishistic dependencies of its own. Through this crack, interdependency is marked and a negotiated access is obtained where previously excluded, enabling deconstructive revisions of identity to emerge that are much more difficult, ironic and incomplete than any

previousbinary fictions.

'Filmic' production (i.e. the rapid succession of 'fixed' images projected onto a 'white' screen in order to create an illusion of realness) served as a trope for the imaginary projection of certain fantasies about 'difference' in the construction of educational paradigms as well as race. The strategy of appropriating stereotypical Beaux-Arts imagery and its specific visual codes was risky but deemed important to the undermining of the stability of the ideologised subject position of the American Society of Beaux-Arts architects when the actual competition submission would come under judgment.

Photo credit:
Fragment of a
drawing by
Mitchell Squire,
Diploma Project,
Iowa State
University, 1995

PrincipalFaçade

(the Principle Façade will undergo two sectional cuts, exposing the notions of magnetic attraction and racial/cultural (mal)absorption)
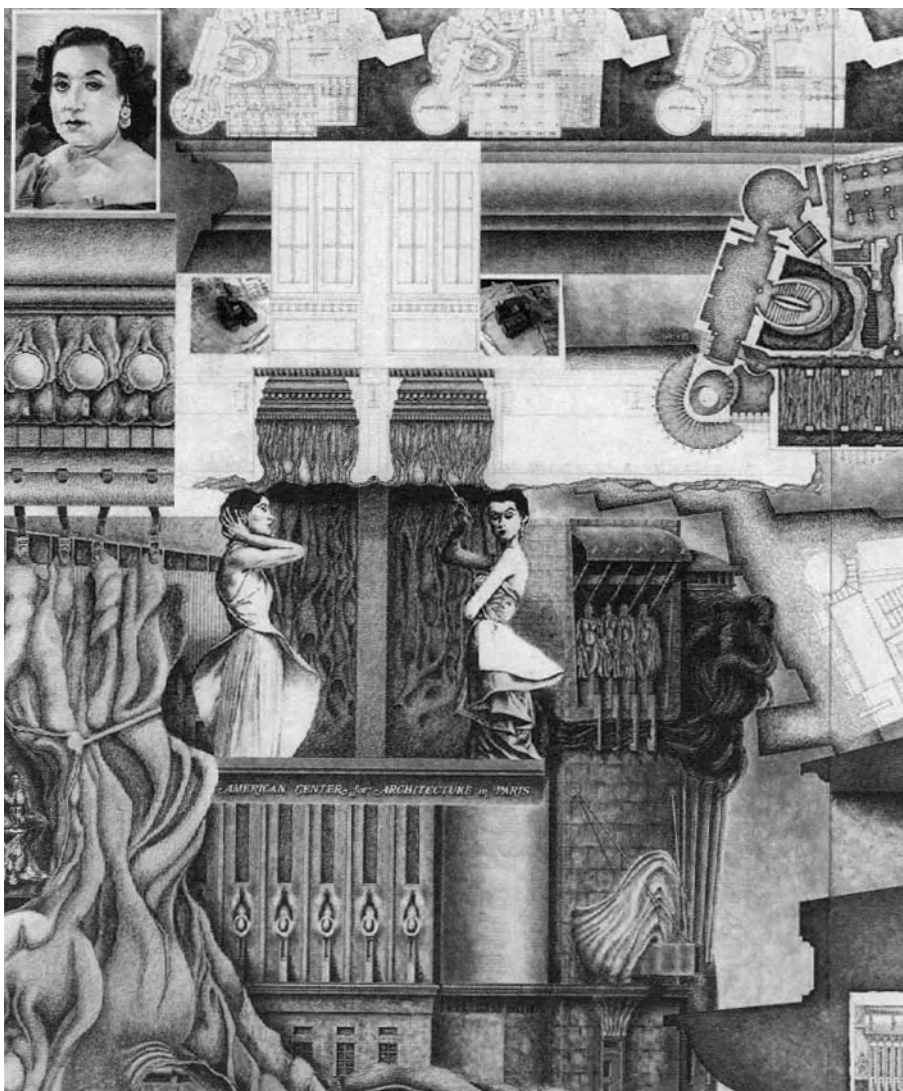
This page illustration credit:
Paris Prize Project, 1995

an American...in Paris
cinematic
tight slacks, swift strokes, struttin' in the streets
falling in love with a parisien
in love with Paris
stereoscopophilia
ex-patriot fetish
gay Paris!

number 2
got to do(in) Paris to play different music
play difference
in deference to Paris
however, the same small room
small schedule
and big buttercup!
big adick shun (same song)
oral
tradition with the mouth
'here, Dale, try this...'
same food
(is okra too different for Paris?)
that big-ass piece of meat!

at home in Paris and facing the death of sameness.
he say
bebop was...
created by the guys that got out of the army
got out of the regimen(t)
bebop is...
breaking free the rule of same
he almost died there

those same visions were haunting him
they always do

PART TWO

of Chiffon, Polyester and Skin: A Sudden Increase in Size
(a.k.a. The Battle of the Bulge)

number 1's still struttin'
look at that ass!
that's a runway ass!
do it gene!
go-on and *strut that stuff*

ripe pepo white people
flared peplum *gillespie cheeks*
pepper shaker reverse the gesture

pepper
pepper
pepper

legendary mOther of the house

burning up Paris!
feels good
blackamour, black noir
the smooth black thought of it
just can't get there
only through Avedon's record, not the black book
(that's stereo-something else, but I think I can use it)

she say: '............'
her children say: '...................'

if you ever seen love in the book
you don't forget it
damn!
between index and thumb
I can map it!
but empty eyes and a full head, I don't know
it ain't me
no way!

(if it was, we joked, I wouldn't be doing architecture)

I will use it!
if for nothing else than for a different colour classic(j)ism
my target
and all the other sensations that come with it.

This page:
Fragment from a
photographer's
still—supposed
to have been the
Paris Prize
Project, but
nothing came
out...still, I like it.
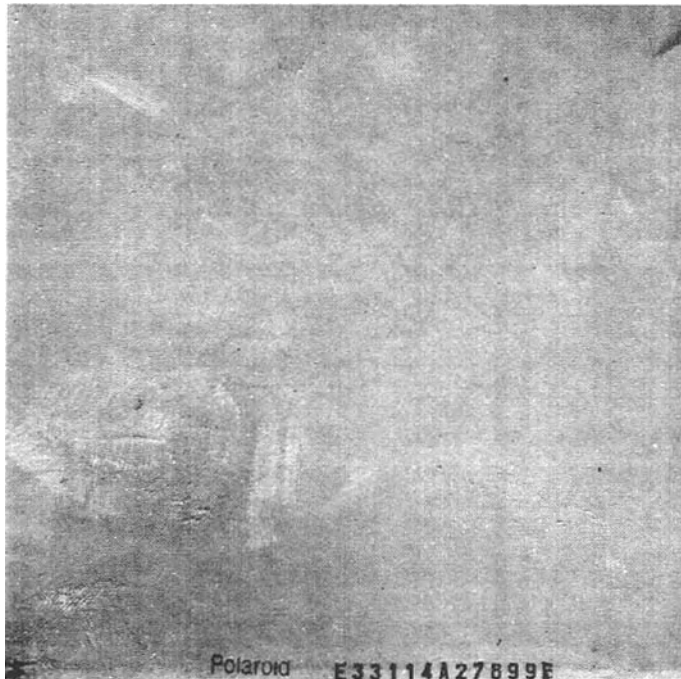
SECTION 2A

Mirror Looks B(l)ack (nigger-cum-voice)

fantasia-paranoids and
white-womanhood
porch monkey Theseus
has decided
to gaze

ahh, he caught you 'looking' at him
saturated body of pictorial darkness
odalisque dressed in cheap, tacky polyester bulge
shifting,
sliding (between) sequences personally named

profiles
mugshots
and measured both heads
handling monstrously large
well-hard tongue

(two, in fact, enhancing pleasure and profitability)
always already wet.

INTERRUPT

You see, Lesley, I've tried to create textual work that parallels visual and oral work. I want architecture that not only writes, but tells stories—that can be passed down—to souls. Therein I am most comfortably black. I let our new receptionist read the following passage (she writes poetry herself). She said, 'I like it...it really flows well, the music is good...but I don't know if I understand it.' That was a few weeks ago. Today over lunch she disclosed to me that she doesn't like 'murky', is uncomfortable with 'grey'. 'I'm the kind of person that needs black or white,' she said. 'I need it defined.' I'm a 265lb black male. 5ft 8 inches tall, with a soft-spoken voice and transitionally-bearded face. I can be downright murky at first glance.

Part Three: [sur]Mise-en-scène

<div align="right">

this stuff is so rapturous
I have to make a building
anarchitecture
or at least represent one
wrap some spaces
fool some faces
trump
if you will
trompe l'oeil

Garnier did it
and, 'perverse fetishism is always distinguished by the space of the theatre'
scenographic?
how close?

oooooweeeh! I wanna get close, so close.
cross-dress, cross-program, cross-over?
Tschumi'shit!
not just see (clue: image).....be!

ex-patriot fetish
(I have to know my enemy. I have to know my enemy, she said to me)
poché was the enemy of the *beaux-arts*
it'll be my friend
I'll live there
I live there.
I'm racial poche
Rachel?
the model that modeled that hair(y) piece.

a genitive inflection
a genital infection
I can't have her but I can have her likeness
in a ball jar.
in a house of wax
zip-locked
twist-tied
saran-wrapped in black poche
hand-rubbed
a break-in case of fire

</div>

SECTION 3B

Sectional V's of Crooked T's (the operative treatment)

I received your letter today, Gate of Paris
by the planes of incision not still
surprised at the image-mirror I encountered
though categorised as incidental
part of a deeply rooted tradition:
crooked laboratory of tropes and jugs denuded
the pubis lay bare and stoic.

long legal faces, physiognomical fixations
quarreling incessantly, packing rather firmly
kept neat, functioning and clean...
rubber covered.
worn with persistence for imaginary clients.
'when will I be able to function?'
eight to ten days, six or eight weeks
in every conceivable distortion.
I vehemently detest their continual presence
madness rages in the place
where
the edges of things come close to touching.

Kelly-clamped circulation analgesics combat desire
for a collection of black spots
relatively diminutive, non-impressive
conceived in revenge against more successful peers
to bear the countenance of crime.
oh so many traits half-eyes, almost blind
simulated in the bedroom can often confuse, preventing the soul
extreme atrophy.

instead I'm taken by the outrageously excessive
meddlesome and uninformed
'they seem to have, on the average, a lower threshold for pain'
tossing questions, turning tricks through hook and eye arrangement

> *elegant and terrifying*
> *sucking into black*
> *tasting*
> *staging:*

Sexuality...is far less important
a whiff from Marge's elastic-banded abdomen
available abroad on a 'cash-in-hand' basis carries me away
through a network of tiny canals
on a harness
a carriage of
safety pins and stockinettes
(whose tracks form a map of his life)
not stopping at Eros, Porno and Obscene
into a hen-house and a diary
peck, peck, peck, scratch, scratch, scratch
with too much pressure as well as too little
to the dead black, no light, verve substance of the low-life
of architecture;
for proper fit and care

'*solid citizen*' chant the fossa on each side of and below,
and out-swag the dark-brained
magician and surgeon.

'*more hope than substance*' uttered Bogoras
in a dressing of grease-gauze
soft and hanging without movement;
while the right side of the mouth, drawn in a grimace,
nipples normally.
Rachel was looking...at an angle of 45 [degrees]

the walls of this place
without a crotch or long legs
betokens a violent temperament

'*preserve the nerves concerned*', lieutenant Malament
'*with skin and suitable draping.*'

in the absence of histrionic tendencies
may I be excused to society
whether driven made by circumstances or not

I'm endowed with inner world undertones,
skill and draughtmanship a feast
castrating details for the ordonnance
(subversive dismemberment)
of hospital speech, of prisons and asylums I hum

This page
illustration
credit:
Paris Prize
Project, 1995

all the sacred conventions and fashion characters
mocked
from an architectural niche
with arias, recitatives, choruses and duets
nappy wigs, drab ribbons, lewd postures, gazes lubed.
but rarely a plan.

WHITE PAPERS, BLACK MARKS

'Dear Mitchell,

I find the pieces a little...elliptical, shall we say...'

Dear Lesley,

If this means that the writing (style) seems unfinished or partial, due to the omission of the necessary words for complete and proper grammatical construction...if this means that the text is too obscure, dark, muddy and unclear, due to the confusing, almost unfocused, haphazard and erratic course, not to mention its ill-spending of words...if this means that the piece fails to include or even take notice of any normal, conventional or customary standards of critical writing/ discourse that would ensure a larger audience...then the writing may be a display of an inveterate and chronic opposition...a black for your white dialectic! Ellipsis is not only present in the writing, it defines the strategy.

If the words, writing and project are characterised by blackened logic, can the writing be defined as black? Have language and visual codes been sufficiently de-territorialised and appropriated so as to fit my secret needs, habits, baseline desires and pleasures? Yes! And I think others may be made uncomfortable.

Our critique has always been one of under/ non-representation. But how? If we are unable to see enough—or any part—of ourselves in the mix, the actual work...we've certainly been the object of much work...but that doesn't carry the same weight as being the work. It is absolutely necessary to master the language, discourse and processes...know them the way you know friends...but not so as to be contained within paternalistic incorporation. Nobody needs another mascot. I'm not interested in being granted a place, being given an allowance—another reservation with stipend. 'If they would only make an honest attempt at being civilised, and normal, like us...,' someone said of the current immigration crisis being voted on tomorrow in the state of California, 'they could have access to the better things in life.' That someone wanted them to speak the language and adhere to an unwritten, American cultural standard. The beauty and prosperity of kinship...without psychological perks...a realness ball.'

So, 'I feel my skin shedding forward to the consequences.' Don't you see, Lesley? Reveal

yourself, so that I can know you, summarise you, so that I can 'see' and objectify—from cranium to penis—measured both heads—become dead for having been 'seen'.

The text is intended to reveal 'for a collection of black spots' who sense some level of connectivity to the work and hide equally as much from those who are 'looking' at a distance, enslaved by voyeuristic fantasy and fearfully white imaginary space. Don't ask me to cast myself according to the very codes I challenge. Sounds like the old 'if you want me to vote, tell me how many bubbles there are in a bar of soap!'

The following text parallels other black language, creative thrusts such as bebop, swing, jazz, bop and blues...those markers we've come to love, admire, respect, preserve. But it is 'blood'-kin to funk, jive, rap, street-corner signifying, oratory preachin'/singin'—generally not so mainstream. It's all been done before, just not in (dominant) architectural discourses, or any other for than matter. This deterritorialised language phenomena is of utmost importance to my thesis of the blackness in architecture. Keep reading it and it can begin to inhabit you, much in the same way that the project's imagery does. Keep looking—there's more and it never settles.

'Sometimes the spirit of a thing offers much more than the reasoning of it.'

The writing parallels the project. I appropriate the right to speak of behalf of everyone, while denying the discourse of the Other—sound familiar? Now here's the switch— stay with me now— the black, instead of buying into the ideal version should find great pleasure and success in flying in the face of it, creating opposition. But that's 'old hat'! That'll only increase our already distantiated binary relationship. The intention is not to stop at what appears on the surface to be the singular interest or goal (i.e., I don't just want a new name—African American). What I want is to move on and show the ambivalent, interdependent relationship of blackness/whiteness. I want to get to that spot, not remain a binary fiction.

Backside: *Up the Alleyway*
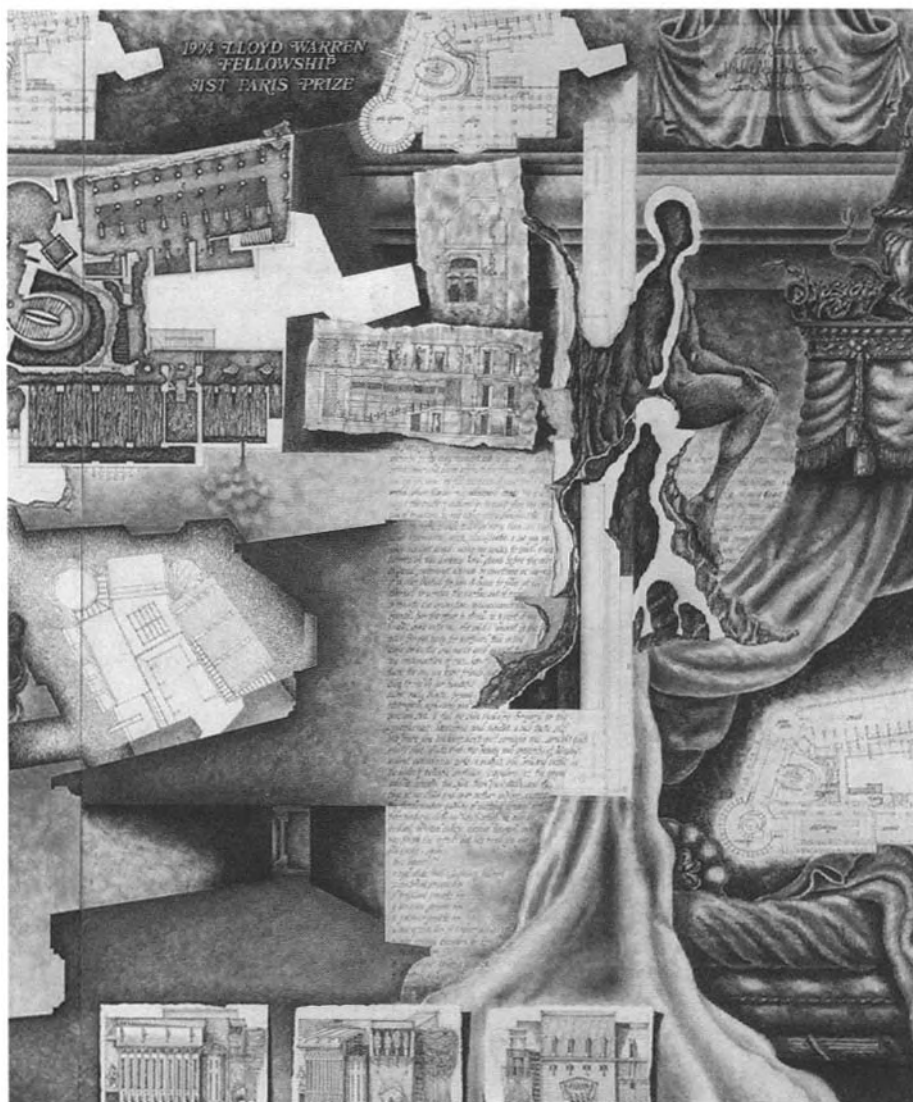
So I played (with) it. I had
to
I had to get it out
it happened in the night, as
do many good things
as did Brassai's lust
as did Miller's
as did Lequeu
as I would find
it flaunts before an audience
of eyes

premier
deuxième
troisième
quatrième

with desire that never rests
tastes that swallow and gag.

desire Paris
paris desires
not you; yours!
your boney-ass(milation)
so play different.
do Rome
it was offered as the prize

but it was only
another field of squeamish
wails.

do
to get what you want,
to expand the limits
the mind of myth is *commerce*
the mind of myth is *commodity*

shit can
before long, occupy more
than
they won't even know (it).

then suck...and blow
suck...and blow
suck and blow to death!

when it's all over
sit back
grin
and show them teeth.

1 : 1

BIOGRAPHY

IMOGEN WARD-KOUAO is a practising artist working in architecture, with several international commissions to her name. She teaches on the Art in Architecture MA programme at the University of East London, where she is conducting studio-based PhD research into wall drawings. After completing her first degree in Fine Art in 1980, she moved to London to establish her practice. Her experience in adventure play, devising multicultural events for children, later informed her work as Artist-in-Residence for the Whitechapel Art Gallery Education Programme; here, the focus of her residency was to celebrate cultural identity. Having gained her MA Ceramics, she began to use an increasingly interdisciplinary approach, fusing painting with ceramics and photography. In 1990, she was nominated by the architect Berthold Lubetkin RA as his 'Academicians' Choice', to exhibit a large-scale ceramic painting at the Mall Gallery, London. Lubetkin encouraged her to work architecturally. Since then she has collaborated with the architects Feary+Heron, and produced large-scale wall drawings for interior and exterior sites as diverse as the gardens of Waltham Abbey, UK, and the sub-Saharan village of Kusanaba, Ghana, using clay, paper, pigments and copper. In 1996, she was awarded a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship to travel to northern Ghana, where she was apprenticed to the Ghanaian artist, Leticia Azuru, and produced her first unfired clay mural painting *in situ*. 'Anything Red Doesn't Come to the House' is a visual diary of her journey.

11

Anything Red Doesn't Come to the House

WHITE PAPER

CONTENTS

FORETHOUGHTS

My Painting is My Curiosity

In 1993, when I first saw photographs of wall painting in rural West Africa, I made a quiet promise to myself that one day I would make the journey to see them. Little did I know that in that still moment of clarity, the seed for this story had been sown. It has been said that when the student is ready the teacher will appear. From that moment on, this story would slowly germinate and the more I opened myself to the journey I was to make, the more it came to me. Things fell slowly into place and gave me the energy I needed to move on. It was sometime later that I remembered a conversation with a boyfriend who, seventeen years earlier, wanted me to accompany him to the USA. I felt no urgency to travel at that time. No, I would commence my training as an artist and go to Africa alone, when I was forty. The decision was made. Twenty-one years later it came to fruition in the form of this story and, in my thirty-ninth year, I left the UK to become apprenticed to the wall painters of northern Ghana.

The mid-1980s had been a formative period in the development of my own work. Having trained originally as a painter, I began to experiment with clay; a material which would allow me to work both in two and three-dimensions. These trials led naturally to architectural interventions, and I came to view buildings as the vehicle for integrating drawing, or surface, with form. As well as being structural, clay lent itself to printing, casting and layering. A richly textured, sensuous surface could be formed, much as in painting, but with the advantage of working in relief, and in the context of a building. This evolution led to my concern with walls. Architectural scale and form freed drawing from the constraints of the picture frame. Domestic architecture acted as a complementary space to 'house' my subject, self-portraiture through the representation of intimate objects from everyday life. Walls seemed the natural site for artistic intervention.

Having inadvertently crossed the boundaries between 'art' and 'craft', and then searched for a dialogue between art and architecture, I felt frustrated by the predominant view that the two were mutually exclusive. My own culture was resistant to hybridity; crossing boundaries was taboo. As an artist who 'turned' to craft, in order to resolve certain concerns in my own work, I was somehow viewed as relinquishing my status as 'an artist'; as a practitioner who wanted to embrace architecture, I was somehow unwelcome. In time, I learned that I had inherited these 'boundaries'. My own experience was rooted in historical events of the early twentieth

Frontispiece photo credit: From a slide taken by Imogen Ward Kouao on her 3-month journey in Northern Ghana. The slide shows a number of pods soaking in a tub of dye, in preparation for decorating the walls of houses. **Previous page** shows a bead collection, from the private collection of photographs by Ward Kouao.

century in Europe, where art and architecture, once happily married, had now very definitely 'split up'. For most of this century, these intimately related forms had existed as separate entities. This led to an art which was divorced from, 'all nourishing connections with the life which initially brought it into being.'[1] The split between the arts was accompanied by a split in the professional identities of 'artist' and 'architect'. Rather than collaborate, architects of the early part of the century began to use art towards the resolution of their buildings, which became increasingly sculptural in form. Art was no longer required to function in an interpretive or decorative role and, as artists became increasingly self-contained, art became increasingly self-referential. Rather than enlivening architecture, art in the twentieth century became confined to the 'neutral' stage, or gallery setting. Art lost touch with life.

Our need to categorize seems at best misleading and at worst damaging, for, when we pitch art against architecture, we create a difficult terrain in which to marry the two. To negotiate a renewed relationship between the separated disciplines demands imagination and 'letting go', on both sides. Perhaps artists and architects alike are not conscious of the barriers they themselves erect; rather than using conflict creatively through collaboration, we hide behind our identities. Have we forgotten how to collaborate? Do we know the value of partnership in art, as in life?

In an attempt to gain perspective on my own practice, I needed to stand back from the constraints of my immediate culture. I travelled in my imagination to the clay houses with their mural paintings and, as I did so, their value for me came into sharper focus. What intrigued me most was the way in which they appeared to exemplify a naturally integrated and unselfconscious relationship between painting and architecture. When I looked at the painting in photographs it seemed that, unlike so much work at 'home', the art liberated the architecture and the architecture in turn enlivened the art. It was like a 'call and response' song where, if the walls could sing, they would sing to the paintings, and if the paintings could sing they in turn would echo the song of the walls. The very material of the buildings was continuous with the surrounding landscape. Gary van Wyk's comments come to mind:

> *The murals are...landscape representations, scoured into the earth of which the fields consist, and colored with its pigments. Because the material of the earthen house is continuous with the landscape that appears to be represented in its murals, representation collapses into identity, and meaning is conveyed on the level of matter itself.*[2]

I knew it was usual for the men to build and the women to paint the houses. I had read that the painting was also the result of a collaborative process where the

women might discuss the work in progress, with perhaps one woman in a co-ordinating role. It was challenging to contemplate a public and collective process and then to juxtapose it with what I was used to; the privacy and solitude of the studio. I was intrigued to know more of the conditions which permitted what looked like an easy celebration of life. I was interested in exploring new ways of working with clay and in particular the possibility for temporary, or erasable, surfaces. I felt excited at the thought of seeing paintings being made directly on the wall; the 'only one chance' element giving them their vitality and power.

At a deeper level, I had begun to question the role of art for myself as a practitioner. Apart from my teaching, I was feeling increasingly cut off from my own environment. I could not have articulated it at the time but realise now that I saw in architecture the means to reconnect with the world. Encountering the familiar competitiveness and power struggle amongst architects, which I knew as an artist, was disappointing. I began to wonder if we have made the conditions for genuine collaboration so alien to our culture that it is impossible to achieve. And yet I kept coming back to another question: has not our obsession with individualism now become redundant? Above all, I longed to be in a place where art was closely connected to life; 'art for life's sake.' Perhaps I needed to touch base with a place where painting could become ordinary again; both ordinary and special. As ordinary as making marmalade at my mother's kitchen table, and special in the sense that art might once again become a vehicle for celebrating and enlarging life.

Artists, and especially white, Western artists, have been criticized for their 'forays' into Africa, for their particular brand of cultural colonisation, and these criticisms are well documented in many contemporary discourses.[3] I was aware that my 'reaching out' was always potentially problematic, and demanded my sensitivity towards the people I would encounter. And yet, I always saw this journey as a potential collaboration. Rather than deny the limitations of my own culture, by running away from the isolation I was feeling in my home country, I would attempt to move towards a new and uncertain place. I wanted to open myself to another world view, to glimpse a recognizable, perhaps unknowable, but nevertheless compelling space. Was is possible to build a relationship with the wall painters? What if I were to try to create a dialogue between an artist working in Ghana, and myself, based in the UK? Could that conversation open the door to an empty space which might activate whatever specific process was trying to happen? Daring to interact, might I come to have a better understanding of myself? Could that 'daring' be a gradual, gentle process, providing the opportunity to learn about the people and their painting, whilst also reflecting upon my own experience? By opening my own viewpoint and allowing another way of seeing things to destabilise it, might the truth of the subject emerge more freely, more fluidly?

3 See, for instance, 'it is not really available for us anymore', in Einzig, Barbara, (ed), Thinking About Art: Conversations with Susan Hiller, Manchester University Press, 1996, pp207–223.

Could I dare to bridge the gap? There was only one way to find out.

The wall painting is vulnerable. Mud buildings are fragile; by their very nature, clay and pigments are only ever temporary, unless fired. As cement continues to replace earth as a building material in tropical West Africa, vernacular architecture is gradually disappearing. The status of cement has, so far, won over the the more humble but sustainable use of clay as a building material. As womens' roles change, fewer women can afford the time to paint, and thus fewer young women learn to paint. The question of women's work being valued is an issue. Because it is women's work it is, by implication, vulnerable. As far as I knew, the painting was still practiced but only in the more remote areas of the sub-Sahara, amongst other places in the world. I knew that I should not leave it too long if I wanted to see it alive. In 1996, this project gained momentum when, in early January, I was awarded a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust travelling scholarship; the 'Chance of a Lifetime' to travel to Ghana, West Africa, in order to witness first-hand the clay mural painting of the Upper East Region.

At first I toyed with the idea of 'surveying' a range of painting styles in northern Ghana but this approach, apart from being impractical within the time available, would have minimized my chance of building a relationship with the painters, something that would take time. Realizing that a dialogue with the artists would be the key to my visit, I decided to devote all my time and energy towards this end. If I were to learn anything at all then it would only be as a result of building a relationship, of having a conversation with the artists. At this stage, my problem was how to meet the painters?

A chance conversation with the artist, Caterina Niklaus, who was based in Kumasi but having a break in the UK, provided the solution. Through Caterina I learnt of Leticia Azuru, a Kussasi wall painter who, with her sister Georgina, had been invited to paint a mural at the College of Art in Kumasi,[4] in 1995. Caterina lent me copies of Bambolse Art Journal, a publication to promote contemporary art in Ghana, edited and produced by the artists Atta Kwami and Pamela Clarkson Kwami. Bambolse showed photographs of the Azuru sisters working together at the College, to mark the opening of an exhibition there of clay pots, by Leticia Azuru, and photographs of wall painting in northern Ghana, by the sculptor, Thomas Reichstein. Caterina, who would be returning to Ghana shortly, agreed to deliver a letter to Atta Kwami, in which I asked him to help me make contact with Leticia and Georgina, and asked his opinion about the possibility of collaboration between us. Shortly afterwards, I received a telephone call from Pamela Kwami, who was visiting the UK, and we discussed the possibility of my being apprenticed to Leticia. Atta was willing to introduce us to each other; he was willing to collaborate.

4 Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana.

Over the following year, a conversation, going back and forth between Atta Kwami and Leticia Azuru in Ghana, and myself in the UK, evolved. In these greetings, we established the practicalities of my visit and that Leticia was willing to accompany me to the north, to act as my interpreter, and to teach me how to do the painting. I left the UK in early January 1997, arriving in Ghana in the middle of the dry season when, in the north, new house building and painting would soon be underway.

Notes from a Journal
(February 12th, 1997)

A Visitor's Welcome.
My first visit to Leticia's family home, Ayeebo's House, Kusanaba, Ghana.

We made a good start. It was just light, in the dawn. The landscape, which I could see properly for the first time because it wasn't too bright, is extraordinary. The harmattan is creating a cloudiness which is like dense, silver-grey mist over the ground. The earth is deep vermilion red and the various trees, scattered across the landscape, reach up above the 'mist' and into the sky. Dotted about are deep brown earthen dwellings with thatched roofs, some round and some square. We drove through the villages of Zuarungu, Kongo, Tilli and Sirigu, passing various NGOs, agricultural stations, the Bolga Rice Mill and a few people cycling, a few walking. The journey, even though it took over two hours, was on fully tarred roads to begin with, then sand, rock, and finally, grassland. We stopped about an hour-and-a-half later at Binaba Market, where we met Dorkas Arongo, Leticia's senior sister, who told us she would take us to Ayeebo's house. We then drove up a track for a few miles across dry grassland, and she pointed out the house, a large compound on the top of a very gently sloping hill, beautiful in the early morning light.

I felt very excited as we parked the car under a baobab tree. A young man came out and fetched Leticia, who was obviously pleased to see us. She led us into her home. I was struck by how familiar it felt and yet, at the same time, how fresh to my eyes. The walls are about my height from bottom to top. You enter between two rectangular rooms, into an open area, and then on and into further courtyards and passageways. As there are passages off each courtyard it's confusing and I went in the wrong direction several times, partly because I'd lost my way, and partly because I'd become distracted by something; huge pots all stacked up on top of one another, or yellow, leather-hard pots drying in the sun, resting on their sides.

We walked straight into a passageway where an old woman, very poised, was sitting, legs out, beating dark yellow clay on to an upturned calabash mould. I knelt down to say hello, "tuma, tuma" (the same in Gurune and Kusale, which is spoken here). As we walked down the passage, more and more children came to say hello; many curtsied or bowed. Leticia invited me into her room. We sat on the foam mattress on the floor. Her suitcase, beads and 'cream soap' were by the bed. She bought a flask of hot water and invited me to drink tea, but we drank 'Milo' instead (a malt drink), which was somehow comforting. She offered me bread and I cut open the avocado pears we bought on the way to the north. Sitting in her bedroom, I looked up at the roof made of woven thatch. In it were 'stored' various objects: flip-flops, prayers, pods and odd trinkets, wedged between the 'sheaves' of straw. They were plaited, which I found interesting, and some of the straw had been formed into a 'rope' which was used along the lower part of the roof. In many parts of the countryside I'd seen fresh straw in bundles, leaning against the walls, ready to make new roofs, or replace old ones. As Leticia told me, if you don't get your building work done before March, then the rains come and you have to wait until the next dry season.

I was offered salad. Leticia had brought it from the local 'irrigation site'. As she sat chopping the vegetables, it was compelling to watch her totally absorbed. I was also fascinated by the confidence and ease with which her younger sister, probably no more than 9 or 10 years old, applied a red (laterite-stained) slip to the yellow—ochre coloured pots, and burnished their criss-cross lines with a river pebble. She applied the 'slip' from a small calabash using a millet cob, which is surprisingly flexible and robust. She held her forefinger right down over the stalk for control. I was surprised to see her rubbing the burnishing stone over the ware back and forth, rather than in one direction, and achieving a smooth shine with two coats. By the time I went to look for the driver, to see if he had escaped, there were nine or ten pot bases formed over calabashes, sitting upturned in the sun. Leticia's Mum then moved them to a cooler spot in the shade, after about half-an hour in the full sun. There's quite a lot of painting here along the main passageway but it looks 'old'; two to three years? I've heard that women don't have time to paint much anymore and now that I'm here I can see why. The house is certainly 'active'; potting, thatching, and building is going on.

I really enjoyed this day. Somehow, Leticia was at ease and I felt welcomed with great enthusiasm. I felt at home. Although dusty, it was wonderfully cool and breezy for a good few hours and, as we sat under the straw roof of the outdoor cooking area, I felt very content to be here at last, after all this effort.

This page:
Wall painting, Ntonso, Ashanti, Ghana. January 1997. Photo: Imogen Ward Kouao

This page:
Printing cloth, Ntonso, Ashanti, Ghana. January 1997. Photo: Imogen Ward Kouao

The driver was asleep on a 'rack' under the thatch. Some of the children ran away when they saw me. In Zaare, David Nsoh had told me that unless they go to school, children see very few white people, so I guess they feel scared. Slowly, I tried to make contact just by saying, "tuma, tuma", and some of them asked my name. I don't know how I will remember their names; at one point, I counted ten children and I know this is not all. They were very reticent but I noticed them 'inspecting' me; the way their soft eyes looked at me told me they were curious. It was great to try Kusale but, as I am only just learning a few words in Gurune (spoken by the Frafra in Bolgatanga), it's quite confusing as the accent is different. I was invited to dance by a woman with a young baby and so I stood up and started moving gently to the lilting sound of the 'violin'. We both smiled and I enjoyed relaxing into dancing. Leticia was still hard at work cooking. She congratulated me in Kusale. We are curious about each other. I wonder if I surprised her? Impossible to know unless you get really close.

I walked around the outside of the house: the earthen walls are reddish, grey–brown in colour. The house is large. As you walk around it, it curves and turns and then you find 'indentations' where the exterior wall flows 'concavely', and then 'convexly'. All around are fields with the stubble of millet stalks, in rows about four or five metres around the house. A small paw-paw tree is growing outside the house, close to the wall. All the animals seem to live outside: goats, sheep and rabbits, and the men are building new accommodation for them. We ate and I asked that the driver be given some chop. He must have been tired because he slept for most of the six hours that we were there. He did really well; the roads are not easy. The chop was tasty, with cabbage, tomatoes and onions. Vegetables here tend to be very small but sweet and flavoursome.

I couldn't bear to watch anymore the girl burnishing pots without trying myself, so I asked if I could 'follow' her. A pot arrived. I sat down, started burnishing and remembered Mo. Looking at Leticia's Mum and sister I could see their 'clarity of purpose' right in front of me. It was enjoyable to start something and I thought about how I'd like to work 'on the wall'. I've started drawing pods, so many in Africa, and so beautiful: deep red kola, and long, yellow-green, bean-type pods which lie at the entrance to the Mission. I finished off one pot. Leticia's father came to protest that 'Madam' was sitting on the ground and that I should be given one of the small wooden stools to sit on but I was happy and he went away. After a while I decided to think about leaving. Nature is totally dictating the structure of my day and I wanted to be home before 'biting time'. We took about two hours to get back, stopped at Christy's for a coke and then home. I was exhausted but happy.

This page:
Printing cloth, Ntonso, Ashanti, Ghana. January 1997. Photo: Imogen Ward Kouao

Pages 316–330:
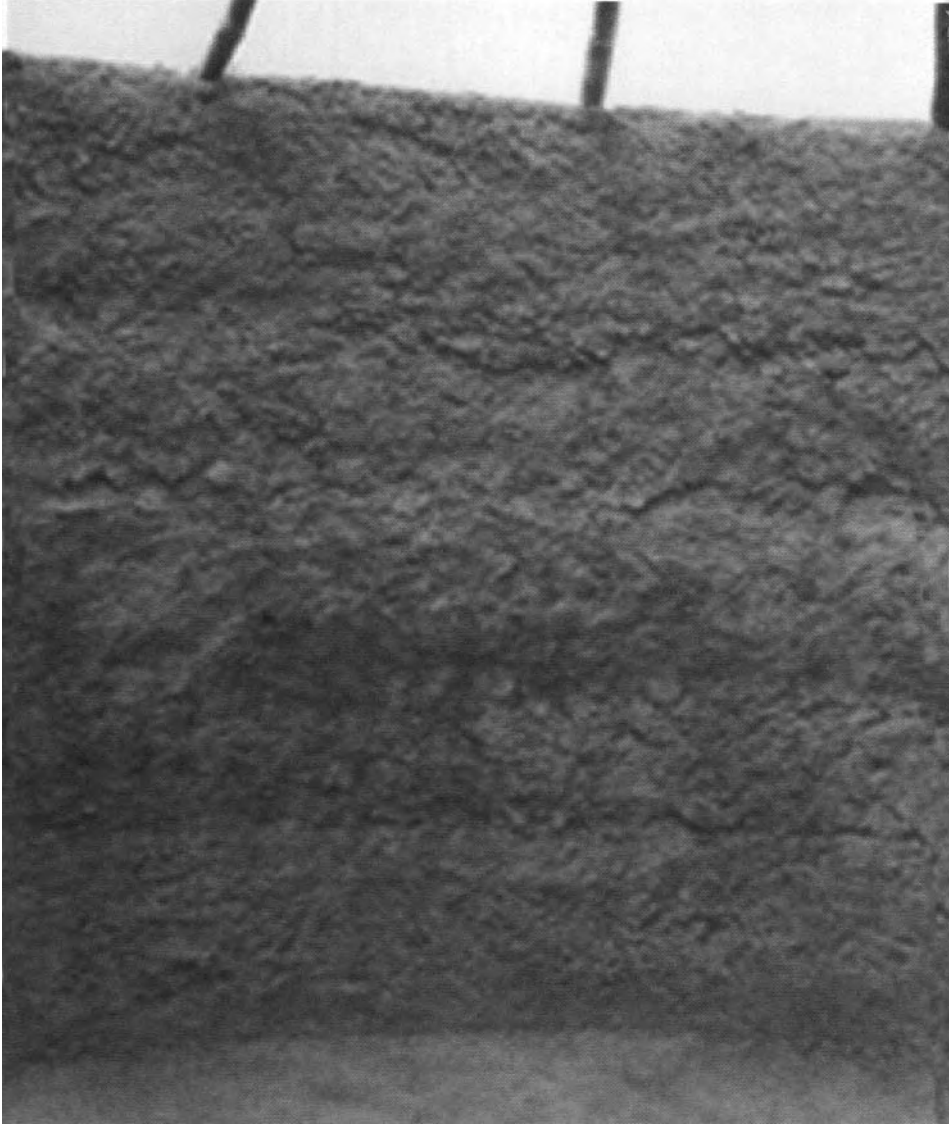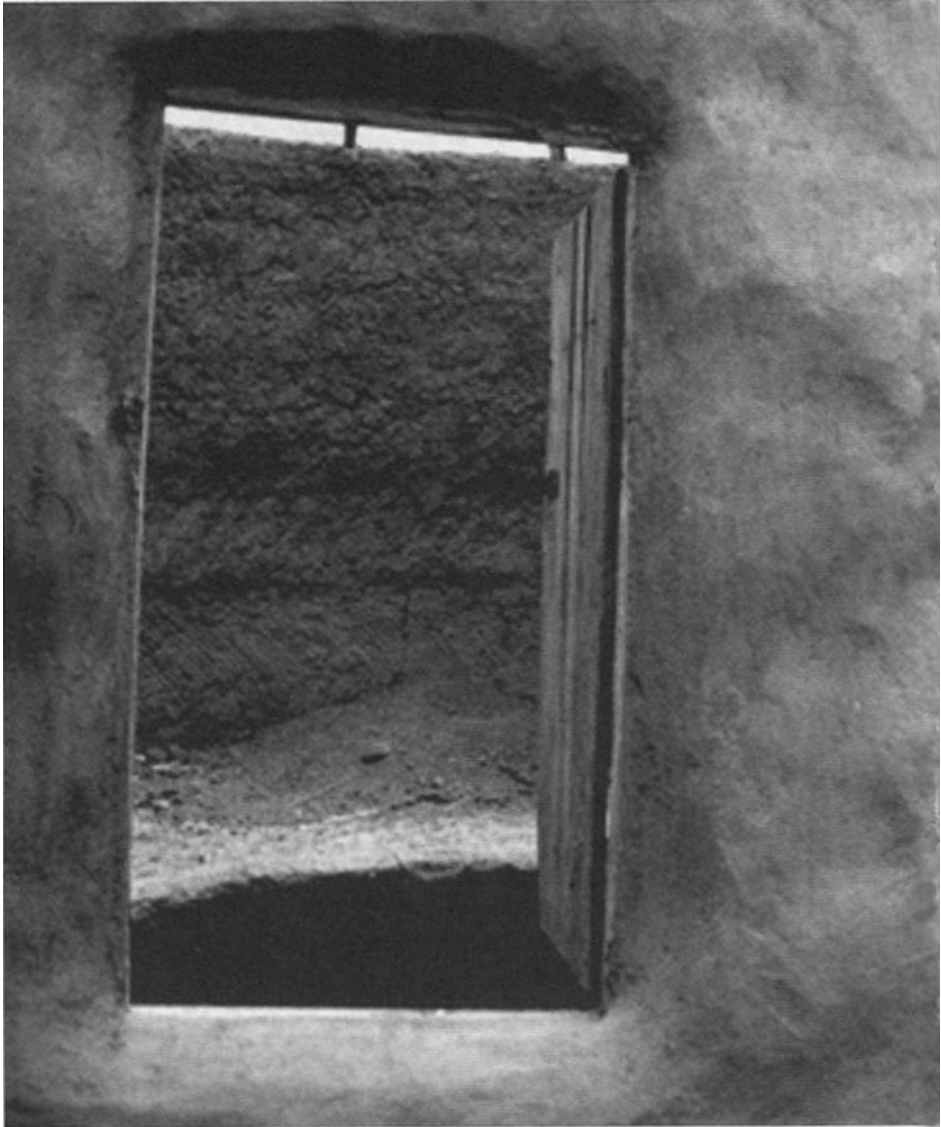All photographs: Imogen Ward Kouao.
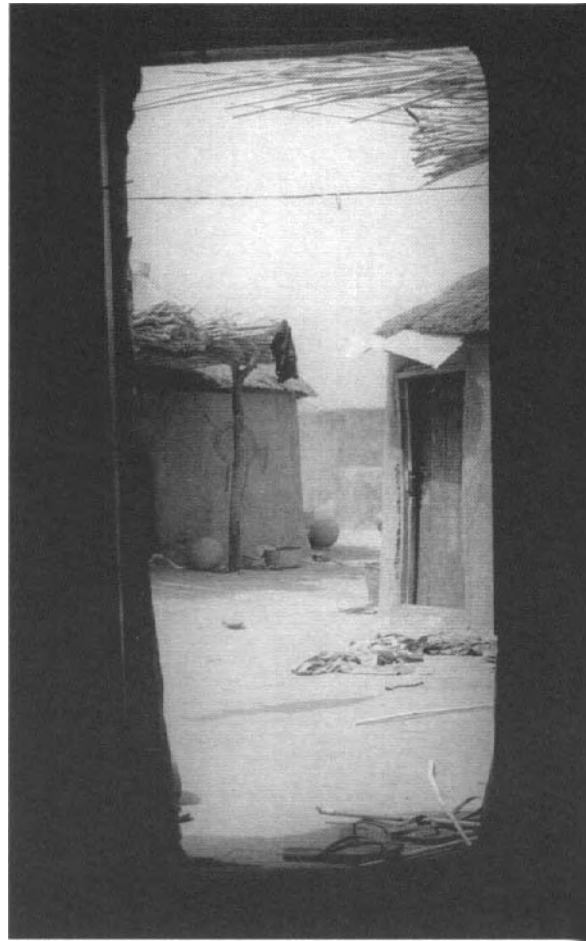
CONVERSATION

Anything Red Doesn't Come to the House
Extract from a conversation between Leticia Azuru and Imogen Ward Kouao.
(Ayeebo's house, Kusanaba, Ghana, 16 February 1997)

It's about 10.30 am and already the temperature is in the mid-30s. We are seated on a large, woven, plastic mat, inside Leticia's mother, Awane's, store-room, an oblong, mud and straw thatch building. It is dark and cool inside; the only light source comes through an open door, illuminating part of the room but leaving the rest in shadow. We are drinking 'Milo'. Chickens wander in and out. Leticia has given me her permission to interview her. I balance the tape recorder on a small wooden stool. There is an atmosphere of excitement as we begin to speak:

Leticia Azuru

So you wouldn't hear any sound from it?

Imogen Ward Kouao

No... you will later, when we play it back. For now, it's just taping our speaking...(pause). Is that okay?

LA   Oh. Mmm.

IWK   What I would like to know is how you learned to paint?

LA   How I learned?

IWK   Yes, who taught you?

LA   No, me, I'm someone curious. I can say no-one taught me. I learned it myself. I'm someone, really, when I see something I start learning it, maybe by asking. You see. So, maybe, when I was in school, when I came home and I see that they are...the people, they plaster and then, maybe, they are doing some design, I try to do it on my own. And, when I see the old ladies doing it I try to stand by her, put a helping hand and, maybe, help her paint.[5] By doing that it was easier for me so, all in all, when you want to know the background, no-one taught me. I learned it myself. You see.

---

5   Amongst the Kussasi, wall painting is customarily a female activity whilst building is usually men's work, though these boundaries do not apply exclusively. Whilst working at Kusanaba, children came to add their drawings, sums and proverbs to the walls.
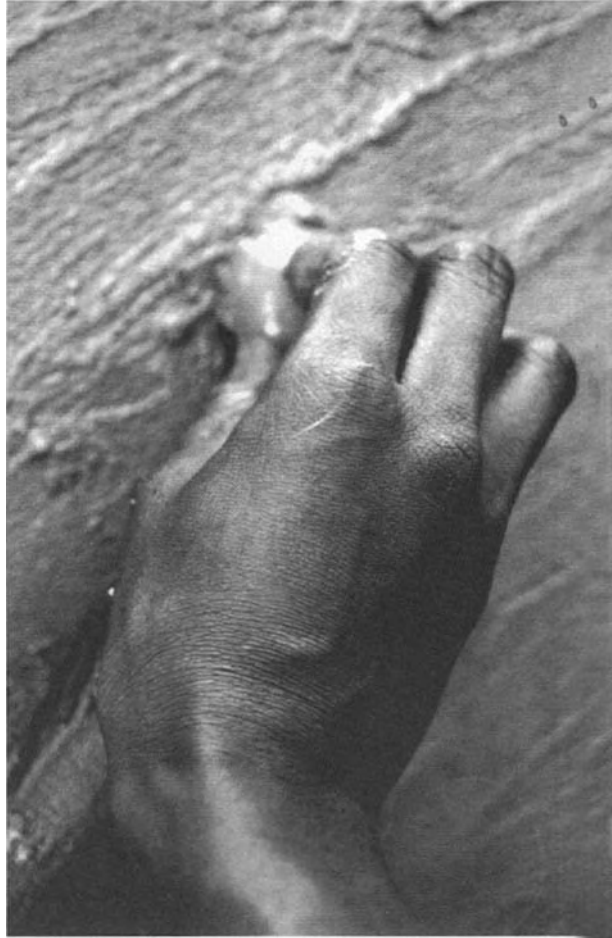
IWK   In that way you learnt?

LA   Ah-ha. I can say it's inherited because my grandmother was doing it; she was doing it. And when we were born and bred in the south,[6] when we came down, she was already old and not strong enough to do either painting or the moulding of pots. So it was that lady... I was doing this, and that, and that...she tried to explain how she worked when she was strong.[7]

IWK   Ah-ha.

LA   So, my painting is my curiosity! (laughs).

IWK   Ah-ha. You see!

LA   I didn't take it serious until Thomas[8] came. Ya...I didn't take it serious because I didn't require it.

IWK   (moving the tape-recorder) It's okay, I'm just lifting it.

LA   I didn't take it serious until...my schooling was disturbing me or, maybe, it was my future plans. I was expecting to be a secretary and really, when I entered the school I did typing and shorthand.[9]

IWK   That was your plan? It was very different?

LA   Yes. So it was after the Stage One, when we did the typing and shorthand. It was, okay, a white lady who taught us in the school of typing and shorthand, but she told us it was very, very, very difficult. Before one could pass shorthand and typing, she wrote it eight times before she had it; so it's very, very difficult. Until you pass it you have to try hard. Maybe you write it as much as possible. You try; any angle at all you hear, maybe you rush, you try here, you try there, in order to... maybe...get your skills....

IWK   So maybe it would have taken a long time?

---

6   Azuru Leticia Akurugu was born in Tema, about 25 km east of Accra, the capital, in 1971. Today, she and her twin sister, Awini Georgina Akurugu, live mainly with their father and other family members in Tema, although Leticia considers Kusanaba, a village in the north and home of her ancestors, to be her 'real' home.

7   Leticia first went to the north when she was 8, in 1979. Her mother, Awane, her father's first (senior) wife, lives in Kusanaba, with her husband's two other wives and children, Leticia's married brothers, and their families.

8   Thomas Reichstein, a German artist and photogapher who, whilst travelling in Ghana, had seen a postcard of wall painting in the Upper East Region, and decided to try and locate the paintings and the mural painters. After being introduced to Leticia and photographing examples of her work *in situ*, which he commissioned, he invited her to stay in Germany for 4 months. There, he commissioned her to paint a gallery, various offices and his own home, and to show her work alongside his own in the exhibition, *'Import-Export'*, from 2 October to 6 November 1994, at the Galerie Rahnitzgasse, Dresden, Germany.

9   Leticia was a student at 'Bolgatech', or the Technical College, Bolgatanga, regional capital of the north of Ghana.

Photo
credits:
Adinkra stamp,
Ntonso,
Ghana,
January 1997.

Photograph:
Imogen Ward
Kouao
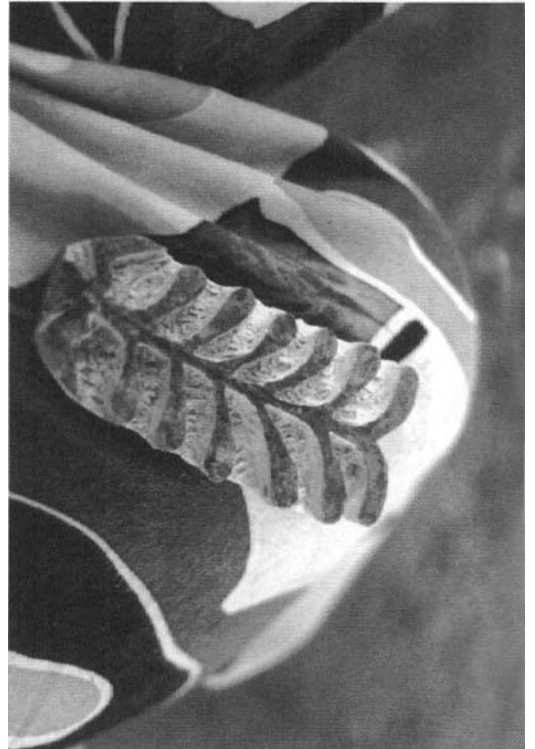
LA   Ya.

IWK   So you could have been wasting good time?

LA   Mmm. Ya.

IWK   But...when Thomas came, you said that...you realized that you had something important?

LA   Yeah, we stayed together. He told me he wanted...he is an artist, and then he comes to Ghana, and when he sees an interesting person, an artist, maybe they will join together.

IW   Right.

LA   So, he told me if I am interested. I say yes, I will be interested; very, very interesting because it will be my chance of really visiting, or seeing, maybe...things, and, very good because...I haven't been there. I haven't been outside[10] before, so it will be...

IWK   It's not the same?

LA   Ya. So, I was happy. I told him I was happy, really. That was my first visit. He said, if you are happy, then I am inviting you to Germany. I will give you money to prepare your passport. Maybe, if there are some things in addition, or whatever....

IWK   Mmm.

LA   So, I prepared the visa and the passport. He told me I should get contact with Ann-Christine.[11] He was the one who made the introduction... so he told me, he gave me directions where I would get Ann-Christine, and I tried; I had her. The time I had her was the time Thomas arrived from Germany again, so I was very, very lucky; I didn't suffer. So, we went together to the German Embassy.

IWK   So it was all arranged?

LA   Ya. So after I had my passport, the following day he also arrived. We did everything together. We prepared the visa. There wasn't any problem

IWK   It was simple?

LA   Ya, easier.

10   That is, out of Ghana.

11   Ann-Christine Bainge, Administrator at the Goethe Institut (German Cultural Centre), Accra. She has since become a friend and patron of Leticia, and has commissioned her work both publicly and privately.

Photo credits: The scored wall splashed with water, in preparation for plastering, Kusanaba, Ghana, February 1997.

Photograph: Imogen Ward Kouao
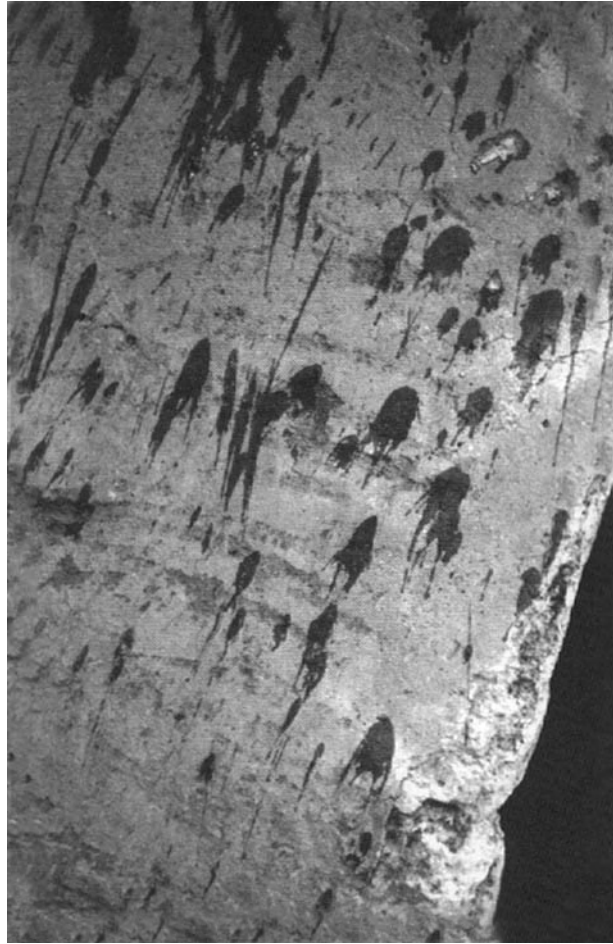
IWK   Were you surprised that European people would be interested?

LA   Yes, I was very, very surprised. Maybe we'd been seeing people, maybe looking, coming up, maybe asking qustions or maybe they see, they snap pictures. They go; we never see them again. So, I was very, very surprised to see him say, I'm inviting you to go with me for an exhibition, so I was happy, really. I enjoyed; despite the cold I enjoyed it.[12]

IWK   Before you went to Europe did you ever use the word 'artist'? If you had been painting and you had not met Thomas, did you use the word 'artist' to describe yourself?

LA   No...no.

IWK   There was no word for artist?[13] It was just...what?

LA   Me, I myself didn't take it to be...I didn't take it to be a serious thing. Ya! *(emphatically)*. My only thing was...my typing and my shorthand in the school.

IWK   Well, that was your work.

LA   Ya. Yeah.

IWK   So, painting. Is painting something like...it's maintenance, or, is it a bit like cooking? It's just another job in the house?

LA   The painting?

IWK   Here, in the house, here...

LA   In the north?

IWK   In the north here or, in this house... in your house.

LA   It's not a job... it's not a job here.

IWK   But, I'm trying to understand how you see it. If you are doing it here, it's not as an artist. You don't do it for your work; it's not your work. You don't get paid. So, what's it for...? What's its purpose?

LA   It's just decoration.

IWK   Okay.

---

12   Leticia left Ghana for the first time aged 24, in September 1994. Her destination was Dresden. She travelled with Thomas Reichstein as his guest, and as an exhibiting artist, returning to Ghana in January 1995.

13   The Kusassi do not have a word that translates as 'artist', though skilled and creative work is certainly recognised. Rather, an artist is defined by his or her activity, e.g. one is a 'moulder of pots'. As Leticia told me, 'A designer is a person who draws on the walls and other structures. In Germany, I would call myself an artist; here, I'm a designer and a potter as well.' (Fieldnotes, Kusanaba, 7 March 1997).

Photo credits: Adinkra stamps floating in 'medicine' (printing ink), Ntonso, Ghana, January 1997.

Photograph: Imogen Ward Kouao
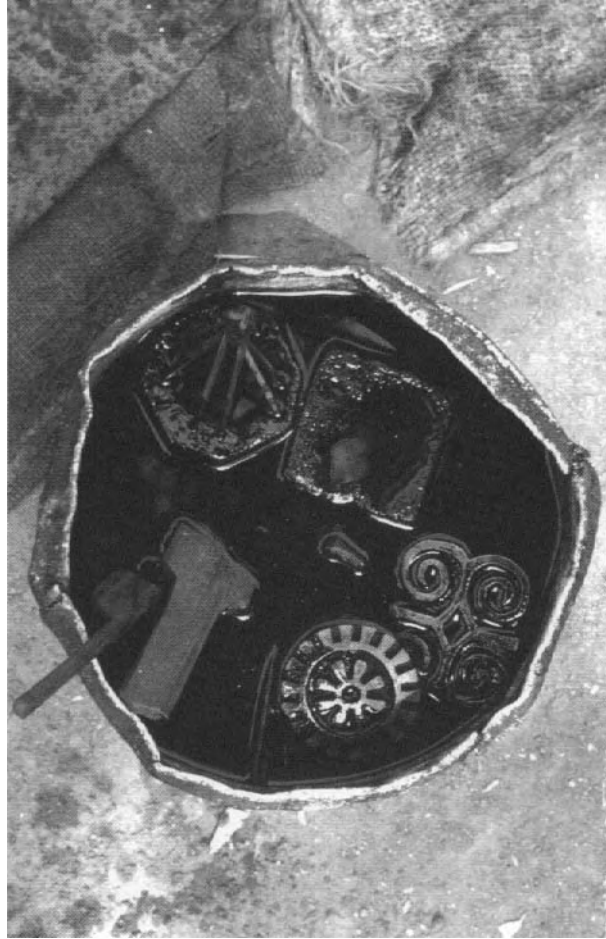
LA   It's decoration on the walls, maybe for people to admire.[14]

IWK   Yes.

LA   That is the main thing. And once I know how to paint and do more, you can come to me and ask for help.

IWK   Ah-ha.

LA   Maybe you; I can also ask you to do something for me. It's only the..painting you don't know. You know something I don't also know, so it's....

IWK   There are possibilities...(pause)...what about printing?

LA   Ya.

IW   You see, I had an idea that maybe we could do some printing; as well as paint, we could print. Do you know how to print?

LA   Yes.

IWK   I mean, you take something and you make a mark...like that...*(demonstrates by 'inking up' a section of a seed pod, using soluble crayon as 'ink', and printing it on paper)*

LA   Mmm.

IWK   But, until I see the paint, I don't know if it's possible.

LA   We will gather everything so that we see.

IWK   We'll see! (pause). I think it's sad that there must be other people like you in these villages, who don't think that they have something valuable.

LA   Mmm-hmm.

IWK   And then I, somebody like me would come...or you now...and you would, you would say this is valuable, I appreciate it, I like it, it's beautiful (pause)...that's it...

LA   Yes.

IWK   Would you like...would you like the painting to be more valued? I'm not talking about money now. I'm talking...you know, the way that you might wear a beautiful cloth. Now, in Ghana, everybody knows the cloth, everybody likes it. Most people seem to like the cloth, most people wear the cloth and they would appreciate it. Would you like people to think the

---

14   This idea of admiration on the part of the viewer is encapsulated in *bambolse*, 'a term applied to wall painting by the Gurensi of northern Ghana [which] implies adorned, decorated, or made more attractive as distinct from *pupurego*, meaning decorated with intent to sell.' (*Bambolse Art Journal*, vol 4, anos 1 + 2, KUNST, August 1995, p 47). The intention of that action 'must have been primarily to increase the aesthetic merit of the form if the decoration is to be Bambolse.' (Smith, F.T., 'Gurensi Wall Painting', *African Arts*, July 1978, vol XI, no 4, p36).

objects – vegetables · grouped, ordered
printing on wall?
pods ;
kitchen utensils

Illustration credits:
Pages from my
sketchbook.
'Objects –vegetables,
grouped and ordered...'

Sketch:
Imogen Ward Kouao

same about the painting?

LA   Yes. Now that I...

IWK   Definite so! *(laughing)*.

LA   Yes. Already, I started; when I was in Accra I was making money. You know, first I painted Ann-Christine's house,[15] after which the...you see, the Gallery; the Institute.[16] Eh, one house from Accra, I've forgotten it...a white lady married to a Ghanaian. They have two children. A very nice house; with the painting it was very beautiful. Yes.

IWK   Are they artists?

LA   They are not artists.

IWK   Are they...?

LA   Apart from Patti's house, in the short...anyway, they asked me. I didn't have time. There wasn't time. He started, even last year, he's asking, 'Where is Leticia? When do you think you come and paint my restaurant?' And I say, 'I'll come. I'll 'phone you. I'll talk to you through the 'phone when I'm ready and I...' (pause).

IWK   But..I've heard...going back. I heard a story that the painting sometimes is not...is decoration, yes. But I heard a story that the painting sometimes; ah (clicks)... a little bit like a drum; it tells, it gives a message, it has a story, and if you know the story, you can read it. Like the cloth, like Adinkra[17]...you know, and...am I right?

LA   You are right. That is why I say it will be good, or much easier, when you come to the village[18] because the elderly people, they started it, and they will know much.[19]

---

15   The Bainge's house, in the Airport Residential area of Accra. Ann-Christine Bainge told me that she tries to support Leticia; this support led to a commission for the Goethe Institut, as well as other private work.

16   The Goethe Institut, Ring Road East, Accra. The 'interior' walls of the garage, visible from the front entrance to the building, were painted by Leticia in April 1996.

17   Adinkra is a 'cloth of plain textile onto which originally non-figurative emblems with proverbial connotations are printed with black pigment using stamps cut out from pieces of calabash. Production is concentrated upon Ntonso, near Kumasi, Ghana' (Picton, J., *The Art of African Textiles. Technology, Tradition and Lurex*, Barbican Art Gallery/Lund Humphries, 1995, p 132). Adinkra cloth is used on funeral occasions.

18   I was invited to stay at Leticia's home, and it had been my intention to live in the village but, sadly, an acute meningitis epidemic, which broke out shortly after we arrived, prevented this.

19   Leticia is unusual in that today few young women paint. I was told by many local people that this practice could easily die out. Cement is replacing mud as a building material and this is a further threat to the painting. Not all female family members paint, e.g. Leticia's mother did not learn to paint but remains strictly a plasterer and a potter.

Illustration credits:
Drawings from a
sketchbook, Ghana,
1997.

Sketch:
Imogen Ward Kouao

IWK   They know more?

LA   Ya.

IWK   Ah-ha.

LA   So, sometimes you can ask and will be told. They will explain to our understanding.

IWK   But you don't know.

LA   No.

IWK   So would that be interesting for you? You, you would also learn?

LA   Yes.

IWK   The knowledge is with the elders?

LA   Yes. It's not everybody... that paints. Here... it is divided into two. Some people from the other villages, they don't do the plastering with the red colour. Due to their custom, they don't like it. The red doesn't go. Even clothings, they don't wear red. Anything red doesn't come to the house. So, people like that, it's only with the white...and the black.[20]

IWK   Is that why you get the zigzag...like this? I call it zigzag: black and white.[21]

LA   Yes, ya. So, such people, when you don't see the red colour there...you must understand that the colour...they don't like it, or they forbid it, yes, they forbid the red colour.[22] And then, the other, they plaster with the red, the red and white but, with the black, they don't like the decoration. I learnt, the olden times, with the decoration on the walls...the children, they feared it; that was the first time of seeing it on the walls, so they cried, and some even died...(pause)[23]

IWK   Ah-ha.

---

20   'For colouring you have the black, the red and the white:' The black comes from (a natural source) deep in the ground. 'You find it where you find gold; from the bush.' Red, or laterite, a deep red pigment which is naturally occurring; 'You dig it from the ground before the light comes. This is our custom. You melt it in water.' The white is also from the ground; 'you dig it. It's from another village far from here (Kamega, near Tilli). You can buy it as a powder from the market (at Binaba), not as a rock. You soak it in water. It can be ground.' *(From conversations with Leticia, Kusanaba, 16 February 1997).*

21   The exterior walls of some houses were painted in a black and white zigzag pattern, which mirrored the 'herringbone' construction of the roof thatch locally.

22   The red colour is associated with the various threats of misfortune, evil, death and destruction, and is therefore taboo. In contrast, a 'ring', or line of deep brown paint, running around the perimeter wall of the compound at Kusanaba, was placed to ward away evil.

23   Leticia's grandmother, now deceased, who lived in Bulingel, a nearby village, told her that the people of that community began to paint their houses for the first time. When they first saw the painting in the form of horses and snakes, they
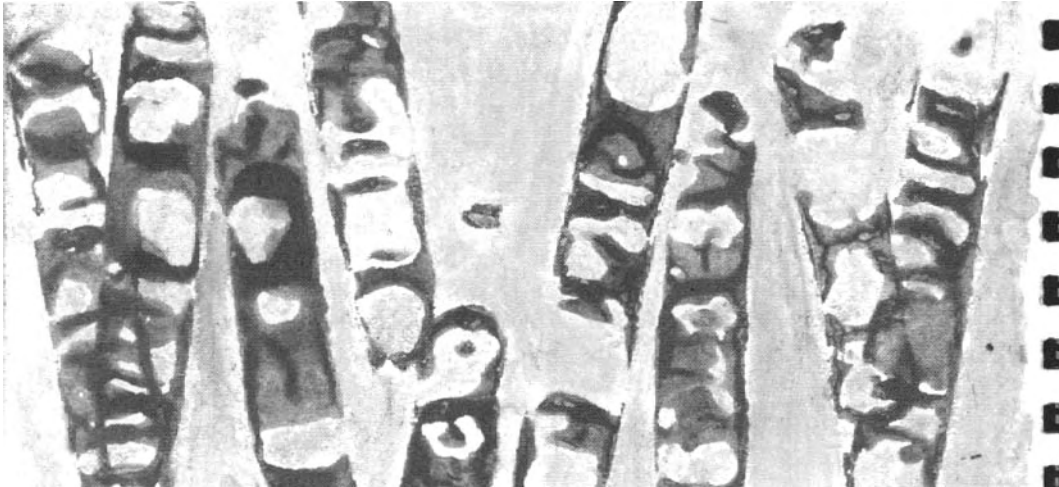
Illustration credits:
Drawings from a
sketchbook, Ghana,
1997.

Sketch:
Imogen Ward Kouao

LA   So, because of that...

IWK   It had *ju-ju*, power....

LA   Ya.

IWK   It had power?

LA   Ya, so they didn't like it. That was their reason, their main reason why they don't paint, or they don't do the decoration on the wall.

IWK   They're worried about it?

LA   Yes.

IWK   They're frightened?

LA   The children, they are frightened.

IWK   Ah-ha. In Kumasi, or in Ashanti, the black and the red is associated with death, isn't it?

LA   Yes. Ya.

IWK   It's for the funeral, it's not for the house.

LA   It's not for anything. But here, we mixed it. But it's because the country is becoming modernized, or, what do we call it nowadays, that we, the northerners also do that. We...the clothings; we are not concerned whether death or these things we mix. We don't have clothings for death, the funerals or anything. No. Our thing is maybe when we are preparing,[24] we have some performances. Maybe they get the Kente. We've got our own Kente...

IWK   Yes, I've seen....

LA   Not the Kumasi-made, but the local one.

IWK   The local woven, the cloth, yes....

LA   Yes. They use that one maybe for the performances...after which they hide it, and they have....

IWK   Ah-ha. (Leticia gets up to look for something which is concealed in the roof-thatch; it's a belt, woven in the local Kente style.)

LA   You wear it around your waist.

IWK   Ah...it's beautiful isn't it.

---

were fearful and cried out, and one child died. This was at a time when 'animals could enter your home'. The people believed that the animals inhabited the walls of the house' and that 'the snake lived in the house', i.e. they thought it was 'real'.

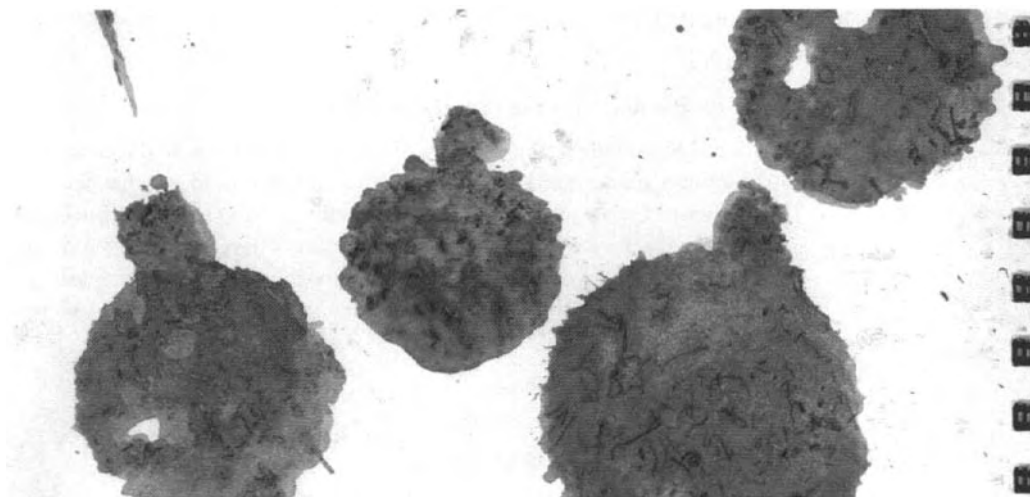24   i.e. preparations for a funeral.

Illustration credits:
Drawings from a
sketchbook, Ghana,
1997.

Sketch:
Imogen Ward Kouao

LA   Mmm. You wear it, and then you use that cloth.

IWK   Is it woven grass? It's made from grass?

LA   It's grass, yes, it's grass. They use colour to colour it. After colouring it, then they start weaving. They weave it with hands, like the Bolga baskets.[25]

IWK   Yes. It's beautiful isn't it?

LA   Yes.

IWK   Do you wear it?

LA   I don't like it.

IWK   You don't like it. How come? (Leticia remains silent)

IWK   Do you like to wear the beads? May I ask you?

LA   Yes, I do wear them.

IWK   You do wear the beads. Because Benjamin was saying he thinks they are really beautiful, the beads. And not many women will wear them now. Because, he said, they make such a lovely shape. Because they sit here, don't they, on your hip (draws an imaginary string of beads around her hips)? They sit there. Is it?

LA   Yes. In here, we, most of, okay, the olden times, you know, they used...maybe there wasn't clothing, so most women, sometimes, they cover their private parts.

IWK   Ah-ha.

LA   And then, maybe with...so, when you are a lady without beads it's forbidden. So, it's custom. So when you're a lady without beads it's not fine. When you...something may happen to you.

IWK   If you had your beads you were respectable?

LA   Yes.

IWK   Is that it? Something like respect; you could have respect?

LA   Yeah.

IWK   But with no beads, no respect?

LA   No, you don't have nothing. So it's very, very important for the ladies to wear beads.

---

25   The 'grass' (dried river straw) is split and then rolled on the thigh into a twisted strand. These strands, once dyed, are then ready for weaving. As well as belts and baskets, men, women and children weave hats and fans. All are made both for local use and for export. Like painting, basket and hat making are dry season activities. Unlike painting, the trade in such items supports an otherwise subsistence economy.

AFTERTHOUGHTS

[Within the workshop], creativity already involves the maker in a dialogue with material, language, meaning and function. Similarly, art objects may be seen as reflections of the continuing dialogue between artists, between the artist and his or her audience.[26]

In the few months that I spent in Ghana, I gained the chance to meet and work together with other artists and, though brief, this opportunity opened the door for conversations, both visual and verbal, to take place between us. Through the wall-painting apprenticeship to Leticia and her family, I gained first-hand experience of the practice itself. This experience was both intimate and sensual in nature: mixing up fresh cow dung and sand, and slapping it on the wall to form a fine layer of plaster; the satisfaction of burnishing 'red' into the wall, polishing it over and over again, until it gleamed, reflective as an old, battered, copper saucepan; the sensation of painting using a millet cob 'brush', dipped in creamy liquid pigment, yielding a mark that relies upon the steadiness of one's hand drawing it across the faceted clay surface, one's body relaxed and breathing gently; the pleasure of 'splashing' boiled 'dawa-dawa' juice on to the painted surface to act as a varnish; the numerous organic forms and indentations, curved, tapering, and all at human height, to enjoy painting on; the release from geometry, or the rectangular format of paper, canvas, concrete and steel. It felt a little like embarking on a huge, continuous drawing, not so monumental as to be overwhelming in scale, but large enough to feel the free 'sweep' of your arm, with a 'brush' full of paint, meet the surface. All these will remain 'body memories'.

Working together was both enjoyable and challenging. At first I was invited, under Leticia's direction, to imitate local designs, having watched and then performed the processes involved in preparing and plastering the wall. As the project developed, I would follow Leticia's lead, by attempting to complement her work. In one painting made for a circular room in Kusanaba, Leticia painted two large 'figures' (my interpretation), leaving me to add my drawings. Seeing the figures *in situ* as quite 'theatrical', I tried to complement them by the addition of a 'frame', or 'curtains', at either side. On one side, I transposed motifs from some of Leticia's drawings on to paper. On the other, I picked out elements from the painted figures themselves, to create a geometric 'sash' form. This was extended beyond the adjoining wall, and on to the floor, in an experiment to explore the relationship between the two.

Once we reached Zaare, where we were invited to paint the entrance to Anogyelson's house, our painting became wholly collaborative. Leticia insisted that I

do 'Mbo' designs (my given name in Bolgatanga), and we both began to incorporate elements from each other's drawings into our work. Because the site at Zaare was large, the entrance and surrounding wall spanning over 15 metres in length, I wanted to get an idea in advance of how we would approach the painting. I asked Leticia to draw her ideas out. At first, she seemed reluctant but later returned and, seizing some charcoal from my box of drawing materials, produced a drawing of a 'two-limbed figure' (again, my interpretation), which incorporated a pattern of seed pods, derived from crayon drawings she had seen in my sketch book. Her drawing did not show the figures' position on the wall though, and the moment we started painting, not knowing how we would proceed, was one of the scariest in my life! We consulted and advised each other as we went, 'overlapping' one other so that we each had enough room to continue with whatever stage of the painting had been reached. When we stood back, we did not want for encouragement from the large crowd, who had gathered to watch our work. I once heard the word 'bambolse' used to describe our drawings, by the elderly woman who had kept watch from the day we started. I was aware that perhaps the 'simple' fact of my presence signified the 'stamp of approval', and that anything we did might be viewed as attractive. I also believe that the effort we put into the work, including clearing up the whole of the surrounding compound area, and completing the painting before it was time to leave, was simply accepted with appreciation and generosity on the part of the Anogyelson family.[27]

27 According to a friend who visits the area regularly, our painting in Zaare has not been disturbed and remains *in situ*, one year on (April 1998).

Completion was marked by a grand opening, which, at the request of the family included a photographic session, in which we took turns to pose with family members, in the height of the midday sun, and before saying farewell. During my stay in Bolgatanga, I gained the chance to meet and listen to local people's perceptions of the painting, and to begin to deepen my awareness of some of the factors governing its complex relationship to the environment. What at first seemed a 'simplistic' idea in terms of 'decoration', became more complex in scope. The more I listened to local artists, and others, the more it became apparent that the concept of 'bambolse' included active appreciation on the part of the viewer. Bambolse implied reciprocity, participation, or a vital involvement; in effect, a dialogue between the maker and viewer. Indeed, I was repeatedly told by the Aninga family of Zuarungu, that, 'I would not be appreciating it (the painting) if she (the artist) had not done it.' The painting is intimately bound up with everyday life. At marriage, a woman is entitled to her own room. Painting is her way of marking this event by decorating, or embellishing, the walls of her home; by making something ordinary special. The fact that she has painted her home will be seen as a sign of her pride in her environment. The 'ordinariness' of making things special was discussed eloquently by Samuel Aninga, an artist and Assembly Man:

the decorations have some kind of relationship; it relates those objects on the floor to the wall. They relate that way, so you feel they are all within you. If I build a house, and I would like to decorate, then I must take into consideration the things inside.[28]

I learnt that the imagery used in painting often relates to other cultural artefacts, such as woven items (baskets, etc.), scarification or body marks, and other forms of visual embellishment. For example, the herringbone pattern used in basketry is mirrored in similar zigzag forms used in architecture (both in wall painting and roof-thatching). These forms are all 'interwoven' in a complex 'texture', which reflects distinctive, cultural groupings in the north:

the designing has one pattern...it has its own significant pattern which relates to the cultural district; your body, your environment and all that, and when you look at pieces, the way they design the pieces, you go to look at the wall and there seems to be some kind of relationship. When you look at them, there must be some relationship, and this is actually how they also got their designs.[29]

Imagery may also derive from animal and bird life. Such imagery may be intimately connected to the life of the ancestors, whose role in advising, protecting and ensuring the stability of the community, cannot be underestimated. For example, Samuel Aninga told me:

they also feel the importance of the chameleon related to the human being, in the sense that some ancestors change into it...so they bring it in (i.e. depict it) near a granary as a kind of 'watch'. That food is quite important to us, and for that matter there must be an important design to it.[30]

The use of such imagery is sometimes secret. As I was told by Leticia and Samuel, 'the elderly people know more'. This knowledge is, to a great extent, secret because it protects the community from harm. I did not feel that it was my place, nor was it necessary for me, to try to 'unravel' and decipher each and every image. It was enough to know that such perceptions underlay the painting.

The omittance, or inclusion, of certain colours, designs and images also signifies the power of *ju-ju*, or local belief systems, and these dictate how, and indeed whether, the painting is made in the first place.[31] Designs can relate to the inhabitant of any particular dwelling, and may reflect key aspects of their everyday life. For example, the image of a walking stick, which literally supports a frail body, might also be used to show that the building is inhabited by an elderly man or woman.

Finally, the desire to make one's house 'neat' and orderly and, by extension,

morally good and belonging to the community, are all factors governing the activity of painting. Equally, the addition of painting makes a house peaceful, safe and 'inside' (as opposed to 'outside'). I do not, and indeed cannot, claim 'objectivity' for this project; rather, it was by approaching this journey subjectively, by listening to artists, and by the practice of painting itself, that I was able to 'glimpse' or begin to learn more about a different way of seeing things. Some aspects of my experience made me feel deeply connected to the artists; conversation seemed to flow more naturally when we employed the mutual language of painting. Others made me acutely aware of my 'differences'. Opening the door to dialogue represented a beginning; a new seed was sown.

For three months I lived in a place where art is both visible and, visibly, a celebration of life. (In the dry season, the house painting can be seen from several hundred metres' distance). Returning to my own, more private, and 'individually oriented' society was simultaneously shocking and soothing. For some months immediately afterwards I felt displaced, and mourned both the painting and those I had held company with. Paradoxically, it seemed that working together as a member of a group had in some way tested the 'individuality' I had so carefully nurtured in the studio. Painting so publicly had been challenging to my own sense of what it meant to be an artist and yet, in retrospect, it seemed the obvious, and the most celebratory thing to do. At the same time, I was rewarded by experimenting with familiar materials in a new context. As I contemplated all that I had learnt on my journey to northern Ghana, I came across some ideas about individualism and the community which, again, paradoxically, seemed to suggest the possibility for community to grow out of individualism:

we insist on individualism and self-expression because we haven't touched deep enough roots of what it is to be an individual. And I suspect that as we get closer to it, we'll discover that it is not as remote from community as we now believe.'[32]

32 Thomas Moore in conversation with Suzi Gablik, in Gablik, S., *Conversations before the End of Time*, Thames & Hudson, New York, 1995, p398.

So the question remains, only now more deeply etched in my psyche. How can the artist become more part of the community, in the sense that he or she goes out and starts designing its building and spaces? How can artists celebrate and participate wholeheartedly in the life and world around them?
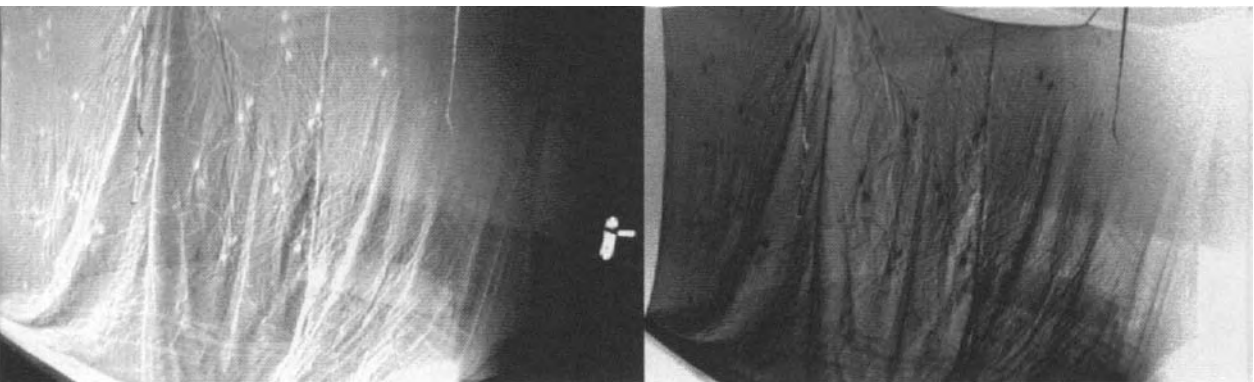
Photo credits:
Mosquito netting above bed, Kusanaba, Ghana, February 1997

Photographs: Imogen Ward Kouao.

Photo credits:
Mixing the dye, Kusanaba, Ghana, 1997.

Photographs: Imogen Ward Kouao.

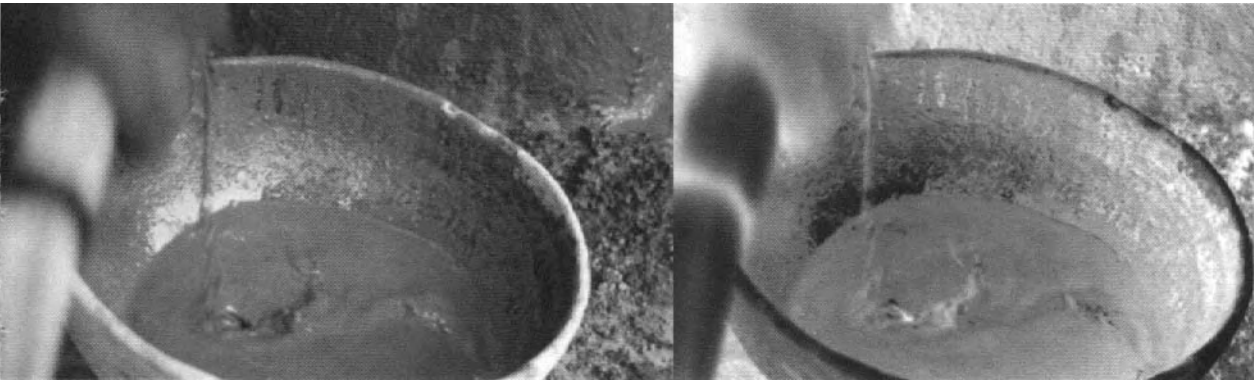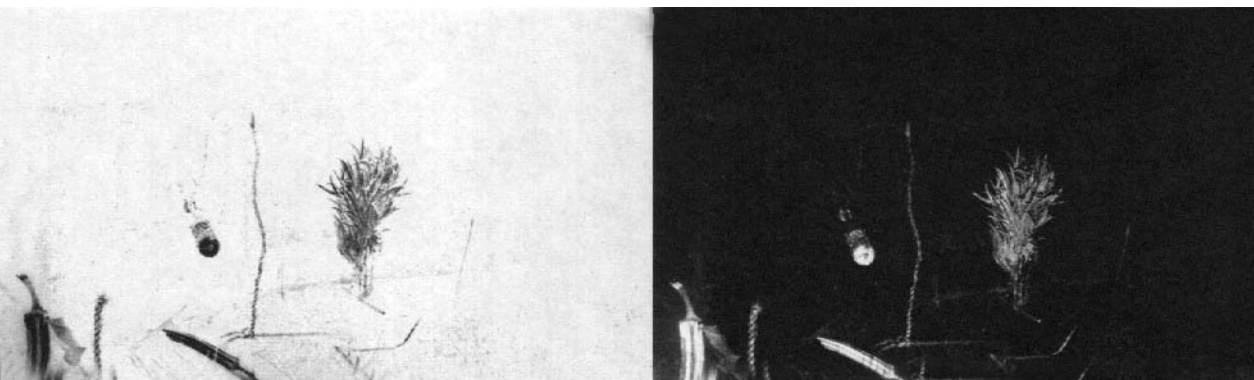**Photo credits:**
Okra and maize hanging from the roof of Awane's storeroom,
Kusanaba, Ghana, February 1997.

Photographs: Imogen Ward Kouao.

Photo credits:
Thatched roof against mud wall, Kusanaba, Ghana, 1997.

Photographs: Imogen Ward Kouao.

1 : 1

BIOGRAPHY

FELECIA DAVIS is a Visiting Assistant Professor at Cornell University in the School of Architecture. She is also principal in her design firm, Felecia Davis Design Collaborative. She has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Engineering and has completed her Master of Architecture at Princeton University. Much of her design and critical work has engaged in the examination of the intertwining of history and memory in African–American culture. Her Memorial and Museum for the African Burial Ground in lower Manhattan and her Gorée Monument to Ship Navigation and Slavery in Senegal engaged the boundaries constructed between history and memory in the formation of narratives for those sites. She has constructed an extended context of African–American historic sites in Manhattan on the web, which is titled *Places of Memory: Walking Tours of Manhattan*, to understand more clearly the significance and meaning of these spaces and the urban fabric.

12

(UN)COVERING/(RE)COVERING

(*un*)COVERING

...a stroll along Manhatten streets reveals almost nothing except dark faces to connect the Negroes with the history of New York City.

M.A.Harris, *A Negro History Tour of Manhattan, 1968*

In 1991, excavation for a 34-story federal office tower at Broadway, between Duane and Reade streets in lower Manhattan, unearthed for the public a site titled on colonial maps as the 'Negro Burial Ground'. This place, which occupied the margins of the Dutch colonial city, later the edge of the encroaching palisade construction, was the final resting place for free Africans, slaves and other impoverished people. In the seventeenth century, the grounds were the only space where Africans, free and slave, could meet together so that the burial ground was also a political rallying space. This burial ground was the Africans' only autonomous space, the only space where they were allowed to congregate with regularity in large numbers.

In the early nineteenth century, the grid of the expanding city had completely erased the burial grounds, which remained under parking lots until 1991. In 1991 and 1992, archaeological teams documented their findings. This dig presented other representations of life in Manhattan, other surfaces to be read. Four hundred and twenty bodies were excavated and are currently undergoing examination to frame the ground within a bio-cultural context which draws upon historical and archaeological data to reconstruct conditions for this group of people. One of the most painful struggles was over what was documented about the space and people, and what questions should be included as part of a research outline. Other people felt that research and display of the skeletons profaned dead ancestors and sacred space. Many communities and multiple publics were constituted and reconstituted around the many important issues concerning the burial ground.

After many battles, the site was declared in the late winter of 1992 a national and civic landmark and renamed 'The African Burial Ground'. The federal office tower is nearing completion and a plot of land on the north face of the building has been set apart

as a memorial space. The site is of great spiritual and inspirational significance, and provides a rare physical documentation of what were transient, ephemeral spaces African–Americans inhabited in the urban landscape. This proposal for a *Memorial and Museum for the African Burial Ground* reclaims the entire site, including the block which was disturbed by excavation for the tower and makes a physical place to connect the 'dark faces' to the history of the city.
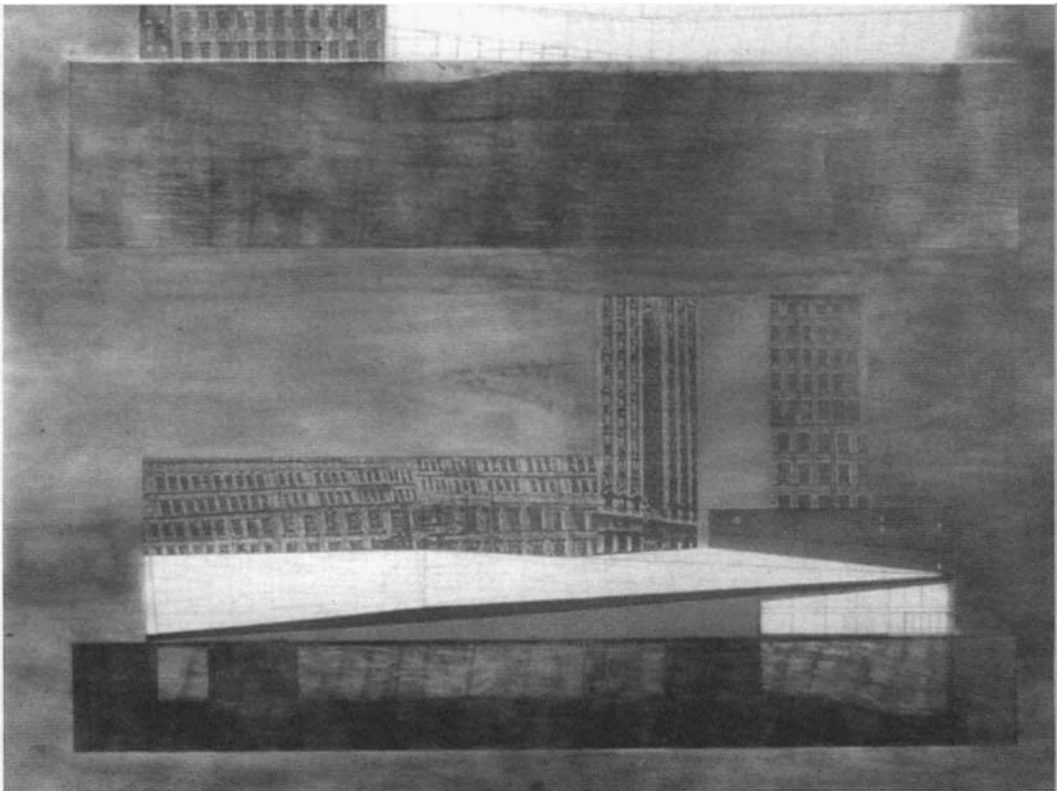
(*re*)COVERING

> *The American Negro is a unique creation: he has no counterpart anywhere, and no predecessors. The Muslims react to this fact by referring to the Negro as the 'so-called*

American Negro' and substituting for the names inherited from slavery, the letter 'X'.
James Baldwin, The Fire Next Time, 1968

There is something compelling about this 'X'. It erases and creates identity simultaneously. 'X' is ubiquitous and its meaning thus ambiguous. 'X' resists ownership, resulting in constant appropriation. It makes the invisible visible, or the visible invisible. Is there an 'X' in the architectural discipline which may begin to speak of the situation of the so-named 'African–American' architect? I am interested in architectural representations that operate like the 'X' in the name 'Malcolm X'.
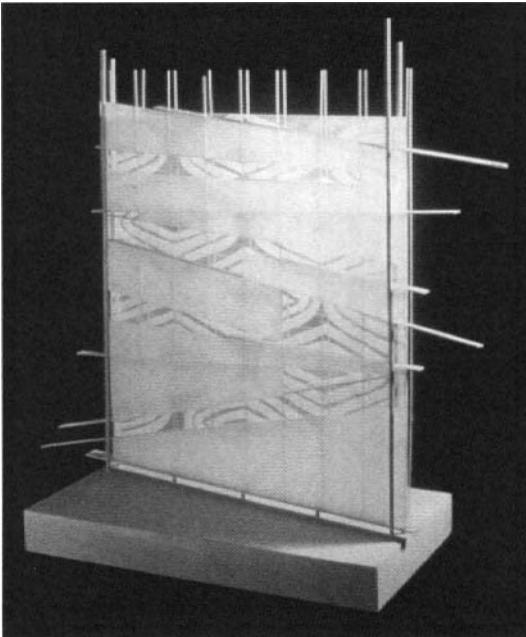
My inheritance as an architect, an 'African–American' architect, is rooted with the image. A most ephemeral and superficial root. I am removed from African traditions and heritage in time and space, but am reconnected by these fragmented images and information. On the surface of the realities, within the frames of these images, is a space to make architectural representations that operate like the mark 'X'.

These issues were lodged architecturally by recovering this sacred place in the city with a continuous skin. By lodging this architecture in this skin, shroud or cloth, it provided a space to look at problems of African–American identity in architectural terms. What was a superficial condition became the primary structuring element. Each part of the program, memorial and museum, was looked at in relationship to its covering or uncovering by this surface. There were many identities in this surface.

The memorial took the

This and
previous
page:
Model, photos by
Felecia Davis

form of a sand-blasted glass covering, akin to a burial shroud, which, at the beginning of
the use of the burial grounds in colonial Manhattan, was forbidden for fear it concealed
weapons for revolt. This shroud was a layer laid on top of the grid of the city streets and
covered the entire grounds, not just the site of the excavation. The grounds, as such,
would wipe out the grid and be seen in the city through the grid. The federal tower slated
to occupy the site was eliminated from this project. The value of the land as sacred space
is underscored by the absence of repetitious floor plates. This site is an inheritance paid
for in full by the wages of slavery. The memorial was thought of as one surface because
it allowed space-making independently of traditional gridded building systems. This
surface also did away with the notion of establishing a datum or origin and undermined
the idea of working in figure and ground or mutually defining black and white. At the
block of the excavation, called *Block 154*, this layer of sand-blasted glass was disturbed
and folded to make a canopy for the hole that the archaeologists left. This was not the
type of dig where there were substantial ruins exposed: there was primarily churned soil,
and after the bodies had been taken and stored for research, the point of origin was
erased. So, at *Block 154*, the shroud was folded to make a new space below it. It is
proposed that ancestors be ceremoniously wrapped in patterned cloth and re-interred

into the skin, the same surface which would provide a protecting canopy of concealment for this ceremony.

In my research, my own search for origin, I came across several articles[1] about the use and display of cloth during West African funerals. The cloth was an important element in these funerals, in that it covered the bodies of the dead and the living and it was also used to decorate the laying-out space. These rooms were quite a production and were organized by the women of the family. The more important the deceased, the greater the number of laying-out rooms and quantity and quality of the cloth, and the more elaborate the folded displays and more elaborate the garments worn by the family. These cloth displays were elaborately folded and placed on beds and tables in the rooms. The fold lines of my cloth came from two important site lines. One was the diagonal at the north boundary of the burial grounds at *Block 154* and the other was an old block line from the city grid. Together, these lines marked my fold.

The pattern of the glass came from the archaeologist's drawings of the excavated bodies. Each body was marked with a line which made another system off the archaeologist's grid, or the city grid. This drawing became a base pattern for the shroud

curtain wall. The body lines became the structure to which the glass was fastened, these in turn were supported by vertical members which marked the 20-foot archaeologist's grid. Scratches were made in the glass generated from the body-line drawing. Finally, a pattern taken from a pattern book of African designs was transformed and etched on to the glass. This pattern started off as a carving on the surface of a small wooden West African sculpture. It is a superficial decoration yet, like the 'X' in Malcolm X, it carried the burden of African–American identity for this project. I, given my cultural background (which is American), would never fully comprehend the richness and power of what I had researched. In the case of the pattern, I did not know if what I had

appropriated had a particular meaning, or perhaps no meaning, in its culture of origin. What was clear was that African art, traditions and culture would always be seen through the impenetrable veil of my culture—American culture.

This problem lay at the heart of this architectural project and was explored through the museum. The museum occupied a wedge between the diagonal north limit of the burial ground and the north line of Block 154. The museum wedge was of concrete and served as a device to frame the surface of the burial shroud. The interface between the museum and the memorial was of primary interest. This large-scale section shows that interface. On the museum side, pieces of the curtain wall were removed to a second layer and objects which were found during the archaeological dig were uncovered, allowing scrutiny. However, this viewing was frustrated as objects and images were cut and fractured by the configuration of the skin. Another layer back was the re-internment space in opaque glass, having been wrapped in fabric of the same African pattern. The last layer revealed scratches underneath the skin of the African pattern which faced the interior of the re-internment space.

To sign the project as 'African', 'I' was stated. I am unable to describe the experiences of others using the space. These experiences are reserved as sacred, for those who love those buried here, who will compose and improvise these activities and experiences, and celebrate and mourn within this privacy.

I had hoped to make an architecture seen and read as African, but seen and developed through the systems by which 'African' was known to me. I am not interested in the nostalgic inscription of an African–American architecture, but in critical invention which reconfigures 'African' and its traditions and allows for many identities to co-exist simultaneously.

1   A selection of books on the shelves in my office reveals a number of commonly-used terms.

2   Boland, Eavan (1989ᵃ) 'Mise Eire', in *Selected Poems*, Carcanet, Manchester——
        (1989ᵇ) *A Kind of Scar: The Woman Poet in a National Tradition*, Dublin, Attic Press
        LIP Pamphlet.

3   Fanon, Frantz, 'The Fact of Blackness', in Donald, J. & Rattansi, A., (eds), *Race,
        Culture & Difference*, Sage Publications, London, 1992, p220.

4   Wells-Bowie, LaVerne, quoted in hooks, b., *Art on My Mind*, Turaround Press, New
        York, 1996.

5   Tschumi, Bernard, *Architecture and Disjunction*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1994,
        p5.

6   Hill, Jonathan, 'Between Six and a Million', *Defining the Urban Condition: Accelerating
        Change in the Geography of Power*, ACSA Press, Washington, DC, 1995, pp179-181.

7   Gordimer, N., in *A Sport of Nature*, Alfred Knopf Inc., New York, 1987, reprinted
        by Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK, 1988, p184.

8   Sanjek, R., 'The Enduring Inequalities of Race' in Sanjek R., and Gregory S., (eds),
        Race, Rutgers University Press, New Jersey, 1996, p7.

9   ibid., p7.

10   Gates, H.L. Jr., 'Writing "Race" and the Difference It Makes', in *"Race", Writing &
        Difference*, Gates, H.L. Jr., (ed), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1985, p4.

11   Shohat, E. & Stam, R., (eds), *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, Routledge, London, 1994,
        p19.

12   op cit., Sanjek, p19.

13   Sibley, D., 'Introduction,' in *Geographies of Exclusion*, Routledge, London, 1995, pix.

14   op cit., Sanjek, p3.

15   ibid., p5.

16   ibid., p2.

17   Hourami, Albert, *source unknown*.

18   Ouologuenm Y., 'À Mon Mari', quoted in Appiah, A., *In My Father's House: Africa
        in the Philosophy of Culture*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992, p137.

19   Shohat, E. & Stam, R., (eds), 'From Eurocentrism to Polycentrism', in *Unthinking
        Eurocentrism*, Routledge, London, 1994, p15.

20   ibid., p16.

21   ibid., p14.

22   ibid., p15.

23   ibid., p38.

24   For an excellent analysis of the various conditions and complexities associated with postcoloniality, see Shohat and Stam's chapter, 'The Postcolonial and the Hybrid' in *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, Routledge, London, 1994, pp37-46. See also Shohat, E., & Mufti, A., 'Introduction' in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives*, McClintock, Mufti & Shohat, (eds), The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 1997, pp1-12.

25   Taken from Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary*, G & C Merriam Co., New York, 1979, p312.

26   op cit., McClintock, Mufti & Shohat, p4.

27   Kureishi, Hanif, 'The Buddha of Suburbia', quoted in in Donald, J. & Rattansi, A., (eds), *Race, Culture & Difference*, Sage Publications, London, 1992, p220.

28   Morrison, T., *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness & the Literary Imagination*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1992, reprinted in 1993 by Pan Books Ltd., London, pxiii.

29   ibid., ppreface xii.

30   ibid., ppreface viii.

31   ibid., pppreface ix-x.

32   ibid., ppreface xii.

33   ibid., pppreface xii-xiii.

34   ibid., pppreface xii-xiii.

35   Foster, H., (ed), *Vision and Visuality*, Bay Press, Seattle, 1988, ppreface ix.

36   Gardner, M., *The Night is Large*, St Martin's Press, London, 1996, p261.

37   Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (trns. C Farrington), François Maspéro, (ed), France, 1961, p27.

38   Hall, Stuart, 'Introduction', in S. Hall & du Gay, P., *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Sage Publications, London, 1996, p4.

39   The term first came to my attention in reading Shohat and Stam's *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, Routledge, London, 1994, p345.

40   Jaffa, A., '69', in G. Dent (ed), *Black Popular Culture*, Bay Press, Seattle, 1992, p266.

41   ibid., pp249-54.

42   Gordimer, N., *source unknown.*

43   Pajaczkowska, C., & Young, L., 'Racism, Representation, Psychoanalysis', in Donald, J. & Rattansi, A., *'Race', Culture & Difference*, Sage Publications, London, 1992, p202.

43   Derrida, Jacques, *source unknown.*

44   Mangabeira Unger; R., *Anyone©* Conference, Los Angeles, 1991. Sponsored by the Anyone Corporation and the Getty Center for History of Art & Humanities, Rizzoli Publications; p30.

CHAPTER 1: THE COLONIAL FACE OF EDUCATIONAL SPACE   **UDUKU**

1   Achebe, C., *Things Fall Apart*, Heinemann, London, 1958.

2   Waddell, H., *Twenty Nine Years in the West Indies and Central Africa: A Review of Discovery and Adventure*, Frank Cass and Co., (2nd Edition), London, 1970.

3   Gordimer, N., *The Essential Gesture: Writings, Politics, Places*, edited by Stephen Clingman, Jonathan Cape, London, 1988, p.239.

CHAPTER 2: APARTHEID URBAN DEVELOPMENT   **NELUHENI**

1   Jean Paul Sartre, quoted in *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics, Places*, Nadine Gordimer, Jonathan Cape, London, 1988, p137.

2   ibid., p224.

3   *The Star*, South African Newspaper, June 11, 1997.

4   op cit., Gordimer, p238.

CHAPTER 3: LIVELY HAZARDOUS PLACES   **BOATENG AND NASAH**

1   Mazrui, A., *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa*, Heinemann, London, 1978.

2   Thomas, A & Potter, D., 'Development, Capitalism and the Nation State', in Allen, T. & Thomas, A., (eds), *Poverty and Development in the 1990s*, Oxford University Press, UK, 1992.

CHAPTER 4: THE RACK AND THE WEB: THE OTHER CITY **STANTON**

1   Foster, H., *The Return of the Real*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1996, p66.

2   de Certeau, M., *The Practice of Everyday Life* (trans. Steven Rendall), University of California Press, Berkeley, 1984, p93.

3   For the Greeks, *polis* meant both citizen and city.

4   Marx, K., 'Speech at the Anniversary of The People's Paper', 1856, *The Marx–Engels Reader*, Norton, New York, 1978, p578.

5   The political parties themselves defend these two aspects of the American dream.

6   Rather than continue to credit Leo Marx throughout the chapter every time ideas find their inspiration in his, suffice it to say that *The Machine in the Garden*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1964, is the jumping-off point for several of the concepts developed here.

7   Eagleton, T., *Ideology*, Verso, London, 1991, p155.

8   The odd willingness of Americans to project printed doctrine from their bodies as T-shirt or tattoo, the need to become a walking sign, to advertise attitude or product; seems to resolve the unbearable and unpalatable political pressure that such an ideological entity as the USA generates. While becoming walking billboards, Americans eschew actual political action and doubt political effect.

9   Here the Frankenstein's 'monster' is understood as simultaneously benevolent, confused and violent...misunderstood, tragic, patricidal.

10   'I received last night from Major L'Enfant a request to furnish him any plans of towns I could, for his examination. I accordingly send him by this post, plans of Frankfort on the Mayne, Carlsruhe, Amsterdam, Strasburg, Paris, Orleans, Bourdeaux, Lyons, Montpelier, Marseilles, Turin and Milan, on large & accurate scales'. Thomas Jefferson to George Washington in letter of 10 April 1791, from Reps, John W., *Washington on View*, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1991, p18.

11   Sauer, C., 'Forward to Historical Geography', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 31 (1941) pp3-4 from Gregory, D., *Geographical Imaginations*, Blackwell, Cambridge, MA, and Oxford, 1994, p286.

12   A return not just to a contrived 'nature' but to a harmonic and simple Golden Age.

13   Rousseau, J., *The Confessions*, (trans. J.M.Cohen), Penguin, Hamondsworth, 1954, pp155 and 375 quoted in Vidler, A., 'Scenes of the Street', *On Streets* (ed.) Stanford Anderson, The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, Cambridge, MA, 1978.

14   Cacciari, M., *Architecture and Nihilism: On the Philosophy of Modern Architecture* (trans. Stephen Sartarelli), Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1993, p4.

15 from Choay, Françoise, *The Modern City: Planning in the Nineteenth Century*, Braziller, New York, 1969.

16 The pitting of Jefferson, as the protagonist of the agrarian in his *Notes on Virginia* of 1785, and Hamilton as the advocate of the industrial and pragmatic–capitalist impulse in his *Report on the Subject of Manufactures* of 1791 is an historical generalization borrowed from *The Machine in the Garden* and continued here with recognition of its basic accuracy but simplification of two very complex political theories which in fact overlap and meld. Leo Marx's dialectical intent in this comparison will be maintained here.

17 see Stanton, M., 'Nature Madness and Architecture' in *Modulus 20*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1991, pp6–25.

18 For this history I am indebted to my student at Tulane, John Morse, and his critical look at the southern steel town.

19 A lithograph from 1910 commissioned by McKim, Mead and White shows a block-long passage from Sixth to Seventh Avenues, facing the station. Collection of the New York Historical Society.

20 Mumford, L., photo caption in 'Biotechnic Civilization' in *The Culture of Cities*, Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1938, p373.

21 Jencks, C., *The Language of Post Modern Architecture*, Academy Editions, London, 1977, p9.

22 Berman, M., *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, Penguin, New York, 1982, pp165–168.

23 Corbett's proposal of 1923 was documented in the Regional Plan of New York and its Environs, vol 2 of 1931 as noted by Rem Koolhaas in *Delirious New York*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1978, p258.

24 Perkins, F., oral history reminiscences, from Berman, op.cit., p304.

25 op. cit., Foster, H., p178, 203.

26 Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five, 'The Message,' written by E. Fletcher, M. Glover, C. Chase and S. Robinson, (Sugarhill Music: BMI, 1983).

27 Virilio, P., *The Art of the Motor*, (trans. Julie Rose), University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1995, p11.

28 McClung, W.A., *The Architecture of Paradise*, University of California Press, Berkeley,1983, pp139–140.

29 From Baudrillard's rather bombastic observations to David Byrne's *True Stories* or Wim Wender's *Paris, Texas*, it seems that, from deToqueville to Banham, Tafuri and Koolhaas, many of the most perceptive views of America have come from non-Americans.

30 Despite the clear differences between the poor as a group and African–Americans, like that between the same community and crime, nevertheless information and

entertainment services always equate urban problems with blacks, showing scenes of drug-use or destitution as peopled by African–Americans even though a predominance of the poor and those involved in drug use and distribution are white. This stereotyping may aid easy identification for viewers of news or television fiction, but it is also used to maintain a status quo that must be seen as one of the objectives of a media deeply rooted in and continuously confirming the forms of power.

31   The four largest cities in the USA (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston) frame the nation at is cardinal points, leaving a weakening center and concentrating energy again at the edges, returning to the model of early development and recognizing an increasing dependence on the outside.

32   Houstonians, in love with size, like to say that the flights from Hobie to International level-off and drinks are served. What Italians call *legende metropolitane* often tell as much or more about cities and the attitudes of their residents than any hard demographics or factual histories.

33   Albert Pope made this point in his lecture 'Ladders' delivered at the University of Texas at Austin, Fall 1996.

34   Tafuri, M., *Theories and History of Architecture*, (trans. Giorgio Verrecchia), Harper & Row, New York,1976, p156.

35   Giamatti, A.B, *Take Time for Paradise*, Summit, New York, 1989, on the mythic force of the legend of return embodied in baseball.

36   'Since the Middle Ages, torture has accompanied it [confession] like a shadow, and supported it when it could go no further: the dark twins. The most defenseless tenderness and the bloodiest of powers have a similar need of confession. Western man has become a confessing animal', Foucault, M., *The History of Sexuality*–vol 1, Vintage, New York, 1978, p59.

37   Olalquiaga, C., *Megalopolis: Contemporary Cultural Systems*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1992, p54.

38   'Spending a large part of our lives planted in front of a piece of talking furniture, we are held hostage by the pleasure of the cutting and the repetition, by a kind of intermittent fascination which is facilitated by the relief we feel in numbness and which has the feel of the erratically riveted wonderment experienced by infants. Television tells us not of a vision, but of visions. It evades singularity and loiters amid the serial, the continual, the flow', by Barbara Kruger, 'Remote Control' in Willis, B. (ed.), *Blasted Allegories*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA,1987, p395.

39   see Stanton, M., 'Redemptive Technologies' in *Archis*, Rotterdam, Netherlands Architectuurinstitut, January 1997, pp26–31.

40   Giddens, A., 'Living in a Post-Traditional Society' from Beck, Giddens, Lash, (eds.) *Reflexive Modernization*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1994, p59.

41   George Wagner, in the lecture 'The Lair of the Bachelor' delivered in New Orleans in 1994, presented the masculine fantasy of dominance and control, evident in the

planning of the 19th and early 20th century and exemplified by the muscular Burnham plan for Chicago. Wagner sees it as thwarted in the neutral field of the suburb after World War II. It had to exert itself in the interior of house or bachelor-pad.

42   Nietzsche, F., as quoted without attribution in Virilio, P., *The Art of the Motor*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis,1985, p99.

43   see Foucault, M., 'Of Other Spaces–the Principles of Heterotopia', *Diacritic* 16, no. 1 (1985) or in a slightly altered translation in *Lotus International* 48/49, Electa, Milano, 1986, pp8–17.

44   op cit., Virilio, P., 'The Overexposed City' in Lost Dimension, *Semiotext[e]*, New York, 1991, p15.

45   Lefebvre, H., *The Survival of Capitalism*, Alison and Busby, London, 1976, pp84–85 from Gregory, D., *Geographical Imaginations*, Blackwell, Cambridge, MA and Oxford, 1994, p275.

46   see Foucault, M., 'Of Other Spaces–the Principles of Heterotopia', *Diacritic* 16, no. 1 (1985) or in a slightly altered translation in *Lotus International* 48/49, Electa, Milano, 1986, pp8–17.

CHAPTER 5: TANGO: A CHOREOGRAPHY OF URBAN DISPLACEMENT
BETANCOUR AND HASDELL

1   Edmund Husserl, who wrote *The Origin of Geometry*, (as Michel Serres reminds us) at a time when geometry is 'disappearing' or 'dying', calls the presence of an unknown a 'horizon', for that which is outside of our perception and knowledge. The tangent reminds us of the limitations of Euclidean geometry's parallel lines, an axiom that is the Achilles heel of geometry for it cannot be proved that two parallel lines do not touch somewhere, over a horizon.

2   'In 1930, the term "periphery" was not in common use and one referred to such areas as *arrabal*, or *barrio*, i.e. as "suburbs" or "outskirts"'. Gorelik, A., 'A Place of Time: the Periphery of Buenos Aires', *Daidalos* 50, December 1993, p112. *Arrabal* means 'slum–suburb', or 'outskirts', the edge where the *pampas* meets the city.

3   The conferring of authority is passed on through lineage, embodied, claimed, discovered and appropriated as Michel de Certeau, in *The Writing of History*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1988, pxxv, tells us: 'Amerigo Vespucci the voyager arrives from the sea. A crusader standing erect in his body armor, he bears the European weapons of meaning. Behind him are the vessels that will bring back to the European West the spoils of a paradise. Before him is the Indian "America"', a nude woman reclining in her hammock, an un-named presence of difference, a body which awakens within a space of exotic fauna and flora. An inaugural scene: after a moment of stupor, on this threshold dotted with colonnades of trees, the conqueror will write the body of the other and trace there

his own history. From her he will make a historicised body—a blazon—of his labors and phantasms. She will be "Latin" America....she is *nuova terra* not yet existing on maps—an unknown body destined to bear the name, *Amerigo*, of her inventor. But what is really initiated here is a colonialization of the body by the discourse of power. This is writing that conquers. It will use the New World as if it were a blank, "savage" page on which Western desire will be written.'

4   Sarlo, Beatriz, *'Una Modernidad Periferica: Buenos Aires 1920 y 30'*, in *Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Vision*, 1988, p31. *'Cuandos cambios acelerados en la sociedad suscitan sentimientos de incertidumbre. Un viejo orden recordado fantaseado es reconstruido por la memoria como pasado. Contra este horizonte se coloca y se evalua el presente.'* Translation from Spanish by authors.

5   Galeano, Eduardo, '1890 River Plata: Comrades', *Memory of Fire*, Quartet Books, London, 1995, p555.

6   Refer to James Scobie's classic two-part study, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb, 1870-1910*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1974, for further elaboration.

7   *'La Argentina recibía a 15 mil immigrantes por mes,'* *El Popular* newspaper, Buenos Aires, 9 January, 1925.

8   'The tango comes from *gaucho* tunes of the interior and comes from the sea, the shanties of sailors. It comes from the slaves of Africa and the gypsies of Andalusia. Spain contributes with guitar, Germany its concertina, Italy its mandolin. The driver of the horse-drawn streetcar contributed his trumpet and the immigrant worker his harmonica, comrade of lonely moments.' Galeano, op cit., 'Faces and Masks', *Tangoing*, p557.

9   'The city is roofed over by a vast horizontal sky: yes, the sole great consolation. For I have seen it, this sky, on the endless plain of grasslands, punctuated by a few weeping willows. It is unlimited, as sparkling by day as by night with a transparent blue light or with myriads of stars; it spreads to all four horizons...to tell the truth, all this landscape is one single and same straight line—the horizon,' wrote Le Corbusier in *Precisions*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991, p4.

10   Galeano, op. cit., 'Man Alone', p556.

11   *'Plata'* as in *'Rio de la Plata'* means 'silver', but is commonly used as the word for 'money' in the region.

12   Galeano, op. cit., 'The Founders', p170.

13   Rama, Angel, *The Lettered City*, translation by John Charles Chasteen, Duke University Press, Durham, 1996, p2.

14   Borges, Jorge Luis, 'The Mythical Founding of Buenos Aires', *Selected Poems 1923-1967*, Penguin, London, 1972, p63.

15   Tuer, Dot, 'Cartographies of Memory', *Parachute*, no. 83, Jul/Aug/Sept 1996, p25.

16   'All at once, above the first illuminated beacons, I saw Buenos Aires. The uniform

river, flat, without limits to the left and to the right; above your Argentine sky so filled with stars; a Buenos Aires, this phenomenal line of light beginning on the right at infinity and fleeting to the left towards infinity. Nothing else, except, at the centre of the line of light, the electric glitter which announces the heart of the city. The simple meeting of the *pampas* and the river in one line, illuminated the night from one end to the other. Mirage, miracle of the night, the simple punctuation regular and infinite of the lights of the city describes what Buenos Aires is in the eyes of the voyageur. This vision remained for one instance and imperious I thought: nothing exists in Buenos Aires—but what a strong and majestic line.' Le Corbusier, op.cit., p201.

17   ibid., p.202.

18   Refer to Collins, Christine Crasemann, 'Urban Interchange in the Southern Cone: Le Corbusier (1929) and Werner Hegemann (1931) in Argentina,' *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, No. 542, June 1995. At around the same time, Werner Hegemann, a German-American architect and planner visited Buenos Aires and made a number of urban proposals for Buenos Aires. Hegemann's more in-depth proposal for Buenos Aires focused instead on the connection of the city to the *pampas*. In a sense, this further articulated the modern project where the periphery effectively became the centre. Hegemann, unlike Corbusier, based the premise of his plan on an in-depth study and protracted fieldwork, rather than on immediate impressions. He immersed himself in the culture of the city and attempted to comprehend its complex dynamic, as Collins writes: 'anchoring his recommendations in the local context, Hegemann reinforced the uniqueness of the South American city as it was striving for its own identity.' In this focus on the periphery, Hegemann specifically considered the role of the *barrio* and presented his findings in a film entitled *La Cuidad del Mañana*, (City of Tomorrow). In part, Hegemann recognised the heterogeneity and ad-hoc nature of the outer edges of the city as 'democratic in spirit...[he] saw in these unpretentious buildings, as well as in the self-built dwellings on the periphery of the capital, an incipient indigenous style.' Collins, drawing on della Paolera, points out the crucial differences between these two imported authorities, Corbusier and Hegemann, as 'emblematic' of the difference between a *plano* regulador and a *plan* regulador. The former is a 'graphic prescription for an urban intervention, which, at the moment of its creation, may be the correct prescription: but already while it is being implemented, the complex city organism has transformed itself.' The latter is comprised of 'many planos in a continuous, energetic planning politic that commands the momentum and flexibility required to organise a major city.'

19   *La boca* means 'mouth' in Spanish.

20   Apart from the Ligurians, all other immigration was stopped at the time by the then president Rosas. 'The man of the interior has stripped Buenos Aires of any materiality and transformed her into a formidable emporium of the best that exists in our reality and in our imagination. Thus Buenos Aires is the centre of a circumference formed by the most populated points and cultivated by the interior. They are all at the same distance. They are periphery as she is centre.' Martinez Estrada, *Civitas*, 1963.

21   Andrews, George Reid, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires 1800-1900*, The

University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin, 1980, p11. During the 1880s, when ships were forced to anchor five or six miles off the coast, horses and carts were used to traverse the land and the water, due to the shallowness of the bay and lack of an adequate harbor: '..a base of planks two or three inches apart, through which water splashes at every wave, mounted on a big heavy wooden axle between a pair of gigantic wheels. To this ungovernable machine is tied a horse. The wild brutish appearance of the sun-tanned cart drivers who, half naked, swear and scream and shove one another and whip their poor exhausted horses into the water.' Suarez, Odilia E., 'Buenos Aires: La Story Urbanistica', *Abitare*, No. 342, July/August 1995, p87.

22   Savigliano, Marta E., *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, Westview Press, San Francisco, 1995, p24.

23   Galeano, op. cit., '1870: Buenos Aires: Sarmiento', p530. As Aline Helg writes concerning the writings of Sarmiento and his ideologues in 'Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930', *Theory, Policies and Popular Reaction in The Idea of Race in Latin America*, 1870-1940, (ed.) Richard Graham, University of Texas Press, Texas, 1990, 'Ultimately, then, the difficult relationship between scientific racism and social environment brings up the question of the audience. For whom were Hispanic American intellectuals writing? For their fellow countrymen in order to redeem them, as they claimed? Or for European colleagues, in order to be published in their Journals and welcomed in their circles? Or for themselves, to relieve anxiety and guilt? The last hypothesis seems most likely. They tried to build up an imaginary and stereotyped world that would function according to permanent and logical biopsychological laws. It would be a world with acknowledged enemies and myths. A 'scientific,' 'rational' world, when a confusing and rapidly changing reality made it too, difficult to find one's identity.'

24   Helg, op. cit., p41: 'The Indians, however, were considered the most challenging enemy of Argentinean civilisation until the early 1880s. In 1879, Gen. Julio A. Roca initiated his 'Conquest of the Desert', a misnamed war that expanded the Argentinean frontier southward by subduing or exterminating an entire aboriginal group...in brief, the policies implemented converged on a single goal: to eliminate the aborigines in order to direct new European immigrants to the exploitation of interior lands.'

25   ibid., p43: 'In reality, the whitening of Argentina through immigration had been a fast process. In 1869 Indians represented 5 percent of the population, but by 1895, only 0.7 percent of a total of 3,955,000. The blacks, centered in Buenos Aires, had composed 25 percent of the capital's population in 1838, but had dropped to 2 percent by 1887. Between 1880 and 1930, total net immigration added nearly 3,225,000 inhabitants to Argentina. Among the immigrants, 43 percent were Italian and 34 percent Spanish; far behind came the highly valued Anglo-Saxons. As for the Jews, during the peak years of 1907 to 1914, they represented between 2 and 6 percent of total net immigration.'

26   Barrenechea, Ana María, 'Sarmiento and the 'Buenos Aires/Córdoba' Duality', in Donghi, T H., Jaksic, I. & Kirkpatrick, G., (eds.), Masiello, F., *Sarmiento: Author of a Nation*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1994, p106.

27   ibid., p63.

28   ibid., pp62–63. Donghi, Jaksic, Kirkpatrick & Masiello elaborate these issues in their biography of Sarmiento.

29   ibid., p62.

30   Helg, op. cit., p41.

31   ibid., p41.

32   ibid., pp42–43.

33   Andrews, op. cit., p106. The slaves and Indians effectively become earlier versions of *los desaparecidos* of the later dictatorship (1976-1983), during which 15,000 people 'disappeared,' of whom no trace other than *memorias de sangre* (memories of blood) remain. The city turns red.

34   Helg, op. cit., p43.

35   Savigliano, op. cit., p199.

36   *Conventillos* were tenements that housed immigrants in areas such as San Telmo, the former black area and other harbour-side areas. Often larger houses originally, they were subdivided into which newly arriving immigrants were crowded.

37   Andrews, op. cit., p165.

38   ibid., p162.

39   ibid., p166.

40   By no means a pattern unique to Buenos Aires, this phenomenon can be found in other cities such as London's East End where the relationships between the harbor area and immigrant cultures are inextricable: the immigrant in effect is almost commodified as import or export, being somehow just outside of the city, often in the floodplains or low lying lands and yet giving new input to the culture of the city. Spitalfields and Brick Lane in London are clear examples of this, the areas having a richness of layers from the various cultural groups. Similarly, a touching line could be said to exist between Spitalfields and the City of London across Bishopsgate.

41   Akin to what Michel de Certeau calls 'Local Authorities', a 'crack' in a place pregnant with signification, from which many spatial stories may be unfolded as the emergent potential of place to speak of emotion (the soul of a place) as opposed to the imposition of this from above as historic narrative. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Rendall, University of California Press, California, 1984.

42   Gorelik, op. cit., p110.

43   See Paul Carter's writings on the colonial city in *Australia: The Road to Botany Bay*, Faber & Faber, London, 1987, p204: '...land there could be regarded very much

like land here. Empty spaces on the map, accountable and equally subdivided, should yield returns that could more or less be computed in advance. Located against the imaginary grid, the blankness of unexplored country was translated into a blueprint for colonisation: it could be divided up into blocks, the blocks numbered and the land auctioned without ever having to leave their London offices.'

44 The *barrio* is not a measurable entity: it is a vicinity—a set of invisible and visible relations constituted by approximation in social contacts; distance and access to the centre of the city; density of inhabitants and buildings; ethnicity; class and history. A result of this is that crossing over a street might mean passing by doorways in silence—in the previous *cuadra* (block), one would always be greeted. For further definitions of the *barrio* see James Scobie, *Buenos Aires—From Plaza to Suburb*, 1870-1910, Oxford University Press, New York, 1974.

45 Tracing the development of the city of Buenos Aires, the historian James Scobie writes: 'terrain, transportation, and land use served to differentiate suburbs, but running throughout the outward expansion of the city towards the suburbs was the common experience and unifying theme of the *barrio*, or local neighborhood. Although nowhere precisely defined or recorded as a unit of measurement, the *barrio*, along with its smallest component, the *cuadra*, was integral to the city's formation. The *barrio* and the *cuadra* were developed principally through a sense of attachment and social contact between inhabitants...in heavily built-up zones, the *barrio* might consist of a single *cuadra*, while in outlying, sparsely inhabited areas it might include as many as a dozen *cuadras*.' Scobie, op. cit., pp201–202.

46 ibid., p112.

47 ibid., p109.

48 For a discussion of gender-related issues in tango and Argentinean culture, refer to Savigliano. It is worth bearing in mind that during the early years of expansion, both as colony and during the nineteenth century, the predominance of males meant, for example, that tango was often danced between males, with one male pretending to be the female partner.

49 Fiorenza, Dante, *Arbitare*, op. cit., 'I Mall d'Argentina', p93–94.

50 As Jean Franco has elaborated in her detailed article 'From Public Space to the Fortified Enclave: Neo-liberalism's effect on the Latin American City' in *Anybody*.

51 This is similar to cities currently being built in the Far East, not to mention London's Canary Wharf.

52 Paz, Octavio, 'The Labyrinth of Solitude', quoted in George Yúdice, 'Postmodernity and Transnational Capitalism', Yúdice, G., Franco, J. & Flores, J. (eds.) *On Edge: The Crisis of Contemporary Latin American Culture*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1992, p5. '...what does it really mean to be Argentine? Who has acquired the rights to define the still un-delimited field of Argentine culture?' Beatriz Sarlo, 'Xul Solar', in *Argentina 1924-1994*, Exhibition catalogue: MOMA, Oxford, 1994, p34.

53   Here referring to the Menem administration.

54   See Rex Butler, 'Buying Time' in *FutureFall: Excursions into Post-Modernity*, (ed.) Grosz, E. A., Threadgold, T., Kelly, D., Cholodenko, A., and Colless, E., Power Institute Publications, Sydney, 1986.

55   *Libertango* is a song composed by Astor Piazzola, during the 1970s. The name comes from *libertad* and *tango*.

56   A footnote is also the sound the foot makes on the floor. *The Authors' and Printers' Dictionary* by F. Howard Collins (1948) indexes good practice in the art of books. Collins writes of footnotes that 'a white line, or rule, should separate footnotes from the text (see also authorities, reference marks).' p135.

58   Translation from Spanish by authors.

CHAPTER 6: INTENSIVE CONTINUITY   **IHEJIRIKA**

1   Foucault, M., *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London, 1982, p32.

2   For a working definition of culture see Kroeber, A. L., and Kluckhohn, C., *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, New York, 1952, p357.

3   Gandelsonas, M., 'From Structure to Subject: the Formation of an Architectural Language', *Oppositions*, vol 17, 1979.

4   op cit., Foucault, p115.

5   Appiah, K. A., *In My Father's House*, New York, 1992, pp174–180.

6   Gella, T., 'The Intrinsic Dynamics of Syntax of The Visual Sign', *Semiotica*, vol 23, 1978, pp304–305.

7   Onobrakpeya, B., *Symbols of Ancestral Groves*, Lagos, 1985, p24.

CHAPTER 7: BLACK BODIES, BLACK SPACE: A-WAITING SPECTACLE   **DANIELS**

1   The Bill of Sale lists each slave by sex, origin, age, and surface markings. 'Negro Slaves in Spanish Importation Records, Appendix B, Bill of Sale: the South Sea Co., Cartagena, 1738', *The Journal of Negro History*, Washington Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Washington DC, p223.

2   Johnson, C., 'A Phenomenology of the Black Body', *The Male Body: Features, Destinies, Exposures*, Goldstein, L., (ed.) University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1994, p126.

3 Foucault, M., 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias & Heterotopias', *Architecture Culture 1943–1968: A Documentary Anthology*, J. Ockman, (ed.) Rizzoli, New York, 1993, pp422–423.

4 ibid, p421.

5 Debord, 'Theorem 10', *The Society of the Spectacle*, Zone, New York, 1995, p14.

6 op cit., Debord, 'Theorem 219', p153.

7 de Certeau, M., *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California, Berkeley, 1984, p30.

8 'Black face': the application of black paint (shoe polish) to white skin in a caricaturization of the 'black'.

9 Fanon, F., *Black Skin, White Masks*, Grove Press, New York ,1967, p202.

10 op cit., Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p421.

11 Rydell, R., *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1993, p61.

12 Walter Benjamin, as quoted in Rydell, *World of Fairs*, op. cit., p15.

13 op cit., Rydell, , p19.

14 Mitchell, T., *Colonizing Egypt*, University of California, Berkeley, 1988, pp8,9

15 ibid., p19.

16 A village featuring dancing acts, which climaxed with the audience viewing a castrated 'adventurer', a testament to the continuing 'savagery' lurking within the 'dark continent', op cit., Rydell, *World of Fairs*, pp167–68.

17 op cit., Rydell, *World of Fairs*, p35.

18 Quoting the director, Denham, to the crew, in 'King Kong', (Cooper-Shoedshack production; RKO Pictures, Inc./Turner Entertainment Co., Los Angeles 1933).

19 See Judith Mayne's feminist critique in which she bypasses a critical consideration of race. 'King Kong and the Ideology of Spectacle', *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, Redgrave Publishing Co., Pleasantville, New York, 1976, p379.

20 Porush, D., 'King Kong Dismembered', *Rope Dances: Fictions*, Brazillier, New York, 1979, p5.

21 '...and lo, the beast looked upon the face of beauty, And it stayed its hand from killing, And from that day, it was as one dead'. An 'Old Arabian Proverb' as quoted in the opening film credits of 'King Kong', (RKO Pictures, Inc./Turner Entertainment Co., Los Angeles 1933).

22 op cit., Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p426.

23   Frantz Fanon has explored the incarnation of the black man as a phallic representation in *Black Skin, White Masks*, and bell hooks has elaborated on this in *Black Looks: Race and Representation.*

24   Echoing Fanon, Sander Gilman writes that, for the European, the African male came to symbolize the phallus itself. In a medical account from the Middle Ages by Galen and reported by Mas'udi, an Arabic chronicler, 'large genitals' and 'excessive emotionalism' define the African 'as readily as the color of the skin or the quality of the hair.' Gilman notes this is also true of readings of the African female. In *Sexuality: an Illustrated History*, Wiley & Sons, New York, 1989, p29.

25   Jane Cooper (niece of Merian Cooper), 'Seventeen Questions About King Kong', *Green Notebook*, Winter Road, Tilbury House, Maine, 1994, pp12, 29

26   op cit., Gilman, *Sexuality*, pp106, 102.

27   Buffon, as quoted by Gilman, in *Sexuality*, p101.

28   op cit., Gilman, *Sexuality*, p106.

29   op cit., Gilman, *Sexuality*, p29.

30   On the grin of the black man as gift, in Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, pp7, 49.

31   op cit., Cooper, 'Seventeen Questions', pp14, 29.

32   Hershon, R., 'King Kong', *Into a Punchline: Poems 1984–94*, Hanging Loose Press, New York, 1994, pp2, 36.

33   Alexander, E., 'The Venus Hottentot', *The Venus Hottentot*, University of Virginia Press, Virginia, 1990, ch 3, pp7–12.

34   See Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Culture of Travel*, Duke University, Durham, NC, 1996, pp40–49.

35   The origin of the word 'Hottentot' has been the source of debate. That the *Khoi-khoip* (*Khoi*: a person, *Khoip*: a man, *Khoi-khoip*: the men—a Hottentot) referred to themselves as 'Hottentot', serves to illustrate how the European world view was superimposed onto the 'natives' of Africa and their descendants. The language of the *Khoisan* peoples ('Hottentot' and 'bushman'), consists of a range of phonetic clicking sounds. The *Khoisan* language was interpreted by the Dutch seamen of the Cape as stuttering and labeled with the Dutch slang then common. See *The Word 'Hottentot'*, State Library, Pretoria, 1971, for articles from the debates of the Philosophical Society of London (1866).

36   From 'The Book of Days', quoted in Kirby, *Africana Notes and News*, vol 6, no. 3, June 1949, p57.

37   Fausto-Sterling, A.,'Gender, Race, and Nation: The Comparative Anatomy of 'Hottentot' Women in Europe, 1915–1817', *Deviant Bodies*, J. Urla and J. Terry, (eds.), Indiana University Press, 1995, p33.

38   The apron was literally a fabric train secured at the hips. However, the 'apron' also served as a euphemism for elongated female genitalia. For Cuvier's reflections, see Fausto-Sterling, A., 'Gender, Race, and Nation', op cit., p35. Steatophygia: protruding buttocks.

39   Gilman writes of Edouard Manet's painting Olympia of 1862-3: a frank depiction of nakedness, which directly confronts the observer, in which the sexualized nature of the 'white woman' is reinforced by the presence of a 'black' servant. In *Sexuality*, op cit., pp287–290.

40   The skipper translating the witch doctor in 'King Kong', (RKO Pictures, Inc./Turner Entertainment Co., Los Angeles 1933).

41   Fairchild's *Dictionary of Fashion*, from Lisa Jones' 'Venus Envy', *The Village Voice*, New York, July 9, 1991, p36.

42   op cit., Fausto-Sterling, A., 'Gender, Race, and Nation', p37.

43   Miller, C., in *Theories of Africans: Francophone Literature and Anthropology in Africa*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1993, p14.

44   African slaves in transport were forced to dance to get their blood circulating on the deck of slave ships transporting them to the 'New World'.

45   Abu-Jamal, M., *Live from Death Row*, Addison-Wesley, Ann Arbor, 1995, pp8–9.

46   Rose, T., 'Post Industrial Hip Hop', *Sampling the City*, The Portable Lower East Side, New York 1994, p91.

47   Newton, H., 'In Defense of Self Defense', *To Die For the People, I, June 20, 1967*, Random House, New York, 1972, p82.

48   Ellison, R., *Invisible Man*, Vintage/Random House, New York, 1972, p3.

CHAPTER 8: AUTHORISING ABORIGINALITY IN ARCHITECTURE
JACOBS, DOVEY AND LOCHERT

(Alphabetical listing of references, not footnotes)

Australian National Parks & Wildlife Service, Kakadu National Park Plan of Management, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia, 1991.

Barthes, R., *S/Z*, Wang & Hill, New York, 1974.

Bowali Visitors Centre, 'Kakadu National Park', *The Architecture Show*, 56, May, 1995, pp4–6.

Chaney, F., 'Aboriginal Studies Building', *The Architect (WA)*, 35(1), 1995, pp8–12.

Davidson, J., 'Brambuk Capital of Gariwerd', *Australian Society*, 1991, pp32–5.

Dovey, K., 'The Quest for Authenticity and the Replication of Environmental Meaning' in Seamon, D. and Mugerauer, R., (eds.) *Dwelling, Place and Environment*, Martinus Nijhof, The Hague, Holland, 1985, pp.33-50

Dovey, K., 'Architecture About Aborigines', *Architecture Australia*, July/August, 1996.

Dovey, K., 'Galina Beek Aboriginal Cultural Centre', *Architecture Australia*, Sept/Oct, 1996.

Jackson, D., 'Architecture Awards Special', *Vogue Living*, February/March 1995, pp145–6.

Jacobs, J. M., 'That Dangerous Fantasy of Authenticity', *Ecumene: Culture, Meaning, Environment*, 2(2), 1995, pp213–6.

Jacobs, J. M., *Edge of Empire*, Routledge, London, 1996.

Johnson, R., 'Brambuk Living Cultural Centre', *Architecture Australia*, 1990, 79.(10): pp26–8.

'Kakadu Visitors Centre', *Architecture Australia*, Nov, pp40–1, 1994.

Lochert, M., 'Mediating Aboriginal Architecture', *Transition*, vol 55/56, 1997.

McDougall, I., 'Keeping the Faith: Interview with Glenn Murcutt', *Architecture Australia*, September, 1992, pp51–7.

Powell, S., 'Bushcraft', *Corporate and Office Design*, vol 10(2), 1995, pp34–41.

Quarry, N., *Award Winning Australian Architecture*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1997.

Spence, R., 'Brambuk Living Cultural Centre', *Architectural Review*, vol (10), 1988, pp88–9.

Tawa, M., 'Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre', *Architecture Australia*, Nov., 1996, pp85–6; pp60–1.

Taylor, J., 'A Rapport with the Setting—Brambuk Living Cultural Centre', *Landscape Architecture*, vol 80(8), 1990, pp56–7.

Schofield, L., Lawson, V., McGregor, S., Bayne, N., Alderson, M. & Large, L. 'Our Land is Our Life', in *Australian Parks and Recreation*, Winter 1996, pp30–1.

Underwood, D., 'Snake Charmer: Uluru National Park Cultural Centre', *Architectural Review*, vol 200 (1197), 1996, pp46–51.

'Unseren Lesern Schöne Ferien!', *Bauwelt*, vol 82(28), July 26, 1991.

CHAPTER 9: THE UNSOUNDED SPACE   **ASGEDOM**

[1] Baldwin, J., et al., *Perspectives: Angles on African Art*, Introduction by Susan Vogel, The Center for African Art, New York, and Harry N. Abrams, Inc. New York, NY,

1987, p125.

2   Appiah, K., *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 1992.

3   Gould, S.J., 'Creating the Creators' in *Discover: the World of Science*, October 1996, vol 17, Number 10, Walt Disney Magazine Publishing Group, Inc., New York, NY, p44.

4   op cit., Baldwin, p125.

5   op cit., Gould, p44.

6   op cit., Baraka, A., 'The Changing Same (R & B and New Black Music)' in *The Black Aesthetic*, Addison Gayle, Jr., (ed) Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York, NY, 1971, pp118–131.

7   op cit., Appiah, p157.

8   Chernoff, J. M., *African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1979, p111.

9   ibid., pp39–60 and pp110–114.

10   Agawu insists, basing his position on his familiarity and research on the Northern Ewe people of Ghana, that rhythmic sensibilities are not only musical, but run throughout the society, daily, as well as specialized events. Agawu, K., *African Rhythm: A Northern Ewe Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995.

11   ibid., p24.

12   op cit., Chernoff, p60.

13   op cit., Agawu, p11.

14   ibid., p26.

15   ibid., p26.

16   ibid., p74.

17   ibid., p74.

18   ibid., p27.

19   ibid., p27.

20   ibid., p28.

21   ibid., p29.

22   ibid., p29.

23   ibid., p23.

24   Heidegger, M., *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Harper & Row Publishers, San Francisco, CA, 1962, p437.

25   Heidegger, M., *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Translation, Introduction, and Lexicon by Albert Hofstadter, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 1982, p387.

26   ibid., p265.

27   ibid., p265.

28   ibid., p269.

29   ibid., p269.

30   ibid., p266.

31   ibid., p267.

32   op cit., Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p386.

33   Berliner, P. F., *Thinking in Jazz: the Infinite Art of Improvisation*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1994, p221.

34   ibid., p493.

35   ibid., p494.

36   ibid., p492.

37   ibid., pp497–8.

38   ibid., p498.

39   ibid., p497.

40   ibid., p437.

41   'I wanted to see whether I could purge away a scruple which I felt about the meaning of certain dreams. In the course of my life, I have often had intimations in dreams that I should compose music. The same dream came to me sometimes in one form, and sometimes in another, but always saying the same or nearly the words: "cultivate and make music," said the dream....I thought that it would be safer for me to satisfy the scruple, and, in obedience to the dream, to compose a few verses before I departed.' Plato, *Five Great Dialogues* (trans. by B. Jowett), edited with an introduction by Louise Ropes Loomis, Walter J.Black, Roslyn, N.Y, 1942, p88.

42   Arom, S., *African Polyphony and Polyrhythm: Musical Structure and Methodology* translated from French by Martin Thom, Barara Tuckett and Raymond Boyd), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p38.

43   Zuckerkandl, V., *Sound and Symbol: Music and the External World*, Bollingen Series,

Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1973, p331.

44   ibid., p332.

45   ibid., p331.

46   ibid., p52.

47   ibid., p53.

48   ibid., p49.

49   ibid., p55.

50   ibid., p58.

51   ibid., p52.

52   ibid., p56.

53   ibid., p56.

54   Eisenmann, P., 'Vision's Unfolding: Architecture in the Age of Electronic Media,' in *Theorizing A New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965–1995*, Kate Nesbitt, (ed), Princeton Architectural Press, New York, NY, 1996. Eisenmann's essay appeared originally in *Domus*, in 1992.

55   ibid., p556.

56   ibid., p557.

57   ibid., p559.

58   ibid., p559.

59   ibid., p561.

60   ibid., p559.

61   op cit., Heidegger, M., 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p170.

62   op cit., Eisenmann, P., p559.

63   op cit., Appiah, K., p155.

CHAPTER 12: (UN)COVERING/(RE)COVERING   **DAVIS**

1   Eicher, J. B. & Erekosima, T. V., (eds.) 'Kalabari Funerals: Celebration and Display', *African Arts*, vol 21, 1988, pp38–45.

The following list, together with the many references provided by the contributors in the 'Notes' Section of the anthology, represents a partial list of the many sources available for readers wishing to explore this area in greater depth. This is by no means an exhaustive listing and the editor apologises in advance for any important omissions and oversights. The editor also wishes to make it clear that books have been listed here not for their general, wider contribution to the growing fields of post-colonial studies, gender and cultural studies, but rather for their more specific relation to architecture and urbanism.

POST-COLONIAL THEORY AND THE POST-COLONIAL CITY

Appiah, Kwame Anthony, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, Oxford University Press, New York (1992).

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H. (eds), *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, Routledge, London (1995).

Jacobs, J.M., *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*, Routledge, London (1996).

Judin, H. and Vladislavic, I. (eds), *Architecture, Apartheid and After*, Netherlands Architecture Institute, Rotterdam (1999).

King, Anthony D., *Culture, Globalization and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis (1997).

King, Anthony D., *The Bungalow: the Production of a Global Culture*, Oxford University Press, London (1995).

McClintock, A., Muft, A. and Shohat, E. (eds) *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis (1997).

Nalbantoglu, G.B. and Wong, C.T. (eds) *Postcolonial Space(s)*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York (1997).

Said, Edward, *Culture & Imperialism*, Chatto & Windus, London (1993).

Said, Edward, *Orientalism*, Pantheon, New York (1978).

Walter, Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa,* Howard University Press, Washington (1974).

RACE, IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE

Douglas, Mary, *Purity and Danger*, Routledge, London (1966).

Du Bois, W.E.B., *Dusk of Dawn: an Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*, Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York (1940).

Elleh, Nnamdi, *African Architecture: Evolution and Transformation*, McGraw-Hill, New York (1997).

Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skins, White Masks*, Grove Press, New York, (1967).

hooks, bell, *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*, Turnaround Press, London (1991).

Hughes, David, *Afrocentric Architecture: a Design Primer*, Greyden Press, Columbus, OH (1994).

Segal, Ronald, *The Black Diaspora*, Faber & Faber, London (1995).

Shohat, E. and Stam, R. (eds), *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, Routledge, London (1995).

Sibley, David, *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West*, Routledge, London (1995).

Wigley, Mark, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA (1996).

MODERNITY AND THE THIRD WORLD

Davis, Mike, *City of Quartz*, Verso Press, London (1990).

Harvey, David, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford (1990).

Rabinow, Paul, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago (1995).

Soja, Edward, *Postmodern Geographies*, Routledge, London (1997).

DIASPORIC THEORIES

Chambers, Ian, *Migrancy, Culture & Identity*, Routledge, London (1994).

Kaplan, C., *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, Duke University Press, Durham (1996).

Pile, S., and Keith, M., (eds), *Geographies of Resistance*, Routledge, London (1997).

FEMINISM, GENDER AND ARCHITECTURE

Betsky, Aaron, *Building Sex: Women, Architecture and the Construction of Sexuality*, Morrow Press, New York (1995).

Colomina, Beatriz, *Sexuality and Space*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York (1992).

Hughes, Francesca, *The Architect: Reconstructing Her Practice*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA (1995).

Spain, Daphne, *Gendered Spaces*, Chapel Hill, NC (1992).

Stimpson, C., Dixler, E., Nelson, M., and Yatrakis, K., *Women and the American City*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago (1980).