Book Reviews

Third World Modernism: Architecture, Development and Identity. Edited by Duanfang Lu. New York: Routledge, 2011. Xi + 292 pp., illus., maps.

Speaking from a decidedly global point of view, *Third World Modernism* is an eye-opening interrogation of the persistent assumptions within the modernist architectural canon. Edited by Duanfang Lu, senior lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydney, it presents research from a diverse set of scholars focusing on different contexts worldwide. The book expands upon themes articulated in Lu's *Remaking Chinese Urban Form* (Routledge, 2006) — namely, Third World modernity, nationalism, and developmentalist aspirations. Individual chapters cover buildings and exhibitions in contexts as varied as India, Peru, 1950s Turkey, and post-independence Nigeria. As a whole, this volume is a valuable and necessary contribution to the fields of architectural history and theory, but it also adds to scholarship in a number of different area studies. Though it may not be the first edited volume, as it claims, to map multiple positions on architectural modernism across the developing world, it does present some of the most thorough, well-illustrated, and theoretically rich research to date. In this sense, it is less a groundbreaking text than one which consolidates and refines research that has emerged over the past two decades on the built environment in the developing world. It serves as an exemplar of this kind of scholarly work and raises important questions which will surely provoke further research.

The book opens with an informative introduction by Lu that clearly expresses the volume's intent: to recognize not only the existence of other modernities, but also the "*legitimacies of different knowledges*" in order to "enfranchise other spatial rationalities" (p.24). Heretofore, the hegemonic modernist canon has been infused with Eurocentric biases toward homogenization, decontextualization, and universalist claims, yielding an abstract, "sterile and faceless" architecture" (p.8). This dominant discourse has assumed a rigidly dualistic narrative, making a sharp contrast between traditional and modern space. The chapters here challenge this presumption, and instead detail how modernist architecture was "adopted, modified, interpreted, and contested in different parts of the world" (p.1).

The modernist project, in fact, was one rife with hybridization, recalibration and localization. In this regard, the ten case studies that constitute the bulk of this book provide a more inclusive history, one which convincingly demonstrates how mid-twentieth-century architecture in the Third World operated in ways that were heterogeneous, hybridized, responsive, collaborative, and more sustainable than has been conventionally represented. Lu puts forth a new framework for understanding this architecture, "based on a radical transformative imagining of epistemological diversity in architectural production" (p.20). The intention is not just to add to discourses of "multiple modernities" and "critical regionalism," but to move beyond these in a bold way.

After the informative introductory chapter by Lu, the book is divided into three parts: "The Will of the Age," "Building the Nation," and "Entangled Modernities." Each chapter in these sections, in its own way, contests the conventional understanding that peripheral modernisms are merely compensatory measures for the "temporal lag" between them and the ostensibly original Western avant-garde. These were distinctive, inventive modernities, which mixed universal tenets with local particularities. Part I features es-

says by Daniela Sandler, Aziz Chaouni, and Sharif S. Kahatt emphasizing the adjustments, contestations, and cultural hybridizations involved in the production of space in Brazil, Morocco and Peru. These examples contest linear-diffusion models of modernist architecture and challenge the location of design agency. Similarly, in Part II, Inbal Ben-Asher Gitler, Anoma Pieris, and Elâ Kaçel investigate the diverse methods employed by Third World countries to express particular ethnic and national identities. They illustrate how architecture became a means for combining modernism with indigenous "relational knowledge networks" and integrating locality to question the ideology of the purported International Style.

While it could be argued the essays in the first two parts of the book present contextualized evidence from prior research, cogently problematizing modernist discourse, it is the final section which presents the most provocative insights. Essays by Farhan Sirajul Karim, Jiat-Hwee Chang, Vandana Baweja, and an epilogue by Vikramādityā Prakash contemplate the notion of "Entangled Modernities." Incorporating ideas from Bruno Latour's actor-network theory (ANT) and emerging concepts from the field of art history like Partha Mitter's "cosmopolitan modernism," these chapters transgress the established core-periphery model of the world to propose an alternative that emphasizes networks, connection and mobility. In an impressive chapter, Chang explores the roles played by nonhuman actants and technoscientific knowledge in the production of tropical architecture. Moving productively away from flawed conceptions opposing global and local forces, Chang's analysis of the Tropical Building Section of the Building Research Station in Britain and similar research centers demonstrates how they were constituted and interconnected dialogically via a network. Knowledge on topics such as building standards produced "locally" at the peripheries could thus circulate to other sites without distortion. As Chang concludes, "tropical architecture is only global insofar as an existing socio-technical infrastructure is in place" (p.228).

This book succeeds on several fronts. However, in its focus on various geographies during the middle decades of the twentieth century, it perhaps does not make the connection to the current moment of architectural pedagogy and production explicit enough. This book is a strong argument against the dominance of the Western modernist canon, but one might question if this is the central force to be contested that it once was. Are the guiding voices of modern architectural discourse necessarily still Gropius, Hitchcock, Fry, Frampton, the Smithsons, and CIAM? There is an implied assumption by the authors in this volume that they are contributing to a history of the present — that their case studies say something about the implicit suppositions of architects working today. Lu states in the introduction that today "modernist design is defined as the only 'valid' knowledge taught in design studios everywhere" (p.24). This itself seems like a universalizing statement, and subsequent essays, immersed

in their own historical complexities, exhibit a tendency to proceed with this supposition and use it to substantiate their "epistemological implications." While it may be true that the modernist canon has left its mark, the notion that there is a unified modern agenda suppressing different understandings of building practice at times seems overstated.

Contemporary architectural discourse is incredibly fragmented and varies tremendously between different schools and offices globally. Though it is clearly beyond the scope of this project, it would have been interesting if these essays could have expanded their focus to topics contemporary designers are more consciously grappling with: sustainable design, material experimentation, parametric and GIS modeling, virtual mapping and data collection, and the overwhelming influence of the market. These were tendencies which were emerging and existed side by side in the Third World contexts highlighted in this book. Making visible the connection between these historical moments and the present would have made this text more engaging to a broader audience of scholars, students and practitioners.

This aside, *Third World Modernism* is a book which makes tremendous strides toward imagining a multivalent history of architecture sensitive to the particularities of place and the rich diversity of actors that produce it. The several examples of fine-grained historical research not only fill a void in the literature on the built environment, but systematically disassemble the certainties and centralities undergirding disciplinary readings of modernism. One hopes that other scholars will follow this lead and continue to produce high-quality work on the architecture informed by these legitimate yet different systems of knowledge.

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The Dynamics of Heritage: History, Memory and the Highlands Clearances. Laurence Gourievidis. Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate (Heritage, Culture and Identity Series), 2010. Xxiv, 232 pp., illus., map.
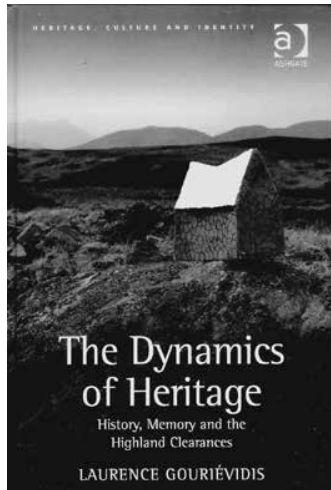
Laurence Gourievidis's *The Dynamics of Heritage* is concerned with the Scottish Highlands and the emotive subject of the so-called "Highland Clearances" as remembered, represented and presented in Scotland's local, regional and national museums. While this is a book about museums and curatorial practices, as the subtitle — *History, Memory and the Highlands Clearances* — suggests, its central concern, of cultural memory and present-day interpretations of the past, is one common to the work of many IASTE members.

The "Highland Clearances" refers to the forced removal of traditional small tenants by landowners from Highland estates in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Against the wild, romantic image of the Highlands, from Lowland Scotland to South West England, the Clearances fit within a wider early-modern British socioeconomic history of land enclosures, agricultural "Improvement" driven by Enlightenment rational-empiricism, the Industrial Revolution, rural flight, and urban growth. However, the Highlands and the Clearances stand out from this wider context as something extraordinary in the popular imagination, and they are a greater cause of local anger and bitterness in the present-day Highlands than elsewhere in Britain. There are many reasons for this distinction accorded to the north of Scotland, and many historical and heritage studies dedicated to delineating them. One reason often presented is that elsewhere in Britain the removal of tenants by landowners was a straight-forward "them and us" class struggle, but in the Highlands removals frequently represented the personal betrayal of a patriarch within a clan culture. This fits with the worldwide image of the Highlands as a site of clannish, mountain romance. Another reason is simply that removals in the Highlands continued through to the late nineteenth century, only just beyond living memory, whereas enclosures in southern England date back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and as such have long slipped from collective memories. Whatever the case, as Gourievidis outlines, since the actual events took place, the memorial fires for the Clearances have been kept alive, well tended by arts, literature, and popular culture.

The Dynamics of Heritage tackles these issues from the perspective of the museum: How do Scottish museums approach their presentation of this complex cultural legacy? Highland history and Highland heritage are well-ploughed academic fields, and it is not easy to find an original insight or new contribution to our understanding. However, to his credit, Gourvievidis manages to achieve this by placing his analysis and field studies of Scottish museums deep within the specific context of cultural theory and the work of French theorists of memory and identity such as Pierre Nora and Paul Ricoeur and, in English, David Lowenthal. While distinguishing the study, such a strong theoretical content also puts the book beyond the interests of most readers. However, for those interested in such things, the opening discussion on current theories and debates about cultural memory and how they relate to museums and curatorial practices is outstanding, well written, and well balanced. Indeed, taken on its own, the first chapter is an excellent introduction to the field of memory and the questions facing museum curators: the construction of narratives through artifacts, texts and images.

Following a good account of popular "Highlandism" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (a potted history of Scottish museums), subsequent chapters take us through the author's field studies of contemporary Scottish museums, including the data he gathered administering questionnaires to their curators. There is a noticeable contrast between the theoretical overview presented in the first chapter and the much more pedestrian discussion presented in these later chapters. One begins to suspect that the first chapter is a literature review from a Ph.D. And, taking the book as a whole, it is a pity that the excellent theoretical discussion of that first chapter was not woven into the later chapters, rather than left in splendid isolation at the beginning.

In brief, Gourievidis is highly critical of Scotland's national museums for sidestepping the issue of the Clearances. This is well-placed criticism with regard to well-funded and expert-staffed national institutions. But he is also critical of local Highland museums, where he found it "odd and strangely lacking that no museum should provide a systematic display on crafting and its background." This critique is not well placed. If they are lacking curatorial rigor, to me, it seems churlish for an academic deeply versed in emergent theories of curatorship to wander the Highlands criticizing local museums with very little funding and run by small but dedicated staff and committed volunteers (I don't know current figures, but in recent times more than 90 percent of the Scottish government's museums budget has gone to the central "national museums"). The author regrets the local museums' populist and commercial attitudes. Well, he should try running a museum in an old chapel in a small village in northwest Scotland. His disappointment with these small, local ventures shows an academic other-worldliness that begins to undermine the academic excellence at the start

of the book. It will also strike IASTE members as odd and strangely lacking that many of the museums discussed are in fact reconstructions of traditional dwellings and settlements, and yet the author has little to say on buildings or the built environment, focusing instead on small artifacts and, mostly, information-board displays and text.

Things improve considerably when, in the final chapter, Gourievidis turns his attention to government heritage policy and the Scottish government's National Cultural Charter. Here, his theoretical analysis and sharp criticism find a just target — where an awareness and articulation of the complexities and nuances of heritage and cultural memory can reasonably be expected (if not, as he shows, always found).

Overall, if in need of some grounding in the realities of running small, local museums, *The Dynamics of Heritage* presents an excellent academic analysis of the theoretical concerns that underpin our (re)presentations of the past, which will prove a useful case study for other researchers.

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This Ecstatic Nation: The American Landscape and the Aesthetics of Patriotism. Terre Ryan. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011. Xv + 171 pp., illus.
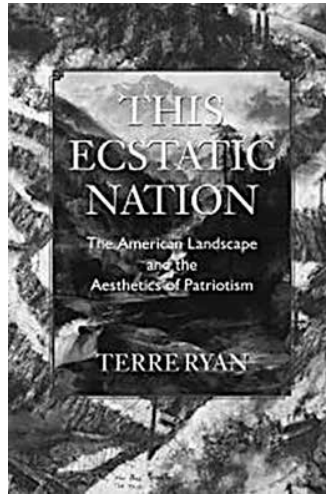
Terre Ryan's *This Ecstatic Nation* combines personal narrative of travels through landscapes of the American West with selective historical and political analysis, what she calls an "ecocritical memoir." Ryan's landscapes are not the ones well traversed by many writers before her — mountains, high plains, deserts and canyons. Instead, her account turns to Western landscapes deeply implicated in the economic and political dominance of the United States: Nevada's test sites, Oregon's timber forests, and Wyoming's coal, oil and gas ranges. She proposes that these landscapes embody "manifest destiny aesthetics," in which grand wilderness vistas, theoretically prized as essential to a patriotic identity, are subjugated to economic and political expediency with deleterious aesthetic and environmental effects. All the while, according to Ryan, our collective economic and political interests have attempted to recast the activities in these landscapes within the frame of the nineteenth-century American sublime, using media, marketing, and rhetorical pronouncement.

The American West that Ryan writes about — vast reaches of land clearcut, surface-mined, pocked by weapons, and disfigured with the detritus of energy production — inevitably raise disquieting questions about where American environmental values actually lie. Indeed, integral to American exceptionalism is the vaunted image of Yellowstone or Yosemite, whose preservation, as Ken Burns has exhorted us, is "America's best idea." Ryan is a writer, and she is in her element when turning a phrase that captures the discomfort we all feel when confronting the discrepancy between our yearning to be light upon the land and our utter dependence on the grinding, relentless consumption of earthly resources. As she admits in her chapter on Oregon's tonsured woodlands: "Every night I bed down in a glen of forest products" (p.62).

This book began as a dissertation in the Department of English at the University of Nevada, Reno. And Ryan's disquisition leans heavily on the interweaving of quotes from an array of disciplines that have examined, often more incisively, landscapes of the American West and their images. But the full texts in art history, environmental history, geography, American studies, and political science that she draws from

give a more complicated view of these landscapes, and the forces operating upon them, than Ryan presents here. Her selection of quotes has more to do with reinforcing her understandably alarmed aesthetic reactions to these places than explicating their complexities.

This is fine enough as an introduction perhaps, but Ryan's chapters halt at gratingly obvious conclusions intended to finger ambivalence in environmental values and actions. For example: "Many SUV ads of the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century have been contemporary versions of expansionist-era landscape paintings" (p.111). Similarly, the book includes digressions into tenuously relevant material whose main purpose seems to be to support predictable and predetermined conclusions. Thus, when Ryan reports that the condom machine in a gas station near the Nevada nuclear test site was made in Korea, it leads to a gloss on the casualties of the Korean War, with the smirky payoff "we managed to refrain from dropping nuclear bombs."

Those with a deeper knowledge of this material may appreciate the difference between such a bludgeoning "ecocritical" stance and the work of artists like Trevor Paglan or Terry Tempest Williams, who have approached these same landscapes with breathtaking, nuanced precision. They have also opened out, rather than confined, our understanding of them. If shared outrage is the goal, others have already shown the wisdom of letting clarity of fact, observation and insight take us there, rather than leading us on a forced march of indignation.

The last chapter of *This Ecstatic Nation* proposes a renewed "green patriotism" which would reject "acts of environmental violence" and the attendant need to obscure them through a parallel visual rhetoric of America the Beautiful. Aesthetics can, indeed, form a lever of power — too often a duplicitous one. But the fact remains that the extreme landscapes this book surveys have their origins in a consumption economy and global industrial capitalism.

As the book points out, manifest destiny aesthetics are there to soothe us after the deed is done; they do not instigate it. Yet the resource-hungry cities where most of us live (or will live in the near future) are hardly mentioned here — and only then in contrast to the wide, open American West. An American landscape unsullied by the effects of our needs and wants requires engagement in the realpolitik of resources, not a paean to patriotism, green or otherwise.

Ryan is a good writer, but she comes to her subject from a primarily literary background. Readers who find this material engaging might be encouraged to move beyond her commentary to the more thorough and realistic appraisals contained in the same sources she uses.

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City and Soul in Divided Societies. Scott A. Bollens. London and New York: Routledge, 2012. 278 pp., b&w illus.
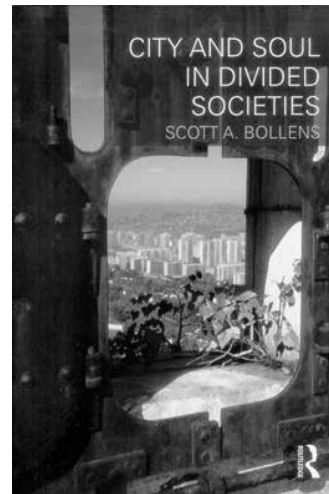
Scott A. Bollens has published extensively over the last two decades on the topic of "polarized cities," and he was one of the first to advance comparative research on ethno-nationally contested urban space. *City and Soul in Divided Societies* is an important addition and summary of his formerly published work. It opens with a revealing personal note and reflection about Bollens's private life and academic career. He writes that the current book is an attempt to give "a first-person account of conducting interview-based ethnography in ethnic and nationalist polarized cities" (p.5). Indeed, this book reflects a more personal ethic than his earlier, more academically oriented work. He then dedicates a chapter to the "Soul in the City: Epic Cultures and Urban Fault-Lines." Here he reflects on one of the themes that has cut across his work in general: that "life in polarized cities constitutes a different normal, where urban separations overlap cultural fault-lines and where long memories fit into tight spaces" (p.13). This assertion provides a recurring position that is detailed throughout the remainder of the text.

The core of the book is divided into ten chapters focusing on nine cities. Over a period from 1994 in Jerusalem to 2010 in Beirut, Bollens conducted site visits and in-depth interviews in each of these, meeting almost 250 local planners, policy-makers, and academics. The first eight cities and conflicts presented have been reviewed and analyzed in Bollens's earlier work. They present case studies of ethno-national conflict and its relation to the city in Sarajevo, Johannesburg, Belfast, Nicosia, Basque County (Spain), Mostar (Bosnia), Barcelona, and Jerusalem. Beirut is the latest addition to this expanding group of selected sites. Here, Bollens gives an in-depth account of the city's history, current urban condition, and ethno-national fault lines. One of the strengths of this book is its ability to capture nuanced contextual factors within brief capsules, mixing discussion of local views, major events, governmental structures, and urban policies. This provides the reader with a swift but flavored overview of the past of each city under investigation — at the time of Bollens's research there.

Other strengths of the book are its reader-friendly format and the personal voice of the author. For those who haven't had the opportunity to read Bollens's earlier work, *City and*

Soul in Divided Societies will give a thought-provoking snap-shot of the main storyline he has developed, which concerns features that distinguish polarized cities. The last two chapters, where he attempts to create a comparative framework and provide some policy recommendations, then offer more practical ideas for experienced planners and decision-makers. In this section of "Synthesis," five additional cities are also introduced: two positive lessons — Montreal and Brussels; and three negative cases — Baghdad and Kirkuk (Iraq), and Mitrovica (Kosovo). The comparison of the different case studies is achieved by comparing the nine aforementioned cities, plus the five new ones, based on four main themes: unresolved or active conflict; suspend violence; movement towards peace; and stable/sustainable.

One absence in Bollens's work is reference to the colonial past and present in some of the cities examined. Especially in the Middle East, these cities have colonial legacies that are relevant in several ways to their development, as well as to power relations within them and their relation of the nation state. There is also an emotional string connected to the rich descriptions in the book, which is sometimes a bit nostalgic, but which has the effect of connecting the reader to the pain and suffering of the conflict. Indeed, it occasionally feels as if the conflict itself is the main point of investigation rather than its impact on planning and development. This is also reflected in the attempt to "compare across conflicts" rather than cities.

The relevance of this book goes beyond understanding ethno-nationally polarized urban space. The different cities described provide important case studies, and they have fundamental value in terms of understanding the wider spatial, social and political conflicts emerging in an increasing number of cities worldwide. Bollens touches on this issue throughout the book, suggesting the relevance of the extreme cases he has investigated to a wide range of urban contexts.

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Living Over the Store: Architecture and Local Urban Life. Howard Davis. London and New York: Routledge, 2012. Vii + 256 pp., illus.
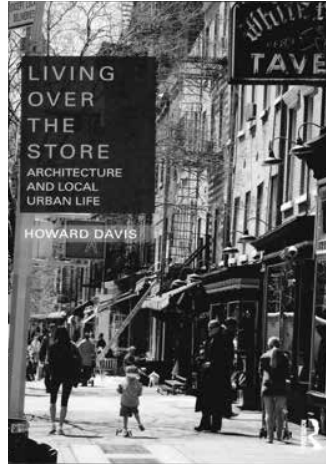
Howard Davis's study of shop/houses, or buildings in which the first floor is devoted to commercial space and the upper floors to residential, is geographically sweeping yet fundamentally an argument for a small, neighborhood-oriented building type. *Living Over the Store* takes a multicultural approach to a hybrid building and demonstrates the commonalities across time and space. Davis uses the shop/house's decline as an insight into deteriorating urban fabric and its possible resurgence as an indication of a "resilient urbanism." Davis takes one small building that houses one family's work and living spaces and expands it to a view of livable cities.

The first part of the book approaches the shop/house geographically, with chapters devoted to the building type in Asia, Rome, and southern Europe; northern and western Europe; and England and America. The commonalities across these cultures are striking, but are perhaps best demonstrated in the section of sixty color plates. These images, arranged to emphasize the shared features of these buildings, include both historic and contemporary images, and the color adds to the liveliness of the street scenes depicted. Throughout, the images are excellent, with black-and-white photographs and a profusion of plans augmenting the analysis. Davis's global tour shows different uses of courtyards, placements of stairs, and relationships between living space and shop — yet the mixed use is the same.

In the next sections, Davis interweaves cultures as he discusses contextual aspects of the shop/house, ranging from the family to the neighborhood, from simple commerce to urban economics. The preindustrial custom of an entire family working together might be outmoded, but recent moves to integrate child-rearing with parents' work lives indicate that a unified life is still desired. But perhaps the greatest benefit of shop/houses is to the neighborhood, which profits not only from small shops conveniently located, but also from residents who have a presence in the community. Davis shares Jane Jacobs's concern for activity on the street and maintains that these small shops facilitate that. He also admires Christopher Alexander's analysis of the beneficial spatial relationships that shop/houses reinforce.

Davis then looks at shop/houses in a larger context, that of the city, arguing that they tend to appear on streets that are not predominantly residential or overwhelmingly commercial, but rather on streets that funnel pedestrian traffic from one to the other. He also argues for the fundamental flexibility of shop/houses, being both economically flexible in their role as "business-incubator" spaces and spatially flexible, ranging from the traditional to the architect-designed. His analysis of the architecture of shop/houses includes certain common features: narrow frontages, physical dominance of the shopfront at street level, fluid relationships between shops and dwellings, location of kitchens convenient to both, and facades that are stylistically open at the shop level and closed at the residential level. His analysis serves as a blueprint for contemporary designs of shop/houses, whose construction Davis emphatically encourages.

In the third part of the book, Davis discusses the decline of this building form, as well as its resurgence. The reasons for its disappearance are many: the functional separation of the city is as much due to industrialization and Enlightenment desires for order and uniformity as to modernist precepts. But gradually the Western city separated home from work. In the twentieth century this separation was reinforced by zoning codes, building regulations, financing attitudes, and urban-renewal theories. One aspect of the shop/house that led to its demise is its very hybridity; hard to categorize and rarely studied, the small mixed-use building seems somehow impure. Today several factors stand in the way of construction of shop/houses: a reliance on known, easily defined building types; a preference for large projects; and the fragmentation of urban space reinforced in land-use plans.

In the face of these forces discouraging the mixed-use shop/house, Davis argues for shop/houses as a way to facilitate walkable, friendly neighborhoods where residents shop locally and know their merchants, and where merchants raise their families in a mixed-class setting. He cites several examples of new designs of shop/houses that work well with their settings and offer a variety of residential arrangements. Many of the new examples are in Oregon, as the book increasingly focuses on the United States in its latter chapters. But one hopes such creative and pleasing designs could be found throughout the world. Ultimately, Davis's book is an argument for a better city — one that facilitates walkability, face-to-face interactions, and a vibrant street scene. The shop/house, as Howard Davis so persuasively reminds us, could be an important ingredient in that urban mix.

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Architecture of Thought. Andrzej Piotrowski. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012. 350 pp., 61 b&w illus., 16 color plates.

[Architects] are always in the service of something more powerful than them — usually (institutional and abstract) and formless until embodiment.

— Andrew Ballentine
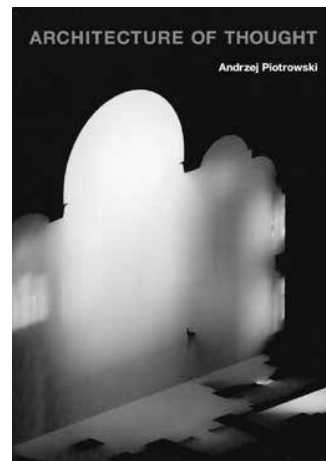
By what means does architecture participate in the construction of ideologies? And what are the various forces contributing to that process? While earlier architectural criticism has examined the uneasy relationship between Albert Speer and fascist aspirations, less attention has been paid to similar agendas in non-Western cultures. In *Architecture of Thought*, Andrzej Piotrowski takes on this ambitious project.

The book is organized chronologically, beginning with the ninth-century Middle Byzantine period and extending to the mid-twentieth century, a span of more than seven hundred years. Furthermore, its scope takes in multiple continents and ideological modalities. On this vast canvas, architecture is examined as a cultural practice — which is to say, part of everyday material culture. In this instance, however, the discourse is associated with defining reality itself — not an easy task.[1]

Piotrowski defines ideology not only as a body of doctrine, but also as the way in which people tend to think — as a *Weltanschauung*, or philosophy of human life and the universe. In Piotrowski's view, before ideological programs or knowledge systems are made explicit, they are imaginings, perceptions. Thus visual constructs can be regarded as ways of testing new modes of thought. This is somewhat of a chicken/egg situation, but the numerous case studies selected effectively support his argument.

Because *Architecture of Thought* describes a process of emergence, its objectives are both theoretical and methodological. Yet scholarly research is primarily logocentric, coming into conflict with the fact that the actual experience of architecture is physical — in other words, nonverbal. Furthermore, non-Western *Weltanschauungs* often encompass nonrational subjectivities, which defy logocentric analysis. Thus Piotrowski argues convincingly that traditional research methods tend to hamper, if not actually exclude, serious discussion of the topic.[2] As a means to circumvent inherited logocentric methodologies, he employs three strategies.

First, Piotrowski tries to analyze architecture in parallel with other contemporaneous forms of cultural production, such as art, images, religious ornamentation, sculpture, apparel, advertisements, and pop culture. Such visual ordering systems reveal something about every culture's philosophies. Piotrowski does, however, observe that this notion is more complex than simply saying that a culture's architecture or advertising only reflect its dominant thoughts and ideologies.

His second strategy is to analyze material culture over time. In this way the emergence of thought can be traced vis-à-vis a series of iterative design negotiations. Design processes make nascent concepts accessible. For example, during a period of non-iconoclastic strictures, the challenge for ninth-century Byzantine ecclesiastics was how to represent the nonrepresentable. Builders resolved this dilemma through the simple stage-crafting of materials: spatial layering, volume, and light. When these representational spaces resonated with the cultural imagination of the time, the process allowed for new realities to become accessible. In other words, new designs make new ways of thinking possible.

This leads to Piotrowski's third strategy, by which digital modeling programs are employed to re-create the atmosphere of pre-electrified architectural spaces while serving as a demonstration of concept. By drawing on simulated lighting effects (both sun- and candle light), the renderings strive to capture the ineffable experience of physical space in all its materiality. Through these rendered examples, he hopes the perceptual experience of architecture, rather than being tightly bound by textual analysis, will rely on visuality and indeterminacy, and thus allow for multiple interpretations. In such an open-ended environment, Piotrowski argues that many ideologies can exist in the same physical space. This is an important observation when studying premodern cultures.

One of this book's strongest chapters concerns Mesoamerican epistemologies. The research here traces how religion was hybrid, as various Native American beliefs later mixed with Catholicism — what the author terms "syncretism." Syncretism as a way of thinking becomes symptomatic on a subconscious level, allowing multiple modalities of thought to coexist without intersecting theologically. For example, a Catholic Baroque ceiling might replicate Mayan bas-relief patterns. According to Piotrowski, "The [Spanish] colonizers attempted to exploit what they considered to be the language of indigenous forms, but actually limited their engagement to what they could control." Originally, of course, the Spaniards did not expect to incorporate pagan art or design; they were only looking to spread a message (whether of Christ or the Word). In contrast, the early Mesoamerican *Weltanschauung* could comfortably enfold unorthodox or alien beliefs. For Mesoamericans, complexity, ambiguity and contradiction were inherently meaningful.

Yet the problem remains that there is no way to test the historical "accuracy" of these observations when scholars are forced to rely solely on the accounts of the Spanish colonialists.[3] If architecture, similar to *Weltanschauung*, operates sub-

consciously, how can historians chart the causal operations of the sublime? Existent European chronicles were unable to capture what cannot be described in words. Further, non-Western subjectivities were deemed inconsequential, and thus ignored altogether. Because the Mayans had no written language, and did not privilege texts as an important way to represent the world and all of its experiences, it is difficult to know with certainty what they were feeling or thinking.

Moreover, Piotrowski is advancing the notion that architecture not only reflects and embodies ideologies, but, in a less ordered way, also tests out new modes of thought. The history of architecture can be seen then to trace philosophical shifts. While this overall thesis is well documented, the analysis sidesteps the importance of economic and political forces, which clearly contribute as well. Throughout the first three chapters, the Roman Catholic Church is framed merely as a theology. Yet the Church's influence during colonialism was concurrently an economic and political project. It acted as a totalizing entity, organizing virtually all aspects of Spanish society, in Europe and the New World.

The book concludes with a discussion of the architect Le Corbusier's use of advertising as a technique to promote the design ideology of modernism, a topic that has been discussed by other historians. This chapter would have fit more seamlessly with the rest of the book if it had linked back to ecclesiastical architecture. An alternative strategy, and perhaps one ultimately more interesting, would have been to refocus the analytical lens and chart Le Corbusier's internal philosophical shift during the 1950s. A close examination of Le Corbusier surpassing his need for rationalism with the design of La Chapelle Notre-Dame-du-Haut de Ronchamp (1954) could have provided a most satisfying conclusion. Or would this approach once again challenge the logocentric methodologies of architectural historians? Either way, *Architecture of Thought* is an important and provocative reflection on the intertwined relationship between ideology and material culture.

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1. This conception of discourse is largely derived from the work of the French philosopher Michel Foucault. Discourse, according to Foucault (1977, 1980, 2003), is related to power as it operates by rules of exclusion.
2. As Piotrowski explains it, Erwin Panofsky's *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* is a particularly good example. "[It] exemplifies the epistemologically self-sufficient character of such approaches. Since the appearance of the book, Gothic architecture has been frequently interpreted as the material outcome of Scholasticism. The scholarly method that Panofsky uses itself frequently follows the scholastic mode of thought. The way in Panofsky constructs his argument parallels principles of Scholasticism — manifesatio and concordia." In summary, Piotrowski argues, the way Panofsky approached his object of inquiry predetermined his conclusions.
3. A central problem in cultural studies is the diversity of patterns of rationality among cultures, historical periods, and stages of personal development; yet the Spanish accounts do not acknowledge this.