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Editorial

The stylised Egyptian hieroglyph on the cover of this special issue of the SAJAH is one of the oldest symbols of the city. It indicates that the city in history originated and developed at the crossroads of trade. This artefact became the greatest cultural invention that human beings are capable of. Since antiquity cities all over the civilized world developed in ways that generate riches and cultural marvels, but also crowd people together in ways that make them vulnerable to exploitation and disease.

The fourteen research articles in this issue deals with different cities and a variety of theories about their ideality and reality, covering a variety of places spread over the earth and ideas originating in various periods of history from Medieval to Modern times.

The various articles are written by researchers representing most of the visual themes dealt with in SAJAH. Moreover, the authors represent a truly international community whose interests in the city converge in this publication that we hope will be a source for further research.

E.A. Maré

Outside city limits: introducing Anton van der Merwe of Starways Arts, in Hogsback, Eastern Cape, South Africa

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Certain contemporary artists in South Africa choose to live in rural areas rather than in cities. This paper explores some reasons for this preference, and also looks at countercultural back-to-the-earth trends and other factors that may have encouraged some of these artists to prefer to live and work in rural settings. It is against this background that artist Anton van der Merwe is introduced and his early choices of spaces in which to work, both as a potter and painter, are examined. This background serves to contextualise his decision, made in 1992, to move home and studio from Midrand in Gauteng to Hogsback village, in rural Eastern Cape. Hardships were faced, artistic growth has been experienced, and a flourishing visual arts practice has been established by him at Starways Arts. In conclusion, it is noted that involvement in aspects of local community affairs have resulted in widespread mutual benefit.

Key words: Back-to-the-earth, David Potter, flame fired ceramics, Hym Rabinowitz, off-the-grid ceramics studio, self-sufficient potter, watercolour landscapes, woodfired ceramics

Buite stadsgrense: 'n voorstelling van Anton van der Merwe van Starways Arts in Hogsback, Ooskaap, Suid-Afrika

Sekere hedendaagse kunstenaars in Suid-Afrika verkies om in landelike gebiede in plaas van stede te woon. In hierdie artikel word sekere redes vir hierdie voorkeur ondersoek; daar word gekyk na kontrakulturele neigings van terug-na-die-aarde, asook ander faktore wat moontlik daartoe kon bygedra het om hierdie kunstenaars te beweeg om in landelike omgewings te woon en te werk. Teen hierdie agtergrond word Anton van der Merwe voorgestel en sy vroeë keuses van werkruimtes, sowel as 'n pottebakker as 'n skilder, ondersoek. Hierdie agtergrond dui as kontekstualisering van die besluit wat hy in 1992 geneem het om sy huis en ateljee van Midrand in Gauteng na Hogsback Village in die landelike Ooskaap te verskuif. Ondanks probleme het hy as kunstenaar ontwikkel en 'n florerende visuele kunspaktyk, Starways Arts, gevestig. Ten slotte word aangevoer dat sy betrokkeheid by aspekte van plaaslike aangeleenthede wedsydse voordele opgelewer het.

Sleutelwoorde: terug-na-die-aarde, David Potter, vlamgebakte keramiek, Hym Rabinowitz, buitengewone keramiekateljee, selfonderhoudende pottebakker, watterverflandskappe, houtgebakte keramiek

I have previously been focussed on researching ceramics praxis of potters based in rural areas in the Eastern Cape (Steele 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013) who mainly bonfire their works to low earthenware temperatures of approximately 900 degrees centigrade, or less. This paper, however, marks a slight change in focus because while staying with potters and flame fired ceramics I am now moving towards looking at those who work at the higher end of the temperature spectrum and create stoneware fired to white heat at approximately 1300 degrees centigrade. Differences between low temperature earthenware and highfired stoneware ceramics practice requires several fundamental shifts in clay composition, glazes, and firing technology, including that a kiln must be used because otherwise too much ambient air is available for such high temperatures to be achieved. Such technical and other matters will be looked at in subsequent papers because my immediate focus in this paper is on potter and painter Anton Van Der Merwe's 1992 decision to settle outside city limits, in the Amathole mountain village of Hogsback, near the town of Alice, about 90 minutes' drive inland from East London in the Eastern Cape.

It is not entirely unusual for artists to choose to settle outside city limits, even though it can freely be acknowledged that “artists disproportionately reside in large cities ... [and that this predilection can partly be attributed to such factors as] access to other artists, access to consumer demand, access to service jobs, and housing affordability” (Andersson & Andersson *et al.*: In Press). These authors have pointed out, citing Palmberg 2012 as well as Leamer and Storper 2001, that some artists are attracted to residing in large cities because, amongst other things, “much of the knowledge that artists can learn from other artists is tacit, and thus requires face-to-face contact rather than disembodied information transmission channels”. Also, it has been observed that frequent contact with other artists can enable an “atmosphere of trust, which is more likely to be forthcoming among people who know one another personally” and interact with each other frequently, thereby facilitating mutually enabling relationships.

Marlet and van Woerkens (2005: 3-4, citing Florida 2002, 2005) observed that artists are “often individualists with alternative preferences, diverse lifestyles and non-conformist behaviour” who tend to “feel drawn to urban tolerant atmospheres and they like urban cosmopolitan experiences”. They add that some artists are also attracted by both the physical and natural aesthetic qualities of some cities, their “fine buildings in an urban environment” as well as natural scenery within and “outside the city, and also the physical presence of extensive local amenities”.

Furthermore, Lovett and Beesely (2007: 49, also citing Florida 2002) have found that artists are often in search of a “life packed full of intense, high-quality multidimensional experiences”. Cities can thus be seen as potentially providing, for some, “a variety of economic opportunities and a stimulating environment”, enabling a potentially attractive “agglomeration of economic and lifestyle opportunities”. Cities also have personal and public spaces dedicated to flora, fauna, wildlife, and local landscape, and artists thus have opportunities for communing with and being part of natural surroundings and cycles, if so desired.

Despite all of these factors there are artists who prefer to live and work in rural settings. David Potter, for example, settled in Rhodes Village in the Witteberge Mountains of the Eastern Cape in the mid-1970s and established a ceramics studio. He, in turn, gave me my start-up opportunity as a potter when he emigrated to Spain in 1976 and I took over that studio. He duly settled in Norfolk in the United Kingdom and has established a homestead, ceramics studio and kiln (figure 1) that are entirely self-built and wholly off the public services grid: there is no electricity, nor piped municipal water, nor telephone or TV to his densely forested property.

Hand-hewn firewood is used for home and water heating, some cooking, and for firing the kiln to at least 1300 degrees centigrade, and his ceramics are created on a self-built kick-wheel. Such self-sufficiency is extreme and extraordinary, and is enhanced by vegetable gardens and fruit orchards that he began establishing in the late 1970s. While musing about his rural and largely self-sufficient lifestyle he recently explained to Boyer (2013: 122) that “I hope to express my love of freedom and contempt for the values of the career bourgeoisie”. He also said that he was originally prompted to take this direction so many decades ago when he decided that rather than struggle in London, he would prefer to “live as a king in nature” which, by all accounts, he does.

Such a radical counter-cultural back-to-the-land way of life and emphasis on self-sufficiency is not entirely unusual amongst some artists in southern Africa, and Halfacree (2006: 309) maintains that variants on such lifestyles are “a very long-standing social phenomenon across the global North”. He also suggests, citing Bunce 1994 and Coates 2001, that “since the

advent of capitalism and its urbanization of everyday life, the theme of going back-to-the-land has been vibrant, inspired by numerous motivations”. Such activities are said to be counter-cultural, according to Halfacree (2006: 313, citing Roszak 1970: xii, and referring to Anderson 1995, as well as McWilliams 2000), partly on account of an emergence in the late 1960s and 1970s of “a youth-led cultural constellation that radically diverges from values and assumptions that have been in the mainstream of ... society at least since ... the seventeenth century”. He further points out that the concept of back-to-the-land hinges on the adoption of a rural livelihood (Fairlie 2001: 9-10) with a goal of what is termed “cosubstantiality” (Gray 1998: 345), whereby “everyday lives and ‘the land’ mutually constitute one another”.



Figure 1
David Potter at kiln and in studio
(photos: Tessa Draper 2014).

Such attempts to re-engage with nature and natural cycles can, according to Halfacree (2006: 313-314, also citing Fairlie 1996, as well as Schwarz & Schwarz 1998) be “linked to other radical rural practices ... such as self-sufficiency ... low-impact building design ... and permaculture”. Such lifestyle choices are “typically entwined”, for example, with “a rejection of many other key features of modern capitalist society” such as “the near single-minded acquisition of commodities and money, careerism and an emphasis on disposability and ephemerality”.

Bunting and Mitchell (2001: 268-269, 272 citing Taun 1977) concur that “landscape appeal” was often a significant factor when choices were made about where to settle, but also suggested that “market access and ... economic exigency” were not ignored, which takes into account that “for the most part, the post-modern arts industry is a market-oriented operation”. They add that “artists have always been believed to exhibit a heightened sensitivity to place, or what Taun calls topophilia”. They maintain that “artistic obsession with natural and rural places is a well-recognised phenomenon” and that “inextricable intimacy and creativity are forged between ... [artists] and the landscapes” which they create and in which they live. It is interesting to note that in a follow-up article Mitchell, Bunting and Piccioni (2004: 152-154, 165) add that “professional visual artists have always enjoyed considerable latitude in selection of a place of work and residence” and that counter-urbanisation trends amongst some artists have “occurred in the context of increased mobility, promoted by mass automobile ... ownership”.

They maintain that perceptions about tangible rural amenities such as “attractive, natural and built landscapes” as well as intangible amenities such as “peaceful, quiet, safe or friendly places” are significant factors encouraging “migration decisions”. Furthermore, Mitchell, Bunting and Piccioni (2004: 154) suggest that once relocation has taken place that “attachment to place ... [becomes] extremely important”, such new rootedness being especially significant for some who maintain that “the spiritual energy that emanates from the natural elements feeds the artistic soul, thereby stimulating the creative process”.

In this regard Lovett and Beesely (2007: 49, 52, citing Florida 2002) suggest that some contemporary artists are amongst those for whom “importance of experience” is paramount, and for whom rural areas are “consistently ... associated with a high quality of life”, adding that “artists are attracted to rural locales because of natural beauty which is often a tool for the artist to use in their work”. Lovett and Beesely (2007: 52) have also observed that country living and the search to be located within beautiful natural settings is facilitated much more easily these days because “the friction of distance is weakening and allowing people to locate where they want to and more freely”.

The drive, by some artists, to be located within and/or create art focussed on beauty and other aspects of nature, is evident throughout visual arts history, and is, regrettably, beyond the immediate scope of this paper. It must, however, be noted that such desire and accompanying attitudes were sometimes accompanied by more than a little romanticism and idealism. Furthermore, in contemporary times, there is also a shadow cast and concern that “social reality has become so complex that the harmonies required by the beautiful, conceived of as a belonging within aesthetic space, can no longer be systematically justified in aesthetic terms” (Olivier 2007: 1). By this he partly means that one cannot sidestep taking cognisance of social circumstances as they impact upon life and ways of thinking and being in the world. Olivier (2007: 1) refers here to “the claim, put forward by Lyotard [1992] that after *Auschwitz* one can no longer cling to the metanarrative of the universal emancipation of humankind”. Life and collective strivings should thus be seen within a context of “the complex, interrelated character of historical events, culture, and social reality” (Olivier 2007: 1) including, in South Africa, that of colonialism, apartheid, and legacies thereof. Yet, despite such weighty issues, artists and others have personal beliefs and ways of living that help make sense of the world, and being within and interacting with nature is regarded by some as being restorative and energising.

Thus, one of the driving forces behind tendencies towards artists settling in rural areas has been about people acting upon a need to connect with nature. Bridie (2006: 117, citing Latour 2004) has commented, however, that the notion of nature is unstable and “always mediated”, a “changing construct in an increasingly global contemporary art environment”. Stevens (2008: 96, citing Barzun 2000) has, furthermore, expressed a view that nature, being the “natural world around us ... has no intentions, friendly or unfriendly; it does not even exist as an entity; it is a man-made construct from [man’s] experience and for his purpose”. She also added that, nonetheless, “the sight of it often gives pure mindless joy”.

It is thus at least partly a search for joy and experience of beauty, on a personal level for some, which is a subtext of various counter-cultural back-to-the-land and other trends that result in artists settling in the countryside. Artists have also found rural settings conducive to experiences of creativity manifest as a sense of freedom and openness to “innovation and surprise” (Lovett & Beesley 2007: 47), a space for “life and work beyond boredom [and] repetition” (Gibson & Klocker 2005: 95). Visual arts practice thus becomes “a means to becoming and belonging”, and creativity in rural life ... [can be] understood as social, performative, visceral and political”

(Waitt & Gibson 2013: 75, 77), thereby involving individuals as whole persons interacting constructively, or otherwise, with their whole environments. These writers further suggest that creativity can be understood, in this context, “as a field of choices and possibilities that are set up in the tensions between being and becoming” and that, generally speaking, creativity can be regarded as the “manner in which art catalyses subjectivities, social relationships and alternative economic formations”. Waitt and Gibson (2013: 77) thereby recognise, that artists work at expression of a “sense of self [that] is ... not innate, or stable, but continually produced, repeated and reiterated – and never ultimately completely successful”.

Anyway, spatially, “nowhere is more creative than any other place” (Waitt & Gibson 2013: 75), and artists situated within their specific landscapes, whether within or outside city limits, regularly engage in moments of deep introspection as well as in various versions of extreme extroversion, all as part of a day’s doings. Looking at this “phenomenology of practice” (Van Heerden & Munro 2012: 295-296, citing Van Manen 2007: 11, and Norton & Amundson 2003) noted that it becomes apparent that most artists experience “physiological arousal” during the creative process wherever they are. Such arousal is characterised in some instances with various degrees of “accelerated heart rate, elevated blood pressure, increased respiration, gastrointestinal activity, increased muscular tension, and increased circulation to skeletal muscles as well as dermal and cerebral vasoconstriction”, or their physiological opposites ... a creative rush and/or droop.

Anton van der Merwe (figure 2) has actively located himself outside city limits in order to make best use of opportunities arising from such creative rushes, setting up his early kick wheel and kiln, as well as easel and paints, on what was then an undeveloped and unserviced smallholding in the forested environment of Hogsback in 1992. The move to Hogsback was not by chance, and arose out of a series of events experienced during his 20 odd years of professional artistic practice prior to that date.



Figure 2
Anton van der Merwe working on a large pot at Starways, and at a recent exhibition
entitled “Evolving Lifestyles” at CVD Gallery, East London. The woodfired platter
features multi-layered glazes with high iron content, and the watercolour is entitled *The*
walls of a San temple
(photos: John Steele 2013).

He grew up in Tzaneen in Limpopo Province, and recalls having “drawn and made clay objects on the banks of the Letaba River ... as a boy”, as well as that in 1965 he was shown how to paint with oils by an aunt who then “locked me in a toolshed” until the task of copying a Tinus de Jongh landscape had been completed (CV of November 2014: 18, and Interview of November

2014: 25). He later attended Pretoria Boys High School where he received his first taste of formal visual arts education.

A move, still very much within city limits, from Pretoria to Cape Town in 1976 presented opportunities to settle into a professional artistic career as both painter and potter. He went to ceramics lessons offered by Harold Bergstein, and then an opportunity to set up his own ceramics studio happened when another local potter decided to emigrate to America, and Anton bought all that equipment, most of which is still in use. In due course he constructed a gas fired kiln under the guidance of Paul Pepworth, and for the next 15 years, on a property in Rondebosch Park Estate, he developed 700 square meters of “renovated dwelling, ceramics studio, teaching facility, kiln rooms and clay preparation and recycling spaces” (email of 06 February 2014). During this time he held several one-person exhibitions, established a pottery school catering for up to 45 adults and 15 children, and also founded the Renaissance Gallery in Long Street, in partnership with Desirée Bonfiglio (CV of November 2013: 18).

Anton van der Merwe initially found living in Cape Town to be stimulating and artistically invigorating. He commented recently (email of 06 Feb 2014) that “Cape Town and the happy community of potters there were my first and most powerful influences and set me on the road that I have since followed closely”, and he quite emphatically stated that “the city, with its established pathways and institutions, can and did assist my growth as a young artist”.

It turned out, however, that in due course, amongst other things, “being able to put a ton of raw clay down and mill it proved too much to expect from the close quarters of living in a suburb”, and that a time came when “I was literally bursting at the seams” and began to feel “confined and interned in every way, practically and artistically” (email of 06 Feb 2014). This sense of restriction arose especially because needs “as a potter, more so than as a painter, led me to a quest for further knowledge of the intricacies of the ceramic world” and he began to want to “further explore and experiment with glazes, clays, and different types of kilns” at a scale that could not be catered for at the Rondebosch home and studio. Furthermore, very significantly, he observed that these factors began to have a negative impact on his artworks, saying in this same communication, that he found, for example, that “work space limitations had a profound influence on the type and feel of pots produced”.

Even so, Anton van der Merwe found that change was difficult, not least because the “Cape Peninsular is geographically confined by the Hottentots Holland Mountains and is particularly hard to leave” and that this “geographical influence, with all its beauty and convenience, had led ... to a false sense of well-being”. Nonetheless, a pervasive feeling of “being confined” and that “more space seemed to be the answer” led, in 1987, to an uprooting and relocation to Midrand, between Johannesburg and Pretoria, in Gauteng. Here, neither within nor outside of city limits, he established the Randjesfontein Pottery in an old cowshed, and a number of exhibitions and a series of concerts were held there in conjunction with his life-partner, Gwyneth Lloyd (email of 06 Feb 2014, and CV of November 2013: 16).

After establishing himself in Midrand, Anton van der Merwe’s artistic and personal growth pattern continued for about half a decade, and then a number of circumstances and factors contributed to a rapid rethink. They experienced three burglaries in quick succession (Interview of November 2013: 32, 34) and soon thereafter got notice from two landlords in one day, resulting in both their living and studio spaces becoming suddenly no longer available. Another significant factor was that Gwyneth Lloyd had grown up in Alice and remembered Hogsback as a happy place for childhood holidays and picnics, and they had recently gone to

Hogsback and impulsively purchased some land with a long-term view of perhaps eventually building a holiday cottage type of retreat on the property.

Furthermore, he “longed for a ‘country’ studio and its perceived freedoms” (email of 06 February 2014). Part of this longing can be traced back to a hope, first experienced in Cape Town, of eventually building and operating a woodfired kiln ... quite a real possibility in Hogsback because that village is situated in the midst of both indigenous and commercial forests. Even more significantly, however, is the fact that Anton van der Merwe (CV of November 2013: 16) cites the late South African potter Hym Rabinowitz as a main mentor and one of those who had influenced and encouraged him during the very early days in Cape Town from his studio called Eagle’s Nest. Rabinowitz created high-temperature flame fired ceramics, was passionate about artistic self-reliance, and his studio was situated up in Constantia Nek, away from the hurly burly of Cape Town city. Furthermore, Rabinowitz had experienced mentorship from United Kingdom based potter Michael Cardew when he worked at Wenford Bridge Pottery in 1966 (Harrod 2012: 310). Cardew, in turn, was influenced by Bernard Leach (Harrod 2012: 133, 228, 378) who, along with Japanese potter Shoji Hamada, was known at the 10th Kenzan on account of being part of a chain of ceramics apprentices (Leach 1976: 29) of Mingei Japanese (de Waal 1997, Kikuchi 1997) and other folk pottery traditions. Such potters were usually self-reliant and rurally based. Anton van der Merwe (Interview of November 2013: 41) has commented that “without consciously emulating Hym” it was inevitable that such influences percolated through to the very core of their relationship and ways of working as potters.

He has also observed that at that time he was once more experiencing a sense of “being confined and at the same time, possibly over-stimulated” by the proximity of both Johannesburg and Pretoria, and that this unsettled feeling was again “extending to all aspects of my artistic work” (email of 06 November 2014). When recently reflecting on circumstances leading up to his move to outside city limits Anton van der Merwe said, in this same email, that he wondered about whether “the most significant development of an artist and work takes place in the centre, the city, or in isolation in the country”. He then commented that, for him, “the epitome of an ‘open space artist’ who breaks new ground is ... Alolph Jentsch” in his Namibian phase, saying that, amongst other factors, what attracted him to the work of this artist was a “deeply spiritual and moving feeling” conveyed by his works. Thus, a combination of factors -including burglaries and receiving notice on Midrand leases, as well as fortuitous purchase of a forested plot, and idealised notions of freedoms to be experienced in the country, in conjunction with “attractive” hopes for artistic and spiritual growth, plus the full support of Gwyneth Lloyd- all coalesced into a precipitous move of studio equipment and household to a piece of earth rich in natural beauty, in Hogsback, in 1992.

The move itself was fraught with complexity, and Anton van der Merwe relates (email of 06 February 2014) that upon arrival “I soon realised that essentially there was an exchange of problems” and that the sheer isolation of the place away from cultural activity and potential buyers complicated matters immensely, as well as that establishing a new homestead and studio “used plenty of energy and resources”, all on an extremely limited budget. Setting up in Hogsback was undertaken very much in the spirit of advice given by Michael Cardew (1969), wherein the gist was to do things for yourself, including building a studio, finding own clay, processing that, then throwing robust works on a kick wheel which were flame fired. This holistic lifestyle and work cycle turned out to be extremely onerous, yet out of that Anton van der Merwe has created spaces and ways of living that, despite tensions and contradictions, work well and have afforded a deep sense of rootedness to place and way of life.

Anton van der Merwe also recalls (email of 06 February 2014) a sensation that

moving to Hogsback gave me a similar experience to my potter friend Steve Shapiro who, in attempting a similar poetic journey to the Japanese poet Basho, pedalled a bicycle up Sir Lowry's Pass [near Cape Town], got halfway up then coasted back down the mountain. He said [in subsequent Haiku poems] that he rode up as an idealist and coasted down as a pragmatist ... Looking back, I also became a pragmatist in the move to Hogsback.

Apart from the need for a new home and studio to be built without much financial resources, Anton van der Merwe also faced physical constraints. Issues such as no tap water was overcome by fetching it from a stream; no electricity was overcome by using paraffin for lighting, wood for cooking and warmth, a kick wheel was used for throwing pots, and a gas kiln was used to fire them; and the absence of a gallery from which to sell works was countered by placing these in the forest and on tree stumps. Furthermore, a reliable clay source had to be found and the clay tested in a series of firings under differing circumstances. Also, perhaps amongst the biggest challenges were that he and Gwyneth Lloyd found themselves in a "cultural wilderness" (Interview of November 2013: 43), far away from city vibrancy and economic activity that included buying and selling of artworks. It had been hoped that tourism would enable regular sales and income, but circumstances were such at the time that Hogsback had lost its allure as a destination for tourism, both hotels were up for sale, the town was very quiet, and that there were virtually no customers for their arts.

Gwyneth Lloyd (Interview of November 2013: 35) relates that at this time the South African economy was in a decline, and, being just a few years before the first free and fair democratic elections in 1994, violence was sweeping the country. "Potential tourists and others who might be interested in purchasing artworks in a remote Eastern Cape village were virtually totally put off from any form of travel outside city limits by a series of bombings and massacres that occurred in neighbouring towns" within the first six months or so of arrival in Hogsback. These included, for example, the Bhisho Massacre in which 29 demonstrators were killed by troops firing indiscriminately on 7th September 1992 (www.sahistory.org.za, retrieved on 16th February 2014); the King William's Town Golf Club Killings at which four were killed and seventeen injured after gunfire on 28th November 1992 (www.sahistory.org.za, retrieved on 16th February 2014); and the Queenstown Bombing at which a satchel was left in a crowded restaurant and 18 people were injured when it detonated on 3rd December 1992 (www.sahistory.org.za, retrieved on 16th February 2014).

In this same interview (November 2013: 35) she re-counted further that as a result of these and other circumstances "there was nobody to buy the pots [and paintings] and we realised that we had to do something about the economic environment, so ... we created the Hogsback Arts Festival ... in order to bring in a buying public ... and create an arts destination for tourism". This decision and line of action turned out to be the visionary backbone and strong anchor upon which Starways Arts is now successfully based.

Artists may come and go in the most idyllic natural settings, but if there are no customers then effort is largely in vain if it is necessary to make a living. Anton van der Merwe has commented that the Hogsback Arts Festival has resulted in Hogsback being seen as an "arts community and 'artist's colony' ... [an image which has facilitated] a flow of creative people to the area ... as well as [contributing towards] the property boom Hogsback subsequently experienced" (email of 06th February 2014). Furthermore, his visual arts practice and confidence as an artist has also grown exponentially. He has remarked that

my route of personal study in ceramics lead me to control fierce fire. The aesthetic qualities of high temperature woodfiring are extremely attractive. Hogsback is an excellent environment for this practice, and ... the geographic features are also excellent meat and potatoes for a landscape artist.

Thus, in the 22 or so years since taking the big decision to locate himself outside city limits, Anton van Der Merwe has established a viable visual arts studio, and developed his concurrent interests in both ceramics and painted watercolour landscapes, both of which find mature expression in his contemporary works. He summarised how these disciplines complement each other, both experientially as well as philosophically, when he wrote (email of 24th October 2013) that

pots and watercolour are the 'heaven' and the 'earth' for me ... pots and sculpture come from the physical body, perhaps a muscle memory. Paintings are 'dreamt' or emerge from my sleep life. So the two together create a kind of a balance that I seem to move between. Also, there is the flow aspect ... in watercolour I always try and respect the 'chance' effect created by the flow of water colours, as I do in glaze. Both have the magnificence of flow and evoke the imagination of the viewer.

An in-depth look at these aspects of his oeuvre and way of life will form the subject of a forthcoming paper, as will several other topics including his architectural program for the site, his ceramics heritage and legacy, as well as taking a look at such matters as high temperature flame fired ceramics aesthetics.

In the meantime, however, it seems fitting to conclude with a quick look at an example of ways in which Anton van der Merwe and Gwyneth Lloyd's presence and arts practices in Hogsback have been of benefit to the local community. This is an important issue, especially in South Africa, where it is becoming increasingly evident that despite political liberation, many poor people are marginalised, especially in cities, and that "capital is thrusting us into a world in which an increasingly massive portion of humanity lives in Third World slums, in what in South Africa are called *emijondolo* [shack settlements]" (Pithouse 2005: 8). This has been confirmed by the likes of Gibson (2009: 4, citing Fanon 1968 as well as Lefebvre 2003) who said that "the Manicheism of the colonial world –with its absolute difference between the colonizer and colonized, which finds its apogee in apartheid- is thus [still] clearly expressed in [South African] spatial realities". Such differences continue to be seen in outcomes of South African economic policies as well as in city and town layouts, resulting in an intensification of poverty (Pithouse 2005: 8) for some of those relegated to urban slums and elsewhere who have very few resources.

On the other hand, in the small village setting of Hogsback, Anton van der Merwe and Gwyneth Lloyd benefitted many others by establishing the Hogsback Arts Festival, and even more significantly, have entered into a mutually beneficial relationship with local patriarch, Enoch Mafika and his extended family. It is related on the Starways Art Centre website (<http://www.antonvandermerwe.co.za/html/art-collectors-news.htm>, retrieved on 16th February 2014) that Enoch Mafika was a woodcutter whose ancestors are buried on the Starways property. In due course family members Willie Mafika and Luyanda Mafika became apprenticed to Anton van der Merwe, and by 1999 "skills had been transferred and Starways Pottery had largely been built". It was, however, seen that the Mafika extended family did not have secure tenure on any local land despite that they had been benefitting from woodcutting at sites in Hogsback for more than three decades. Out of that situation, however, the basis for a "lifelong partnership [with the Mafika family] was forged". He relates that they struck the following deal:

For every brick or stone laid at Starways a similar structure would be built at Mafika's home half a kilometre down the road from Starways. Funding was sought from the National Department of Arts and Culture and awarded to the project. Land was donated by Peter and Wouter of "The Edge" in Hogsback. A pottery building and shed was designed and erected, and pottery making equipment was

acquired and installed, and kilns were installed and fired up ... new apprentices are being trained and a happy collaboration between the two businesses at Starways Pottery and Mafika Pottery continues. (<http://www.antonvandermerwe.co.za/html/art-collectors-news.htm>, retrieved on 16th February 2014).

Thus, not only has Anton van der Merwe's relocation to outside city limits resulted in artistic growth and a financially viable way of life, he has also facilitated transfer of ownership of land now occupied and utilised by the Mafika extended family (figure 3), thereby "building counter-hegemony from below that opens up spaces that fundamentally change the political status quo and contest the ... leadership of the ruling elites" (Gibson 2009: 12).



Figure 3

Left: Work beginning on the Mafika Studio, from left: Willie Mafika, Luyanda Mafika, and Mncedisi Mafika (photo: Anton van der Merwe 2004).

Right: Luyanda Mafika at work in the newly completed Mafika Studio (photo: Anton van der Merwe 2005).

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Mikael Subotzki: The surveyor and the surveyed within the urban environment

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This research reflects on Foucault's disciplinary structure *The Panopticon* as a point of departure for the discussion of Mikael Subotzky's visual interpretation of the urban space and the interplay of the role of the surveyed and the surveyor. The research argues that Subotzky challenges the very notion of the role of the photographer, curating a variety of visual media in order to probe the concept of communicating visually. Over a period of ten years his work has reflected on the basic concept of looking. The emphasis is placed on multiple representations as a form of social commentary and engages the power of the 'gaze' in both the capacity of the surveyor and the surveyed. The significance of the research lies in reflecting on Subotzky's curated bodies of work that challenge the viewer's internalised disciplinary practice encouraging engagement with the role of the surveyed and surveyor and so providing insight into contemporary co-existence in the urban environment.

Key words: visual communication, urban environment, surveyed, surveyor

Mikael Subotzki: Die waarnemer en die waargenome binne die stedelike omgewing

Foucault se disiplynêre samestelling van *The Panopticon* word gebruik as vertrekpunt van hierdie studie in die bespreking van Mikael Subotzki se visuele vertolking van die stedelike omgewing en die tussenspel van die waarnemer en die waargenome. Die studie dui daarop dat Subotzki die rol van die fotograaf as kurator bevraagteken asook die verskeidenheid van media waardeur die opvatting van visuele kommunikasie ondersoek word. Oor 'n tydperk van tien jaar het sy werk die basiese konsep van waarneming reflekteer. Die klem word geplaas op veelvoudige weergawes as 'n vorm van sosiale waarneming en betrek die veelseggende blik van beide waarnemer en waargenome. Die belang van die navorsing lê in die weerspieëling van Subotzki se werk wat die aanskouer se interne disiplynêre toepassing uitdaag en betrokkenheid tot die rol van die waarnemer en die waargenome aanmoedig en sodoende insig op die hedendaagse samelewing in die stedelike omgewing werp.

Sleutelwoorde: Visuele kommunikasie, stedelike omgewing, waargenome, waarnemer

This article comments on the surveyor and the surveyed in contemporary South African urban space. By reflecting on the visual commentary of photographer Mikael Subotzky¹, as well as referral to Foucault's² work on power and space as a perspective for discussion of Subotzky's work, possible insight into contemporary co-existence in the urban space will become evident. Subotzky originally approached his subject within the tradition of social documentary photography progressing over the past decade to a more introspective multi-dimensional social comment on the urban environment and the vastly differing realities of its co-inhabitants. This is achieved through his own introspection, surveillance and documenting of places of incarceration and the effects of incarceration on society, as well as the appropriating of surveillance footage and found media. Much has been published on Subotzky's work but the contribution of this article lies in reflecting on his curated bodies of work that challenge the viewer's internalised disciplinary practice, encouraging engagement with the role of the surveyed and surveyor and so bringing a deeper consciousness to the role of the photographer, the subject and particularly the viewer.

In 2012 Subotzky did a presentation titled *To See a Photographer Sees*³. To reflect on his own inner conflict with his role as photographer and surveyor, as well as for the purpose of creating a particular visual interpretation, Subotzky used the following quote by James Agee⁴ (1941:7):

...the problems which confronted the maker of the photographs; and those which confront me now as I write of it: the question. Who are you that will read these words and study these photographs, and through what cause and by what chance, and for what purpose, and by what right do you qualify to, and what will you do about it...

This research reflects on Foucault's disciplinary structure *The Panopticon* and Hille Koskela's study '*Cam Era*' – *the contemporary urban Panopticon* to provide a point of departure for the discussion of Mikael Subotzky's visual interpretation of the urban space, as Subotzky questions his role as visual interpreter and the interplay between of the role of the surveyed and the surveyor.

Foucault's book *Discipline and Punishment* (1975) can be reflected on as a historical analysis of social conditions tracing 'the changes that there have been in the way that societies punish those they consider to be criminals' while at the same time 'an analysis of the bases on which we think about analysing social conditions' (Mills 2003: 16). It is in this book as well as in an interview entitled *The Eye of Power* (1980), that Foucault discusses his disciplinary structure known as the Panopticon. The Panopticon was originally proposed as a model prison by Jeremy Bentham⁵ (1748-1832):

The Panopticon ("all-seeing") functioned as a round-the-clock surveillance machine. Its design ensured that no prisoner could ever see the 'inspector' who conducted surveillance from the privileged central location within the radial configuration. The prisoner could never know when he was being surveilled -- mental uncertainty that in itself would prove to be a crucial instrument of discipline (Bozovic 1995: 35).

The significance of the Panopticon for Foucault was that it reflected the philosophy of observation that has become a guiding principle of policing in the modern state. The use of video cameras both in cities and on roads employs the same principle of observation, so that the citizen is never entirely sure whether or not they are being watched. Foucault uses this analysis of a particular way of organising 'the special arrangements of prisons, schools and factories to enable maximum visibility' to argue that a new form of 'internalized disciplinary practice occurs: one is forced to act as if one is constantly being surveyed even when one is not' (Mills 2003: 45). In contemporary society, Panoptical vision can be equated to Close Circuit Television and perhaps even Lyon's (2001) concept of 'superpanopticon' which subsists in electronic environments – in the 'world wide web of surveillance'. 'Telesurveillance' is the principal element of representation and control in what has been characterised 'the era of the great global optic' (Virilio 2002: 110). According to Koskela (2003: 294):

When surveillance cameras are combined with visitors' registers and 'people- finding tools', such as face recognition systems, supervision touches a wide range of issues around privacy and human rights. While older surveillance systems mainly watched over the public as anonymous crowd new technologies make it possible to recognize individuals and to combine faces to data bases of criminals, activists, etc. We are accompanied by our "data doubles".

In Koskela's study "*Cam Era*" – *the contemporary urban Panopticon* (2003: 300), Foucault's work is used to understand space as crucial in explaining social power relations through parallels and variances with the Panopticon and contemporary cities. Koskela (2003: 300) is of the opinion that:

Urban space is not a space of coercion in the same sense than a prison is because being in it is – at least ostensibly – voluntary. In cities people are not imprisoned but can move freely and are entitled to leave... . Nevertheless, if one wanted to avoid being under surveillance it would be impossible to live in a contemporary city. Especially in city centers it has become impossible to choose ones routes

so that surveillance would be avoided. While being in a city may be voluntary, the new forms of control are increasingly involuntary. In that sense, cities do form a space of coercion.

According to Koskela (2003: 307) the urban environment is exposed to ‘the cam era’ – ‘an era of endless representations’. He further argues that technology has enabled ‘a society that prefers the sign to the thing, the image to the fact’ (as cited in Weibel 2002: 219). In Koskela’s (as cited in Weibel 2002: 219) opinion there is no way to move undetected under the constant watch of surveillance technology within the urban environment and it would be counterproductive to act against it; rather, the implications and possible advantages should be understood. Perhaps in time, ‘it may be so that the multiplied representations work as a more effective form of resistance than the efforts to avoid the gaze(s)’ (Koskela 2003: 307).

Subotzky comments on South African society, the lifestyle of fear and insecurity and the role of surveyor and surveyed in the South African urban environment. He explores other realities normally blocked by social structures or the structures of politics and economics. He was encouraged by Nelson Mandela’s (Lifelounge, 2009) statement that ‘No one truly knows a country until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged on how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.’ Subotzky’s early work reflects an interest in crime and social marginalisation, as well as institutions of punishment and security. According to Foucault:

The prison, that darkest region in the apparatus of justice, is the place where the power to punish, which no longer dares to manifest itself openly, silently organizes a field of objectivity in which punishment will be able to function openly as treatment and the sentence be inscribed among the discourses of knowledge.

Die Vier Hoeke (2004) reflects on the South African prison system, and in particular Pollsmoor Prison, Cape Town. Subotzky developed a personal relationship with his subjects and when three of the inmates burned to death in their prison cell he decided to follow the body of one of the inmates to the Eastern Cape to document the funeral. As a result the series that followed *Die Vier Hoeke*, was *Umjiegwana*⁶ (2006), which looks at the lives of ex-prisoners. This work is at once ‘introspective and direct, reflecting both the individual and the systemic aspects of South Africa’s colonialist legacy in the post apartheid age’ (MoMA, 2008).



Figure 1

Left: Strip Search, Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison, 2004.

(series: Die Vierhoek and Retinal Shift. Mikhael Subotzky, courtesy Goodman Gallery).

Right: Vallen and Mathwin, 2005.

(series: Umjiegwana. Mikhael Subotzky, courtesy Goodman Gallery).

Subotzky’s *Umjiegwana*, reflects on South Africa as a society of ‘mass incarceration’, which is attributed to the fact that ‘many young men are bound to spend the first two decades of their

adult lives in and out of prison by virtue of where they grew up' (Steinberg 2012). In their neighbourhoods the social structures apparent in the work *Die Vier Hoeke* and *Umjiegwana* have been mixed up; 'they have come to form equal parts of lived experience' (Steinberg 2012). Approximately four out of five of the people from this type of social environment will spend the first half their adult lives in and out of prison, taking 'Umjiegwana to *Die Vier Hoeke*, and *Die Vier Hoeke* to *Umjiegwana*' (Steinberg 2012). Figure 1, from the series *Die Vier Hoeke*, and figure 2, from the series *Umjiegwana* are both photographed from an elevated position without direct eye contact or any type of acknowledgement of the viewer. The stark hard process of a systematic search as reflected in figure 1 contrasts sharply with the tender moment a father shares with his child in figure 2 and aptly visualises the mixing of social structures.

When commenting on the work *Umjiegwana* and *Die Vier Hoeke* in an interview with Joerg Colberg (2009), Subotzky reflects that

At this point the work became more personal as I established and built up relationships with a group of disparate people who inhabited the same city as me, but very different worlds. I began to see my work as my own exploitation of my surroundings, a part of my attempts to make myself as conscious as possible... On a primary level, I still very much see my work as being about myself, and my place. It is photographs of my personal experience of my surroundings. But as I learn more about the power of images, or perhaps the power of all texts (including photographs), and the power of narrative, association and imagination, I get more and more excited about making work (interviewed by Joerg Colberg, 2009)

It seems therefore a natural progression that he moved towards including himself and commenting on his own 'living environment' in the body of work *Retinal Shift*. This collection is in fact essentially made up of "six works" which include *Self Portrait*, *Who's Who*, *CCTV*, *Don't Even Think of It*, *I Was Looking Back* and *Moses and Griffiths*. Subotzky presents new works which extend his earlier work focusing on criminality and the justice system into new societal environments. These environments are the cities Subotzky has inhabited - namely Cape Town and Johannesburg - but the work in essence loosely focuses on the lifestyle of fear in South Africa, exploring both the experience and the perception of security in contemporary society. *Retinal Shift* reflects on the mechanics and practice of surveying and being surveyed (in essence the act of looking) and plays with the contradictions of the city becoming a place of incarceration as its citizens are increasingly monitored as a form of policing in the modern state, as well as by the surveyor - and indeed in some cases by Subotzky himself. Subotzky interrogates the concept of the city space as the relationship between the multifaceted lived environment and the viewer's experience of that environment, the personal and the other; the process of viewing and being viewed.

The work titled *Moses and Griffiths* is a four-channel projection, and presents a personalised view of Grahamstown as narrated by two men: 'Moses Lamani, gives tours of the town through the Observatory Museum's 19th-century camera obscura, and Griffiths Sokuyeka, presents similar tours of the 1820 Settlers Monument' (Artslink 2013). Although this work is based in Grahamstown, it is significant as it represents one of the earliest methods of observation namely the camera obscura. As the guides speak, flashes of arbitrary town life are presented, leaving the viewer with the feeling of being observed. Essentially the installation combines the visual, the documented and the personal account, providing a multi-dimensional reflection on the 1820's Settlers impact on the Grahamstown area. The installation reveals the actual lived experience alongside the historical memorised account, and it is within this context that the viewer is exposed to the possibility of observation of South African society over centuries. Combine the idea of rudimentary small town observation with more contemporary observation

footage of the larger cities, and one is left with the idea that the possibility of observation could have taken place at any time and in any place. The viewer is both the observer and exposed to the possibility of having been the observed.

Don't Even Think of It (2012), is a single-channel video using stop-motion footage that Subotzky photographed from his apartment window in downtown Cape Town in 2004. Sequences of still photographs were then put together to form a rudimentary stop-motion film. According to Subotzky:

Don't even think of it shows various scenes that caught my attention. Most notably, a homeless man starts masturbating. A man without a private space to house this most private of acts. A little while later, another group of homeless men sit down nearby to eat some scavenged food. A woman in the apartment above calls a private security guard, an agent of the 'Inner-City Improvement District', who chases them away. She provides the guard with a bucket of soapy water to wash away their mess. For good measure, she pours a few more buckets over the spot from her balcony.

This somewhat voyeuristic work represents Subotzky as the observer and the subjects he photographs - the observed. With his hidden camera he engages unnoticed as a silent observer choosing moments of activity, which reflects the ease with which undetected surveillance can occur. This serves as an illustration of the privileged observer having the ability to observe without inhibition as the subject continues without suspicion of observation.

According to Buys (2012: 230), *CCTV*⁷ (2011) reflects 'glimpses of the night-time city range from the mundane to the horrific: besides two blithe tire thieves and a pair trying to remove a manhole from the road, two men are badly battered and then robbed and left lying on the street'. *CCTV* is a single-channel film put together with footage from central Johannesburg, which Subotzky acquired from the police. Subotzky's only intermediation was to exhibit the unedited film clips concurrently on a single screen, allowing them to each follow their own story line until they simultaneously arrive at a moment of realisation (see figure 3). This is the moment when the all seeing eye of the hidden surveillance camera is revealed and the criminal confronts the realization of observation. 'The cameras zoom in and, for a few seconds, it is as if the actors in all these dramas leave their fictional worlds and peer out at the audience' (Buys 2012: 245). It is also a moment when the viewer is challenged in their privileged surveillance position. And perhaps as a voyeuristic viewer they are confronted with the difficult question posed by Agee (1941: 6) 'Who are you... that study these photographs, and through what cause and by what chance, and for what purpose, and by what right do you qualify to, and what will you do about it...'



Figure 2

Left: *CCTV* from the series *Retinal Shift*

Right: *Boat 2*, 2008.

(series: *Retinal Shift*. Mikhael Subotzky courtesy Goodman Gallery).

Subotzky blurs the line between personal and project, presenting himself as both a privileged viewer and subject of scrutiny within the work *I Was Looking Back*. The work is a selection of a hundred images from Subotzky's entire photographic collection over the past ten years. Within this seemingly random collection he mixes the personal and the professional as parallel realities, allowing his own space and person to become an alternative reality amongst the 'other', presented as a single work. The connecting thread is the process of looking. The glass covering several of the images has been purposefully shattered, breaking the easy glide over the work to paradoxically draw attention as well as obscure the visual (see figure 4). Subotzky 'complicates the nature of the violence done in image-making... violence is done not only to the subjects but also to their representation, perhaps to the notion of representation itself' (Buys 2012: 405).

The work *Self Portrait* was accomplished with the assistance of an optometrist. Subotzky manages to create an internal glance at the central core of his viewing abilities devoid of emotional attachment. The images of Subotzky's retinas present a literal internal inspection of the process of looking. Subotzky's retinas have been photographed during the precise moment of looking. According to Subotzky (2012a: 1)

I was intrigued by my encounter with the optometrist. At the moment when my retinas, my essential organs of seeing, were photographed, I was blinded by the apparatus that made the images.

A predominant theme running through the diverse variety of work that is included in *Retinal Shift* is the concept of looking and being looked at. The viewpoint moves between the private familiarity of self to the extreme of surveillance footage available in the contemporary urban environment; between the present and the past, the remembered and the actual as well as reflecting on the multiplicity of realities evident in South African public space. *Retinal Shift* moves beyond the concept of looking and seeing, to include the unnerving perception of being watched. These moments are particularly evident when the subject consciously returns the gaze of the camera, giving the images the ability to jolt the viewer from their privileged position of unrestrained observation. The bodies of work that have been discussed reflect a change in the way that the photographer documents and engages with his subjects. Subotzky attributed a major shift in his personal understanding of his work and his role as visual commentator to the exhibition *Retinal Shift*. He concluded his presentation *To See A Photographer Sees* by making a proposal 'to all of us who want to look at the world and especially for all of us who want to represent it' (Subotzky 2012b):

We need to see in three ways. Firstly we need to see what is immediately in front of us with very acute eyes. Secondly we need to see beyond the structures, the political structures, the social structures, the economic structures, which hide most of the world from us. But what I propose most importantly is that we also need to look at ourselves and to write that looking at ourselves back into the way that we look at the rest of the world (Subotzky 2012b).

Subotzky's latest book *Ponte City* was published in collaboration with British artist Patrick Waterhouse. They started working together in mid-2008 on a project in Berea's fifty-four-story building, Ponte City, the tallest building on the African continent. Using a combination of photography, historical archives, found objects and interviews, the body of work reflects on the pre-history of the structure, its remarkable deterioration and recent endeavors attempting renovation. 'The building is cast as the central character in a tangled narrative which reflects Johannesburg's magnetic pull on the social and mythical lives of those who come to the City of Gold from all over the country and continent' (Subotzky and Waterhouse 2009). Subotzky's montages are made up of photographs of all the inner doors, windows and television screens present in the iconic structure. Waterhouse and Subotzky also gathered material discarded or

left behind by inhabitants as well as from archives. These personal or archived paraphernalia include letters, postcards, architectural plans, newspapers clippings and promotional leaflets. The actual book is in the shape of a tower, and included in the book are seventeen pamphlets of written and visual essays, allowing the reader to become ‘a participant in the acts of matching, collaging, and layering which are at the essence of the project’ (Benton 2014). The viewer of the work therefore plays a decisive role in navigating how they interact with the book choosing their own viewing experience and again allowing the privilege of unrestrained viewing.

When Subotzky began the documenting of the building half of the tenants had been evicted for renewal that did not take place. According to Benton (2014), *Ponte City* is a book ‘that shows the detail and texture of both life and decay at the same time’ (see figures 5 and 6) ‘Circles and grids constantly refer to the shape of the building, and shapes reappear on successive pages’ (Benton 2014). Ivan Vladislavić⁸ (2014: 3) is of the opinion that the building ‘remains a focal point of the city’s dreams and nightmares, seen as a refuge or monstrosity, dreamland or dystopia, a lightning rod for society’s hopes and fears.’



Figure 3

Left: Windows, Ponte City, Johannesburg, 2008-2010.

(series: Ponte City. Mikhael Subotzky and Patrick Waterhouse courtesy Goodman Gallery).

Right: Cleaning the Core, Ponte City, Johannesburg, 2008.

(series: Ponte City. Mikhael Subotzky and Patrick Waterhouse courtesy Goodman Gallery).

Subotzky’s latest work questions the disintegration of Johannesburg’s iconic tower structure. Once a symbol of the African powerhouse, it now houses the refugees and those drawn to urban areas in the hope of economic empowerment. Perhaps this tower is synonymous with Bentham’s privileged central location in the Panopticon and at last the privileged viewer is exposed as society reflecting on society; or perhaps the subject of scrutiny is becoming aware that their fear of scrutiny is more imposing than the scrutiny itself. Once again the role of the observer and the observed is called into question it is almost as if Subotzky’s work has come full circle, from working through the documenting of places of incarceration and commenting on the multidimensional process of looking and being looked at in the urban environment to finally observing the all-imposing privileged observer – those that inhabit the tower. Subotzky further challenges the viewer and the photographer to acknowledge what they see and to be aware of possible structures - political, social or economic - that overshadow a clear view; but most importantly, he requests that the view of self be acknowledged as a milieu within the viewing process. Through his carefully curated bodies of work, Subotzky challenges the viewer’s

internalised disciplinary practice, encouraging engagement with the role of the surveyed and surveyor and so providing insight into contemporary co-existence in the urban space.

Notes

- 1 Subotzky was born in Cape Town, and is currently based in Johannesburg. His work has been exhibited widely in major galleries and museums, and his prints are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the South African National Gallery, Cape Town, the Johannesburg Art Gallery, and FOAM (Magnum).
- 2 Michel Foucault (1926–1984) was a French historian and philosopher, associated with the structuralist and post-structuralist movements. In his book *Discipline and Punishment*, published in 1975, Foucault's analysis shows how techniques and institutions, developed for different and often quite innocuous purposes, converged to create the modern system of disciplinary power.
- 3 Subotzky was invited by TEDx to present on his work. On 17 October 2012 he presented *To See A Photographer Sees* in Stellenbosch. TEDx is an international community that organizes events acclaiming locally-driven ideas and presenting them to a global stage published on YouTube.
- 4 Writer James Agee and photographer Walker Evans together probe the idea of documenting society, particularly the role of the surveyor, the surveyed as well as the possible reasons for surveillance in their book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*
- 5 Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), a Utilitarian philosopher and theorist of British legal reform.
- 6 *Umjiegwana* is Xhosa for 'The Outside'.
- 7 Abbreviation for Close Circuit Television.
- 8 Ivan Vladislavić is a South African writer and editor.

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Walking in the city as (model for) “dissensus”

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This paper explores the variegated spatial meanings of “the city” by way of Michel de Certeau’s reflections on “walking in the city” as part of “the practice of everyday life”, which he conceives of as allowing people multiple ways of escaping the straitjacket of the “disciplinary society”. The latter conception, deriving from Foucault’s investigation of disciplinary practices, ostensibly leaves one scant opportunity to escape from the clutches of disciplinary mechanisms such as hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and the examination, which appear to find their counterpart in the apparently carceral spatial design of the city. In contrast to the belief, that one has become inescapably enmeshed in panoptical practices, which tend to reduce humans to “docile bodies”, however, De Certeau traces the multiple tactics employed by pedestrians to subvert their assimilation into the pre-planned geometries of city design. He also alludes to Freud’s claims about repetition of spatially originary experiences, which is here employed to examine the relation between spatial familiarity and foreignness in different cities. These considerations are placed in constellation with Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction between striated and smooth spaces, as well as with Hardt and Negri’s distinction between planes of immanence and of control, and Lyotard’s between the modern and the postmodern, thus creating the possibility of conceiving of walking in the city as an act of dissent regarding the society of discipline. This could suggest more robust practices of subverting the ostensibly all-encompassing, pseudo-political realm of what Rancière calls “the police”, by introducing moments of peripatetic “dissensus” into the striated fabric of the city.

Key words: architecture, city, *dissensus*, space, walking

Stadwandeling as (model vir) “dissensus”

Hierdie artikel ondersoek die uiteenlopende ruimtelike betekenisse van “die stad” aan die hand van Michel de Certeau se refleksie oor “stadwandeling” as deel van die “praktyk van die alledaagse lewe”, wat volgens hom veelvuldige geleenthede aan mense bied om aan die dwangbuis van die “dissiplinêre samelewing” te ontsnap. Laasgenoemde verwys na Foucault se ondersoek na dissiplinêre praktyke, en laat oënskynlik weinig geleentheid om dissiplinêre meganismes soos hiërargiese observasie, normaliserende oordeel en die eksamen te ontwyk, wat blykbaar die ekwivalent is van die geometries-inperkende ruimtelike ontwerp van die stad. In teenstelling met die opvatting, dat subjekte onontvlugbaar verstrengeel is in panoptiese praktyke wat mense tot “slaafse liggame” reduceer, ontbloeit De Certeau die taktiese manoeuvres wat deur stadwandelaars benut word om hul onderwerpenheid aan die voorafbeplande geometrie van stadsbeplanning te ondermyn. Hy verwys ook na Freud se insigte ten opsigte van die herhaling van ruimtelik-generatiewe ervarings, wat hier aangewend word om die verhouding tussen ruimtelike bekendheid en vreemdheid in verskillende stede te ondersoek. Hierdie oorweging word in ‘n konstellasie geplaas met Deleuze en Guattari se onderskeid tussen “gladde” en “gestreepte” ruimte, sowel as met Hardt en Negri s’n tussen vlakke van immanensie en van beheer, asook dié van Lyotard tussen die moderne en die postmoderne. Langs hierdie weg kan ‘n mens aan stadwandeling as ‘n anderse of afwykende handeling teenoor die samelewing van dissipline dink, en moontlik in die rigting van meer robuuste praktyke beweeg, om die skynbaar allesomvattende pseudo-politieke sfeer van wat Rancière “die polisie” noem met elemente van nomadiese “dissensus” in die “gestreepte” ruimte van die stad te ontwig.

Sleutelwoorde: argitektuur, *dissensus*, ruimte, stad, wandeling.

“There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons...Félix Guattari has imagined a city where one would be able to leave one’s apartment, one’s street, one’s neighborhood, thanks to one’s (dividual [from “divide” B.O.]) electronic card that raises a given barrier; but the card could just as easily be rejected on a given day or between certain hours; what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person’s position – licit or illicit – and effects a universal modulation.” (Gilles Deleuze, *Postscript on the Societies of Control*).

One can hardly write about “the city” without thinking of Michel de Certeau’s now classic study, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), part of which is entitled “Walking in the City”. De Certeau’s book is a radicalisation of what one might call a “transgressive reading” of ordinary, everyday activities, revealing the surprising degree to which such “practices” surpass the “disciplinary” mechanisms that – according to Michel Foucault’s genealogical analysis in *Discipline and Punish* – structure modern life, in the process reducing subjects of the modern state to “docile bodies” (Foucault 1995: 135). Foucault’s genealogy of punitive practices contrasts pre-modern, spectacular punishments (such as executions), which were visible and localised, with modern practices such as (chiefly) imprisonment, as well as related, “panoptical” (quasi-omniscient) practices of surveillance, which tend to be invisible and pervasive. The latter, Foucault claims, are more effective despite being virtually imperceptible, and as a consequence contemporary society can justifiably be regarded as “carceral”. According to him (Foucault 1995: 170-194; Olivier 2010), the disciplinary mechanisms operating in society, which ensure that modern subjects are economically productive and politically powerless, can mostly be subsumed under three headings: hierarchical observation (of inmates on the part of wardens in prisons, and of school pupils by teachers, for example), normalizing judgement (which establishes a continuum in which subjects are inserted and individualized according to quantifiable norms), and the examination (where the latter combines the first two in a way that subjects individuals to panoptical power).

The disciplinary society and societies of control

Discipline and punish, with its relentless exposure of the countless ways in which the “microphysics of power” operates to enmesh subjects in webs of constraint, has the potential of leaving one with the impression of being exhaustively hemmed in, on all sides, by social, educational, economic and political forces that one cannot control (not even those agents who occupy nodal points in the defiles of power; they are mere, easily replaceable functionaries). One should note, however, that Gilles Deleuze, in his brief but powerful essay, *Postscript on the societies of control* (1992: 3-7), has argued that what one witnesses today, represents the emergence of something entirely different from Foucault’s “disciplinary society” – where most of the paradigmatic institutions of discipline, like prisons, schools, asylums, hospitals and factories, were spatially clearly identifiable as “spaces of enclosure” (which are today in crisis, according to Deleuze) – and is recognizable by the fact that “control” is continually exercised, today, along invisible, dispersed networks of numerically coded information, subject to “inseparable variations”. This is not merely an extension of the panoptical spaces of Foucault’s disciplinary society, nor does it exert “discipline” in the Foucaultian sense. It is rather the case that control is exercised in a flexible manner through the rhizomatic defiles constitutive of the so-called “network society” (Castells 2010), which do not leave any area of economic, social, political or cultural activity untransformed. Besides, control is just as, if not more effectively exercised through the coding of economic participation of individuals in terms of credit rating and other enabling or disabling mechanisms, as through military intervention.

Even “individuals” are being transformed into “dividuals” (Deleuze 1992: 5), a term that links individual subjects to the market by associatively signifying “dividends” and “divisions”, in so far as the recording of individuals’ consumer habits is an index of anticipated dividends on the stock market, and individual consumers can be numerically “divided” according to specific consumer needs, each of which is linked to a plethora of marketing strategies, so that the new “dividual” becomes itself an index of potential profits. To the extent that “dividuals” fail to live

up to consumer expectations, or worse, actively undermine the conditions of optimal financial gain (through the introduction of computer viruses into corporations' websites, or acts of piracy, or simply by refusing or being unable to incur debt, for example), they risk being excluded from the consumer economy. This system of control, in which everyone is continually recorded or registered through ubiquitous electronic modes of surveillance, tracking and marketing, is in the process of replacing the "society of discipline" that Foucault described and theorized in *Discipline and punish* (1995), according to Deleuze (1992: 4). It should be obvious that resistance to the "society of control" will have to assume different forms compared to the resistance to lingering manifestations of Foucault's societies of discipline – something to keep in mind with regard to De Certeau's inventive analysis of "walking in the city" as strategy of resistance against the tendency of disciplinary society, to reduce subjects to "docile bodies".

Paul Virilio casts further light on the novelty of what Deleuze calls "societies of control" (2005: 61) where he intimates that instances of deliberate over-exposure to panoptical visibility by individuals require "a new **global optics**, capable of helping a **panoptical** vision to appear" (bold in original) – something in which one may see the metamorphosis of panopticism as theorized by Foucault into something constitutive of societies of control, and no longer linked to the institutional "spaces of enclosure" of prisons, schools, factories, and so on. Moreover, Virilio makes it clear that such voluntary panoptical self-exposure is inextricably linked to marketability of individuals (Deleuze's "dividuals"). Accordingly, he observes that such a panoptical vision is indispensable for a "market of the visible" to emerge. According to Virilio (2005: 60), one such individual's (June Houston's) actions, which have since been replicated with different purposes in mind, were revolutionary, transforming the transparency of living spaces to which informational television programmes have accustomed us, towards what he calls "...a purely mediatic *trans-appearance*...", and he attributes the growth of this practice to the requirement, on the part of the globalization of the market, that all activities and behaviour be "over-exposed" (2005: 60): "...it requires the simultaneous creation of competition between companies, societies and even consumers themselves, which now means individuals, not simply certain categories of 'target populations'. Hence the sudden, untimely emergence of a universal, *comparative advertising*, which has relatively little to do with publicizing a brand or consumer product of some kind, since the aim is now, through the *commerce of the visible*, to inaugurate a genuine **visual market**, which goes far beyond the promoting of a particular company."

Walking in the city, smooth and striated space

Returning to De Certeau, it is refreshing to encounter in his discourse of transgression, as one might label it – or in a different idiom (that of Jacques Rancière), of "dissensus" – something that seems to offer some hope of evading the totalizing tendency of what still remains of discipline and, one might add, the far more pervasive reach of emerging strategies of control, with typical (postmodern) "consumers" of today in mind. In contrast to Foucault's emphasis on disciplined toeing-the-line behaviour on the part of modern subjects in terms of a distributed "microphysics of power", De Certeau displays remarkable verve, arguing that the "procedures of everyday creativity" offer resources to subjects that enable them to resist falling prey to the totalization of such disciplinary power. In the Introduction to *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984: xiv) he elaborates:

If it is true that the grid of "discipline" is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive, it is all the more urgent to discover how an entire society resists being reduced to it, what popular procedures ... manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them, and

finally, what “ways of operating” form the counterpart, on the consumer’s (or “dominee’s”?) side, of the mute processes that organise the establishment of socioeconomic order.

These “ways of operating” constitute the innumerable practices by means of which users re-appropriate the space organised by techniques of sociocultural production ... the goal is to perceive and analyse the microbe-like operations proliferating within technocratic structures and deflecting their functioning by means of a multitude of “tactics” articulated in the details of everyday life ... the goal is not to make clearer how the violence of order is transmuted into a disciplinary technology, but rather to bring to light the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of “discipline.” Pushed to their ideal limits, these procedures and ruses of consumers compose the network of an antidiscipline ...

“Walking in the city” is one of several “ways of operating” that enables subjects to evade the otherwise ubiquitous control exercised over them by anonymous mechanisms of order, including the myriad forms of surveillance, ranging from urban pedestrian surveillance technology to consumer behaviour-tracking via credit card-use, mobile phone movement, CCTV cameras, radar speed traps and parking meters (if not older forms of discipline, such as examination results, census forms and tax returns). De Certeau (1984: 92) contrasts the act of “reading” the complexity of the city visually from the top floor of a skyscraper in a “texturological” manner – which corresponds, as expression of the “scopic drive,” to the much earlier representations of the city by Renaissance painters, as if from a god’s-eye view – with the street-level spatial practices that elude (panoptical) visibility and abstract legibility. These below-the-radar activities, De Certeau intimates, are alien to the “geographical” space of panoptical, visual mechanisms, and he thinks of them as belonging to an “anthropological,” “migrational” or poetic experience of space – something elaborated on by Gaston Bachelard in *The poetics of space* (1969) by means of metaphors such as “burrows” or “nests”, which may be paradigmatically instantiated by some of the secluded spaces that pedestrians could potentially discover in their exploration of interstitial city-spaces.

In terms of a different idiom, one could say that, what one sees from the top storey of a skyscraper (namely, the concrete counterpart of the geometrical, cartographic representation of the city as represented on the city plans) corresponds to what Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 474) call “striated space”, or space that exhibits the marks of “territorialisation” by agencies of power such as the state or corporations. For Deleuze and Guattari this mode of spatiality contrasts with “smooth space”, which is “nomadic” space (corresponding to De Certeau’s “tactical” space of “nomadically” walking the city), not yet “territorialized” or organized by asymmetrical power-relations. Importantly, as they note, these two qualitatively distinct varieties of space exist nowhere in pure form, but always in an admixture of sorts. In their words (1987: 474-475):

Smooth space and striated space – nomad space and sedentary space – the space in which the war machine develops and the space instituted by the State apparatus – are not of the same nature. No sooner do we note a simple opposition between the two kinds of space than we must indicate a much more complex difference by virtue of which the successive terms of the oppositions fail to coincide entirely. And no sooner have we done that than we must remind ourselves that the two spaces in fact only exist in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space. In the first case, one organizes even the desert; in the second, the desert gains and grows; and the two can happen simultaneously. But the de facto mixes do not preclude a de jure, or abstract, distinction between the two spaces.

Implicitly De Certeau has theorized this contrast between the striated and the smooth by juxtaposing the “abstract” structural and textural legibility of street layout (from an appropriate vantage point) with space as it is experienced (or perhaps “produced”, in Henri Lefebvre’s idiom) through concrete, “tactical” activities and practices in the spatial density encountered in the streets, parks and alleyways of the city. What Deleuze and Guattari call “the war machine”

therefore suggests De Certeau's "dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals" which are still to some degree subject to enclosures of "discipline", to which one can add that they are increasingly enmeshed in webs of control. The "war machine" is what anarchistically gobbles up spaces rigorously subjected to disciplinary arrangements, and by extension, introduces nomadic or guerrilla-moments of subversion into the continuum of control, with predictable consequences of dissonance for the system – for example by using the very network-system of omni-visibility to bring to the surface hidden elements indispensable for optimal control. (Think of Wikileaks' exposure of "secret" inter-state communications, or of Edward Snowden's more recent revelations of the American NSA's secret "Prism" surveillance programme – these are "nomadic" or guerrilla-tactics that destabilize the system of control significantly, followed by predictable reactions on the part of the agencies of control-society, to maximize control by closing loopholes, apart from attempting to bring the anti-control guerrillas to book.) The "State apparatus" brings to mind precisely those strategies and mechanisms that typically establish the disciplinary society theorized by Foucault, the contemporary incarnation of which is the society of control as characterized by Deleuze.

One should note, however, that in terms of the "serpentine" characteristics of "societies of control", striated space continually tends to disguise itself as smooth space, so that subjects are easily fooled into believing that their optimal participation in the rhizomatically pervasive neo-liberal economic system (supported by the capitalist states through appropriate legislation, among other things) is tantamount to the optimalization of personal "freedom". What I want to argue here is that De Certeau's analysis of "walking in the city" not only illuminates the always-already existing possibility of subverting attempts at exhaustive control, but also constitutes a model of sorts for what Jacques Rancière has termed "dissensus", to which I shall return below.

City-walking as model of eluding control: the case of Seoul

It is in these practices of invisible, unrepresentable peripatetic movements, peculiar to walkers in cities the world over, that one participates every time you criss-cross cities such as Seoul in South Korea, a colossal urban landscape of 16-million inhabitants, or Prague in the Czech Republic, with its enticingly variegated architecture comprising the walker's referential horizon of spatial markers, intermittently inviting one to change direction for better visibility, or for the sake of savouring a specific perspective opened by one's inescapable visual embodiment. In the case of Seoul one encounters the urban fabric of what is claimed to be the "most-connected" city in the world – one does not even have to inquire at coffee shops, on buses or trains: there is Wi-Fi everywhere – and therefore one would have to rethink De Certeau's walking-tactics in relation to strategies of control, rather than mechanisms of discipline.

De Certeau casts urban peripatetic practices in a new light, for instance one's tendency, to walk more-or-less towards a visible beacon such as the Seoul Tower overlooking the city's downtown area, exploring the interstitial architectural spaces that present themselves, mostly unexpectedly, to your loose directional intentions, and sometimes deliberately walking without any directional intent, surrendering to randomness and changing patterns of traversability of streets. One easily forgets what makes this kind of wandering exploration possible, namely space in its primordial giving (*and* givenness), which – as De Certeau appositely remarks – is a blind spot on the part of the functionalist organization of the city on the basis of technological and economic "progress" that privileges time. To be sure, such "urbanising" operations belong to what De Certeau calls the "Concept-city", with its language of panoptic power, but one should

not make the mistake of believing that they comprise the only field of power in the city. On the contrary (1984: 95):

The city becomes the dominant theme in political legends, but it is no longer a field of programmed and regulated operations. Beneath the discourses that ideologise the city, the ruses and combinations of powers that have no readable identity proliferate; without points where one can take hold of them, without rational transparency, they are impossible to administer.

It is with what De Certeau understands as the decay of the “Concept-city” and the kind of rationality on which it is founded, that the kind of interstitial, pluralistic practices, of which unpredictable (and uncontrollable) city-walking is one, have (always-already) been given a new lease of life. His analysis of the innumerable pathways such walking describes highlights its heterogeneity, its qualitative, rather than quantitative character (the footsteps comprising it cannot be counted), its non-functionalist function of weaving places together, and the intangible manner in which such pedestrian movements constitute a complex, but elusive system which is inseparable from the city “itself.” The qualitative indeterminacy of such walking actively resists the numerical, quantitative coding which is part and parcel of societies of control, for Deleuze (1992: 5), and also subverts the structural strategy of “*perpetual training*” that replaces the school in control societies (1992: 5) by not submitting to the pre-established urban “tracks” for pedestrian movement, but instead refusing such “training” altogether by finding one’s own nomadic way. Moreover, in an exemplary control-city such as Seoul there are other tactics to subvert strategies of assimilation into the serpentine coils of the economic system which is arguably the chief vehicle of control today. Eschewing the consumer trap of expensive cable-cars to get to the top of the hill where the Seoul Tower overlooks the city, one climbs as far as possible up the rocks where they are negotiable, before moving sideways to the stairs that take you past kiosks where consumer goods are displayed. This is analogous with using open-source, freely available software (such as Mozilla Firefox) as internet browser, rather than Internet Explorer, or the AVG free anti-virus programme, rather than expensive anti-virus programmes such as Norton. One’s use of these may be recorded somewhere by agencies of control, but cannot be prevented for as long as the internet-“superhighway” exists, and is symbolic of escaping from the treadmill of consumer-behaviour.

In Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, “walking in the city” constitutes an exemplary modality of “smooth space” eroding the conduits erected by “striated space” – two kinds of space that are locked in an embrace of mutual implication, with the corollary that the latter, which represents the vanishing disciplinary society and the emerging control-society, can, in principle, never be totalized, even when it appears to be the case, as in Deleuze’s “societies of control”. Subversive, anti-control, nomadic activities and tactics emerge in the interstices of the ostensibly exhaustive mapping of the city, (re-)introducing “smooth space” into the organized structures of “striated spaces”.

In a way reminiscent of Lefebvre’s (1991: 26-39) contention, that human social activities “produce” different kinds of space, De Certeau claims that the intertwined movements of walkers “spatialise,” or shape spaces. Anyone familiar with walking in cities all over the world has had concrete experience of this – every walk across the city is irreducibly different. While, as De Certeau points out, city authorities can, through surveys, determine which routes from one end to the other of a city are more frequently used than others, the qualitative activity of walking a route is singular, never exactly the same as before, even when “the same route” is followed. Changing weather conditions also influence these changing patterns of activity in the city. For example, on occasion, when it starts snowing in Seoul, a visiting western woman, who has never seen snow before, responds to the snow in childlike fashion, transforming her pedestrian

appropriation of the street into a veritable body-celebration of what is by then an increasingly familiar space, suddenly shot through with flurries of snow – catching snowflakes in her hands, on her eyelashes and her tongue, and deviating from her intended route under the spell of a completely novel experience of Seoul’s city-spaces. Moreover, this does not carry a price tag in a globalized space where life-world practices such as this one are increasingly colonized by economic imperatives, as Habermas (1987: 356) has demonstrated. Only her tracks in the snow and her memory-traces of the event remain as testimony to this “practice of everyday life”, and if her mobile phone has transmitted the numerically coded, geographic coordinates of her whereabouts to potential marketers, she has the freedom to refuse them in the name of playing in the snow.

It is easy to underestimate the revolutionary potential of what may seem like the perfectly innocuous activity of walking in a big city, functionally organised according to principles of economic and technological efficacy. De Certeau’s analysis leaves one in no doubt, however, that such “practices” impart an experience of precluding the totalization of hyper-mediatized, panoptical control under which one unavoidably lives. And in allowing such experiences, these practices keep the always uncompleted elaboration of freedom alive, and moreover, constitute a model of democratic actions: similar, but different, as I shall attempt to demonstrate with the help of the work of Rancière, below.

Rancière, the “police”, equality and dissensus

Jacques Rancière (2010) has revitalized the sphere of political thinking – which had arguably been stagnant, or at best, caught within the walls of the consensus-oriented liberal tradition (Rancière 2010: location 532) – with his uncompromising insistence on the difference between “politics” and the regime of what he has tellingly dubbed “the police”. The latter represents the organization of society in terms of a variety of hierarchical partitionings, despite its claim of instantiating “democracy” or a “society of human rights”. By contrast, according to Rancière, “politics” only emerges, irruptively, when an event of a certain kind disrupts the unequal social fabric of exclusions and subordinations, manifesting the core of the political, namely “equality” (Tanke 2011: 50-51). The social order of the “police” (a play on the ancient Greek word for the city-state, namely, *polis*) represents an instance of what Rancière describes as “the distribution of the sensible” – a reference to the way that the perceptible social world is ordered, or partitioned according to the categories of who belongs where, who is included or excluded, and what is sayable or unsayable. Rancière brings these concepts together where he observes (2010: location 499):

*...Politics stands in distinct opposition to the police. The police is a distribution of the sensible... whose principle is the absence of void and of supplement. The police is not a social function but a symbolic constitution of the social. The essence of the police lies neither in repression nor even in control over the living. Its essence lies in a certain way of dividing up the sensible. I call ‘distribution of the sensible’ a generally implicit law that defines the forms of partaking by first defining the modes of perception in which they are inscribed. The partition of the sensible is the dividing-up of the world (*de monde*) and of people (*du monde*)...*

One way of thinking of different “distributions of the sensible” is discursive, that is, as an arrangement of the social realm through language as discourse, that is, by means of the use of language where meaning and power converge, in as far as one may be “spoken by discourse”, or initiate a counter-discourse in relation to such hegemonic discourses (Foucault 1990: 84; 1972). But Rancière goes further than this, pointing out that language, as well as the images encountered

in art, have an *aesthetic* (ancient Greek: *aisthétikos*) function, not in the modernist sense of being confined to their own specialized sphere of “aesthetic” enjoyment and taste (Habermas 1985: 9), but in the etymological sense of belonging to, or affecting the sphere of sensory perception (from Greek *aisthanomai*: perceive). Hence his use of the phrase, “the distribution of the sensible”: the discourse comprising a country’s constitution, the text of an important juridical judgement, philosophical and literary texts, artworks such as paintings, films, sculptures and architecture all have the *aesthetic* capacity of “partitioning the sensible” by way of projecting anticipatory configurations of “sensible” relations among people, and between people and natural entities.

One approaches a tall, hyper-modern skyscraper with two “scenic” lifts, one on either side of its almost surreal “legs”, in hyper-connected Seoul, for example – lifts that provide a panoramic view of the city’s lights as they ascend the fifty-plus floors of the building – to get to the top floor from where one can admire the cityscape comprising a carpet of lights below, where it stretches out further than the eye can see. You soon realize, however, that at night these lifts are only used by the economic elites, patrons of the city’s most expensive restaurant, situated on the very top floor where your scopic desire is taking you. Rather than being put off by the stares on the part of the restaurant patrons, whose sartorial splendour contrasts starkly with one’s own hiking gear, you blithely skirt the periphery of the restaurant to approach the best visual vantage point from a different angle than the one where you are instructed to “wait to be seated”. Cutting obliquely through the hierarchically ordered, striated space of economic privilege, your casual movements impart a blurring effect to the “police-partitioning of the sensible”, embodied in the architectural features of the building as well as the practice of economic exclusion evident in the location of the restaurant and its attendant “etiquette” – a euphemism for financial-economic discrimination. You have to be quick, though, before security guards can ask you to leave – as an instantiation of what Rancière calls *dissensus* in action, your photographic adventure has to assume the guise of an open-source affiliated hacker’s lightning intrusion into the virtual space of the elites to garner information vital to the sustenance of democratic action. Photographs taken, you return to the lifts along a different route, lest security personnel are already converging on the spot where you breached the striated space of the economic elites. And should they intercept you, you were just on your way, anyway. After all, you are a nomad of the city.

Such a nomadic appropriation of the city’s economically striated spaces represents what Rancière calls “dissensus” – the disruption or dislocation of the normalized “distribution of the sensible” according to the precepts of the “police” – and manifests the core of politics, or democracy, for that matter, namely “equality”. In his words (2010: location 532): “The essence of politics is *dissensus*. Dissensus is not a confrontation between interests or opinions. It is the demonstration (*manifestation*) of a gap in the sensible itself.” Fleetingly appropriating the elite-space of an exclusive upmarket restaurant in a Seoul skyscraper may be an ostensibly innocuous instance of the irruption of equality in the thick of the “police’s” parcelled-out city spaces, but it connects metonymically with many other, far-reaching events proclaiming the *equality* of all citizens with one another. The recent “Marikana massacre” in South Africa, where scores of miners were shot dead by the gun-toting police (among the lowliest of the agents serving the “real police” – the symbolic structuring of social space according to criteria of inclusion and exclusion), marks one of these highly significant events functioning as a kind of epiphany of democracy in its unambiguous assertion of “equality” on the part of the miners: their right of participation in society as citizens sharing in the common life of the *polis*. The nomadic ascent of a late-modern Seoul skyscraper that introduces “smooth space” ephemerally into the “striated space” of economic power, as well as such overtly “political” events as the Marikana insurrection in the face of the agencies of control, resonate with De Certeau’s “walking in the city”.

An analogical series

It is therefore not difficult to discern in Rancière's notion of "equality" – the core of the political, that must always be presupposed by any "distribution of the sensible", including that of the "police" – the counterpart of De Certeau's "tactical", anti-disciplinary (and contra-control) practices, such as walking in the city, and of Deleuze and Guattari's "smooth space", which is constantly at work, transforming the scaffolding of "striated space" through its tactical incursions. What one finds here are variations on the theme of an ineradicable tension encountered in social reality. The "police", the disciplinary society, the society of control, the state apparatus, striated space – all of these notions are markers of cratological (power-related) processes that territorialize, arrest, control, constrain life, or specifically human life, in various ways. Countervailing these, "politics" (in Rancière's sense of the term), the practices of everyday life (De Certeau), the "war machine" and "smooth space" (Deleuze and Guattari), denote countervailing cratological processes that promote (human) life in non-hierarchizing ways – something also theorized by Deleuze and Guattari in terms of "desiring machines" in *Anti-Oedipus* (1983: 1-8) and by Hardt and Negri (2001: 76) as the tension between the immanent plane of creativity and the transcendent plane of order/control, which they perceive to be at the basis of historical phenomena such as the 15th century European Renaissance (the immanent plane of creativity) and its sequel, namely the imposition of "modern" state control (the transcendent plane of order). It is worth elaborating on the latter for further clarification of what is at stake.

Hardt and Negri's (2001, 70-78; see also Olivier 2009) observation is historical, in that the Renaissance is here grasped as a dynamic era of becoming (or an era marking a new awareness of humanity's immanent, revolutionary potential or "desire"). For them, this can also be interpreted as the "first mode" of an incipient modernity, as opposed to its historical aftermath, the force of a new, transcendent order (an attempt at domesticating the newly emerged, radically revolutionary, immanent forces of the Renaissance) which comprises the "second mode" of modernity – and which turned out to be historically triumphant, without being able to obliterate the revolutionary moment completely. As they put it (2001: 76):

Modernity itself is defined by crisis, a crisis that is born of the uninterrupted conflict between the immanent, constructive, creative forces and the transcendent power aimed at restoring order. This conflict is the key to the concept of modernity, but it was effectively dominated and held in check.

The first of these is familiar from another source, too – Lyotard's (1984: 79) (given its resistance to the usual periodizing sense attributed to these terms) somewhat counter-intuitive remark that, "A work [of art] can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant". What strikes one immediately is that what Hardt and Negri refer to as modernity's "first mode" (the "revolutionary plane of immanence") corresponds to Lyotard's postmodern moment, while their "second mode" of modernity (the transcendent plane of order) has Lyotard's "modern" as its counterpart. What has been described earlier as an ineradicable tension obtains here, too, and corresponds (to mention yet another analogue) to the evocative quasi-economic and quasi-psychoanalytic description by Deleuze and Guattari (1983: 1-3) of the relation between the stable psychic economy of the Oedipal (Freudian) subject or ego, on the one hand, and the endlessly productive psychic economy of the "schizophrenic" subject – characterized by excess and loss of psychic investment through dissociation and lack of stable identification – on the other. The latter "schizophrenic" moment corresponds to Lyotard's "postmodern", as well as to Hardt and Negri's "revolutionary plane of immanence", to which one can add De Certeau's anti-disciplinary practices, Deleuze and Guattari's smooth space and Rancière's "politics" of

equality, all of which are variations on the theme of becoming *in its tensional relation with being*. The former, “stable economy”-moment, in turn, has Lyotard’s “modern”, as well as Hardt and Negri’s “transcendent order” of control as its counterparts. These may be amplified by Foucault’s disciplinary society, Deleuze’s societies of control, Deleuze and Guattari’s striated space and Rancière’s “police”, all of which represent variations on the theme of being *in its tensional relation with becoming*. What this analogical series suggests, is that a paradoxical spatio-temporal configuration, with the form, “becoming>being” / “being>becoming” (concepts dating back further than Plato) underpins all of these analogous pairs, and that one could arguably show that it has its roots in pre-Socratic, ancient Greek experience and thought (something that cannot be pursued at present).

Familiar places and foreign spaces

One is now in a position to return to De Certeau’s “practice of everyday life”, armed with the insights gained earlier, to find there another way of articulating the alternating rhythm or vacillation between two extremes, neither of which seems to be able to eradicate the other once and for all, as demonstrated above. What I want to argue is that, under the heading, “Childhood and Metaphors of Places”, De Certeau opens the possibility of understanding the tension between the organized spaces of discipline and of control, on the one hand, and the spaces of nomadic subversion, on the other (alternatively, the tension between striated and smooth spaces, or between the “police” and democracy/equality), as one that has its quasi-transcendental (or historico-transcendental) roots in originary human experiences. He writes (1984: 108):

The memorable is that which can be dreamed about a place. In this place that is a palimpsest, subjectivity is already linked to the absence that structures it as existence and makes it “be there”, Dasein. But ... this being-there acts only in spatial practices, that is, in ways of moving into something different ... it must ultimately be seen as the repetition, in diverse metaphors, of a decisive and originary experience, that of the child’s differentiation from the mother’s body. It is through that experience that the possibility of space and of a localisation (a “not everything”) of the subject is inaugurated.

What De Certeau is talking about is the transition from what Freud called the “oceanic self” (and Lacan dubbed “l’hommelette” – the human omelette; Silverman 1983: 152-153) – that sense of self when the infant is still so intimately conjoined with the mother’s body that she or he does not experience themselves as separate beings – to the state when one finally does experience oneself as different, or “other” from the mother’s body. (For Kristeva the separation process from the *chora* of the mother’s body, where space is still undifferentiated, is one of “abjection” [Kristeva 1997: 35-37; 153-154]; for Lacan that of entering the imaginary via the “mirror phase” [Lacan 1977: 1-7].) This enables one to grasp that, even much later in life, leaving one’s familiar spatial surroundings to go to exotic places or cities is still modelled on that originary (meaning: giving rise to, like a matrix) experience first described by Freud, and later by his successors in psychoanalysis, which include De Certeau. In fact, he takes one back to that famous passage in Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (2006: 140), where Freud the grandfather describes the so-called “Fort/Da” game played by his grandson in the absence of his mother, Freud’s daughter. In Freud’s interpretation, the game is played as a psychic mechanism to cope with the mother’s unexpected absence, and makes it bearable to the boy through the metaphoric substitution of a cotton reel for the mother – by throwing the reel into his cot and pulling it back into view again, the child reassures himself of his mother’s return through repetition (what Freud called the “repetition compulsion” as manifestation of the “death drive”).

According to De Certeau, the manipulation of the cotton reel by the little boy is an “original spatial structure” (1984: 109), given the reciprocity of self and other in the process of throwing the spool out of sight into the cot (while uttering “Fort!”/“Away!”), and then pulling it into visibility again (accompanied by the delighted “Da!”/“There!”). It is a founding, originary act that first establishes the spatial difference between “self” and “other”, “here” and “there”, and which repeats itself throughout life in the spatial practices of traversing a world of spatial variation and diversification. Were it not for such founding experiences in childhood, it would not be possible to look upon the continual expansion of an individual’s spatial universe in terms of a kind of metaphorical “grafting” of “new” experiences on to older ones, or of experiencing the exploration of novel, foreign spaces as somehow presupposing the familiarity of the places of the everyday world. Is it not possible to perceive in this dialectic of spatial experience(s) an alternation between the “Fort/Da” processes that generate “smooth” and “striated” spaces, and result in the intermittent preponderance of now the one, now the other? On the one hand, the “anti-discipline” and “counter-control” structure of walking in the city would be the nomadic incursion of the “smooth space of self” into the “striated space(s) of otherness” which may, from a distance, appear indomitable, but is easily subverted by the “tactics” of pedestrians, as I hope to have shown above. On the other hand, however, it is imaginable that certain kinds of traversing space on foot would be the counterpart of striated space, such as a military march through the city’s streets, and that its homogeneous fulfilment would be prevented by unruly children ducking and diving among and around the legs of the marching soldiers, or by nomadic pedestrians who “take back the streets” as soon as the steps placed with military precision, carving the boulevards into a space of layered power-relations, have moved on.

This potential of introducing qualitatively different, “smooth”, spatial appropriations into what are ostensibly well-established “striated” spaces through variable urban peregrinations, would explain the excitement, the sense of adventure, that accompanies a trip into the as-yet unknown spaces of other lands. Like Freud’s grandson, who exulted in the reappearance of his plaything after its initial disappearance, travellers to foreign places can delight in transmuting their foreignness (the “Fort”) into the newly discovered (the “Da”), which is destined to become familiar in the process of exploring it — but, to be phenomenologically accurate, a kind of familiarity that differs in quality from the “knownness” of the place where you live. This is why, after first visiting cities like Prague, Florence, Rome, Istanbul, Shanghai, Seoul or Osaka, and savouring the exotic sights, tastes, and above all, the singularly configured urban spaces and architectural places that comprise these cities, one longs to return there, to savour once again, this time with a sense of recognition, what first imprinted itself on one’s memory like a spatial signature. “Signature” here represents what is always already the transformation of the city’s geometrically striated space by one’s own nomadic spatial peregrinations. It therefore comes as no surprise that, on the eve of one’s departure for an as yet unexplored “foreign” city or country, an involuntary, anticipatory projection occurs, its specific quality imparted to it by the memory-image one has of the place in question. This image is relatively more, or less, vague (or clear), depending on whether it is informed by stories you have heard or read, or – in the age of the internet – websites you have visited. This, together with what one knows of foreign cities and countries through a mixture of related experiences and prior information, induces the heady anticipation of a kind of “virtual” mixture of self/familiarity and otherness/exoticism.

Conclusion: the city and the practice of space

Returning to De Certeau’s text enables one to put such spatial peregrinations in clearer perspective (1984: 109):

To practice space is thus to repeat the joyful ... experience of childhood; it is, in a place, to be other and to move toward the other ... the childhood experience that determines spatial practices later develops its effects, proliferates, floods private and public spaces, undoes their readable surfaces, and creates within the planned city a “metaphorical” or mobile city, like the one Kandinsky dreamed of: “a great city built according to all the rules of architecture and then suddenly shaken by a force that defies all calculation”.

His words conjure up, once again, the seemingly inescapable interwovenness of being and becoming, discipline/control and freedom, striated and smooth space. To imagine one’s visits to faraway cities and spaces in these terms is to realise that there is far more to it than the mere “rubbernecking” of tourists. It helps one understand that there is a subtle dialectic between past experiences, going all the way back to childhood, and new experiences; one which, moreover, never coincides with the formal pattern laid out in advance by city planners. The way different, actively space-traversing individuals appropriate unexplored spaces (by walking from one side of a city to the other along unpredictable trajectories) is indeed “a force that defies all calculation” – a force, moreover, that resonates with the deterritorializing effects of the “war machine” associated with Deleuze and Guattari’s “smooth space”, which transmogrifies the “striated spaces” of grid-like city-blocks into nomadic spaces of unpredictable, indeterminate peregrinations.

At the same time it adumbrates the irruption of “equality” within the interstices of exclusive hierarchical social structurings of the “police”, unmistakeably announcing the fleeting “in-vention” (“in-coming”) of democracy. “Walking in the city” and everything with which it is metonymically connected (smooth space, equality, democracy, the immanent plane of creativity, the “postmodern” moment that is the “modern” in its incipient state), can therefore function as a model for the “dissensus” that must of necessity be inserted, repeatedly, into the consensual fabric of a social and urban space that bears the striated imprint of the “police”. And the city is the arena where this has to happen, or rather, is always already happening.

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As an undergraduate student, Bert Olivier discovered Philosophy more or less by accident, but has never regretted it. Because Bert knew very little, Philosophy turned out to be right up his alley, as it were, because of Socrates's teaching, that the only thing we know with certainty, is how little we know. Armed with this '*docta ignorantia*', Bert set out to teach students the value of questioning, and even found out that one could write cogently about it, which he did during the 1980s and '90s in opposition to apartheid. Since then, he has been teaching and writing on Philosophy and his other great loves, namely, the arts, architecture and literature. In the face of the many irrational actions on the part of people, and wanting to understand these, later on he branched out into Psychoanalysis and Social Theory as well, and because Philosophy cultivates in one a strong sense of justice, he has more recently been harnessing what little knowledge he has in intellectual opposition to the injustices brought about by the dominant economic system today, to wit, neoliberal capitalism. In 2012 the South African university where he teaches (NMMU) conferred a Distinguished Professorship on him. His motto is taken from Immanuel Kant's work: '*Sapere aude!*' ('Dare to think for yourself!').

Planning and replanning Ng'ambo, Zanzibar

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The planning of Zanzibar was taken into hands by the British colonial administration in order to develop a neatly segregated modern city. In this process, the historic eastern part of the city, Ng'ambo, was stigmatized as the informal, native quarter, as opposed to the elite part of the city, 'Stone Town'. Notwithstanding the multiple attempts to replace Ng'ambo with a planned modernist quarter, Ng'ambo resisted and developed its own modernity.

Key words: Informal modernity, urban planning, colonial stigmatization

Beplanning en herbeplanning van Ng'ambo, Zanzibar

De planning van Zanzibar werd in handen genomen door het Britse koloniale bestuur om een keurig gescheiden moderne stad te ontwikkelen. In dit proces, werd het historische oostelijke deel van de stad, Ng'ambo of 'de Andere Kant', gebrandmerkt als het informele, inheemse kwartier, in tegenstelling tot 'Stone Town', het elite deel van de stad. Niettegenstaande de vele pogingen om Ng'ambo vervangen door een geplande modernistische wijk, verzette Ng'ambo zich en ontwikkelde haar eigen moderniteit.

Sleutelwoorden: Informele moderniteit, stedenbouw, koloniale stigmatisering

William Cunningham Bissell, in his book *Urban Design, Chaos, and Colonial Power in Zanzibar*, argues that policymaking and planning of urban Zanzibar has been, right from the establishment of the British Protectorate in 1891, a chaotic story. A chaos that served the conscious scheming of the colonial administration well, and which was in itself based on naive ideas. This political heritage has cast its shadows far into the future. Bissell states that

in tracing the tale of the incessant making and remaking the modern in Zanzibar City, I show how colonial disorder and dysfunction has laid the foundation for contemporary conditions typically attributed to postcolonial African regimes (2011: 3).

and he continues that

through either historical amnesia or active forgetting, contemporary problems in the city have been wrongly interpreted as the products of postcolonial mismanagement and indigenous incompetence when in fact the roots of urban disarray stretch far back into the bureaucratic chaos unleashed by colonial designs (2011: 4).

As an example, Bissell mentions the countless decrees and planning initiatives launched by the colonial government, which proved to be ad hoc, sometimes contradictory and often unrealistic in terms of execution or management due to the chronic shortage of professional personnel and funds.

In Zanzibar, true chaos was created by the refusal of the colonial administration to create a Municipality, out of fear of opposition from the Zanzibari elite and citizens. Any urban planning initiative on Zanzibar thus had to pass the various ministries and departments, such as Ministries of Health and Lands, the Public Works Department, and the Police. For the a citizen of Ng'ambo

- a sector of Zanzibar town - obtaining a building permit for a small outdoor kitchen to his residence was to walk the long and circuitous way through all these institutions.

Bissell states that the colonial policies and planning traditions have been inherited by the post-colonial administration, and that up to the present, due to this heritage, both government and citizens are struggling to get things straight. Strange enough though,

in a cruel irony, many Zanzibaris now look back to the British and their alleged designs, when it was precisely colonialism that laid the uncertain and disorderly foundations of the present, instead of focusing on the available means at hand or relying on local resourcefulness and indigenous creativity (2011: 333).

Bissell refers to schemes that are based on modern dreams of total design, reflecting a technocratic vision of complete order and control, whereas he pleads for the Zanzibari to embrace and draw

upon those elements that actually make the city worth living: the improvisational, the unknown, the capacity to survive. It is well past time for Zanzibaris and others to dismantle the colonial legacy of incompetence that has hindered them from realizing their own indigenous and everyday powers of urban design (2011: 334).

Bissell does consciously exaggerate his argument, in order to make his point clear. Of course, he does know, as we do, that there is something like modern infrastructure that, in whatever way we want to build our city, needs to be accommodated. Just think of electrification, sanitation and fire safety, to name a few.



Figure 1
Ng'ambo residents moving out of Michenzani
(source: Zanzibar National Archives).

Aspirations to modernity

Key to the drive of the colonial and post-colonial society to plan and re-plan Zanzibar is, according to Bissell, the lure of 'modernity'. Modernity is a complex notion that deserves to

be researched in itself. It is a notion that carries multiple and differing meanings for various individuals and groups.

Bissell defines modernity in his study as “(...) an European invented term to distinct [sic] Europe from the backward rest of the world. Urbanity is quite central to that notion” (2011: 24), and so is the shift from the rural to the urban, bringing rationality and innovation that is modernity.

Yet, there is a contradiction within this definition, because the shift from the rural to the urban already took place in Africa well before European ingress. Kilwa, as an example of Swahili urban culture, was a thriving merchant city in the 12th century. Zanzibar itself was well developed before the modern European powers set foot on the island by the middle of the 19th century. Hence, in this sense, modernity cannot be stated as a sole European invention. But the use of the notion for the conscious positioning of European thought on the African continent by the end of the 19th century certainly cuts wood. And, as Bissell continues,

“Modernity still is the haunting image of the sophisticated western technopolis for the Africans, who do not realize that they have invented and implemented their own modernity over time, creating the African modern city.” (2011: 25)

This is an observation to be heeded by contemporary planners and decision makers active in the field of African urban development. The African city of Zanzibar is a modern city, but it is conceived and built in a different way than the European one, in a way that seems to elude the policies, master plans, grand designs, guidelines, conventions, by-laws, decrees, and all the other instruments introduced by the ‘western world’. Popularly, this non-planned situation is referred to as informal, organic, if not blandly stigmatized as ‘slum’. Yet, the notion of the ‘informal city’ is somehow strange, because all cities’ genesis and growth are based on formal patterns. If, in Zanzibar, historic Ng’ambo is qualified as informal, organic and a slum, so is Stone Town, as we will see.

There is no doubt about the fact that modernity is still luring the citizens of Zanzibar. This desire surfaces clearly from recent surveys on Ng’ambo, such as from the interviews carried out by Shapira Hellerman Associates (2013: 419) for the new Structure Plan of Zanzibar.

Residents of Vikokotoni and Michenzani were asked about their ideas for the future of Ng’ambo. Their answer was that a new highrise city, not dissimilar to the ‘German Blocks’, should replace the existing. With the ‘German Blocks’ are meant the monumental apartment blocks erected by late President Karume at Michenzani. For ‘highrise’, no doubt, Dubai is the reference. This modern city is seen as the panacea for all the ills of the existing city, but most importantly, it is understood as the idea of the modern city itself.

Ng’ambo, apart from Karume’s planned intervention of the 1960s and 70s, has however developed its own modernity, which seems to be ignored by everyone, the residents included. As we speak, new multi-story buildings with ‘modern’ apartments are popping up all over Ng’ambo. Notwithstanding all attempts to regularization, Ng’ambo has developed itself in a ‘home grown’ fashion into what it is, and it will probably continue to do so for the decades to come (figure 2).



Figure 2
Left: Ng'ambo in the late 19th century
 (source: Zanzibar National Archives).
Right: In 2013
 (photo: Berend van der Lans, African Architecture Matters).

Ng'ambo is not a slum

Ng'ambo, meaning literally 'the other side', commenced as a suburb of Zanzibar on the other side of the tidal creek that divided the peninsula - on which the city was founded - from the main island. This expansion commenced not later than the 1840's, probably much earlier. By 1846, on Guillain's map, the Ng'ambo suburb is already substantial (figure 3). Ng'ambo grew fast, and by the end of the 19th century, its size exceeded that of Stone Town on the peninsula.



Figure 3
Map of Zanzibar by Capitain Guillain, 1846
 (source: African Architecture Matters).

Until the installation of the British Protectorate in 1891, there was no difference between the two parts of the city in terms of population presence and construction. Arabs, Swahili, Indians,

Persians, Comorans, Goans, Malgache, a true cosmopolitan population lived on both side of the creek, in wattle-and-daub Swahili houses, in stone type Omani riads and in Indian duka's (figure 4). The urban tissue on both sides of the Creek was also basically the same. It was the British administration that changed this cosmopolis by re-organizing the town into a segregated city. The peninsular part on the western side of the Creek became Stone Town – in itself subdivided in European, Arab and Indian quarters – and Ng'ambo on the mainland of Zanzibar became the native sector. Hence, in its origin, there is not such a thing as a traditional divide between Stone Town and Ng'ambo. The Creek was nothing else than a natural barrier, which, conveniently, was turned into a greenbelt, a 'cordon sanitaire' between the two parts of the city. The whole notion of 'Stone Town' is a remarkable one, as a 'stone town' cannot exist without a 'mud town'. But there was no such thing as a 'mud town'. In both parts of the city there were stone houses and mud houses next to each other.¹



Figure 4
Late 19th century Mselem House next to traditional Swahili houses
and new apartment building
(photo: Berend van der Lans, African Architecture Matters).

In this way a typical colonial African city, based on racial segregation, was conceived. Regulations were drafted for the city, for the houses and the huts, for one side and for the other. This theoretical split has survived up to today, dividing the city into a Stone Town and the Other Side, both with their own set of rules and plans. One has become World Heritage, the other a slum to be upgraded.

But what is a slum? UN Habitat (2007: 23) defines a slum as an urban area that lacks one or more of the following:

1. Durable housing of a permanent nature that protects against extreme climate conditions;
2. Sufficient living space which means not more than three people sharing the same room;
3. Easy access to safe water in sufficient amounts at an affordable price;
4. Access to adequate sanitation in the form of a private or public toilet shared by a reasonable number of people;

5. Security of tenure that prevents forced evictions.

According to this definition, many African cities are predominantly slums (Davis 2010: 69). The majority of the houses in Zanzibar Stone Town and Ng'ambo both qualify as slums. What is the sense of this definition?

Upgrading, or modernizing, Ng'ambo has been on the agenda since Lanchester's Zanzibar master plan of 1923. And today, 90 years later, multiple plans and strategies to formalize, or better, to rebuild Ng'ambo according to formal planning systems and rules, have passed over the table. Aerial surveys were undertaken in the late 1920s, the detailed Ng'ambo Folder was created, in the 1940s a Civic Centre was constructed in order to radiate modern thought, the quarter of Holmwood was built on an English Garden City model, a second masterplan was produced in the late 1950s, but little really changed Ng'ambo's situation and development until the Revolution of 1964. Planning, monitoring capacity and funds were never sufficient to replan and rebuild Ng'ambo. Yet, the intention to rebuild Ng'ambo into a clean and modern city never left the planning table. Ng'ambo - notwithstanding the fact that visitors and professional surveyors often described Ng'ambo as a pleasant and neat part of town - was a slum and needed to be rebuilt (Folkers 2010: 69).

Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo

In order to show the impact of planning, survey and replanning on Ng'ambo, a small area, consisting of the two neighbourhoods of Kisimamajongoo² and Kisiwandui³, has been the subject of a study of their detail (figures 5,6 and 7).



Figure 5

**Left: The Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area in Ng'ambo in the 1870s
(drawn by author, 2014).**

**Middle: The Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area in Ng'ambo in the early 1900s
(drawn by author, 2014).**

**Right: The Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area in Ng'ambo in 2014
(drawn by author, 2014).**

Lanchester, a pupil of the famous urban designer Patrick Geddes, remodelled Zanzibar town with a number of larger and smaller interventions in his 1923 master plan (figure 6). The larger interventions encompassed the extension of the port through land reclamation, a monumental redesign for Stone Town's seafront and the canalization of the Creek. For Ng'ambo, he proposed some smaller interventions, as he did not see a possibility to redesign the area without a proper survey.



Figure 6
The 1923 masterplan by Lanchester
 (source: African Architecture Matters).

For the Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area though, Lanchester's proposals carried some important consequences. The rearrangement of the Creek into a tidal canal and basin, baptized 'the Banjo', caused a major change to the access of Ng'ambo through the Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area. The low-tide track crossing the Creek was replaced by a bridge, daraja mpyia, the new bridge, so named to make the distinction with the old, 19th century bridge. This new bridge was located at the inlet of the canal into the tidal basin. At the Ng'ambo side of the bridge, a major junction was conceived with roads leading into five directions. This junction did however not come about until Karume's interventions of the 1960s. Lanchester proposed to realign and widen a number of roads, and the road leading from the Daraja Mpya to Kisimamajongoo crossing was to become one of the most important roads through Ng'ambo.

On the landfill south of the Banjo, the plan proposed a recreation ground, which indeed would become a cricket pitch and later the Mnazi Moja football grounds. North of the Banjo,

new Indian quarters were proposed on the landfill. This did not happen, instead this area was left as public space.

For Kikwajuni, south of the Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area, a new orthogonal neighbourhood was sketched, and at Michenzani, most remarkable of all the interventions proposed for Ng'ambo, Lanchester sketched in a neatly arranged Goanese Village.

Lanchester's instructions on surveying Ng'ambo were followed. Aerial photographs were taken in 1927, traced and compiled into the so-called Ng'ambo Folder,⁴ but only to be completed in 1948, 25 years after Lanchester drafted his master plan. The Ng'ambo Folder does not contain any of the new neighbourhoods that Lanchester had proposed. As a matter of fact, Ng'ambo had in the mean time expanded to well beyond the city limits of 1923 and informal settlements had occupied the land for which Lanchester had made his designs.

The only interventions affecting the Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area that were proposed in the Ng'ambo Folder are the realignments and widening of some roads. This rearrangement of the roads was followed until the end of the colonial period, and the policy was to implement this through building regulations. If a house impeding the projected road alignment was found in a derelict state by the building inspector, the owner was summoned to demolish the house and to rebuild according to the projected alignment as specified in the Ng'ambo Folder.

The second masterplan for Zanzibar, the Kendall-Mill master plan of 1958, focused on curbing the expansion of Zanzibar City and rearrange certain areas into neatly segregated zones. For the Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area there were no specific interventions proposed according to this master plan. As with Henry Lanchester, Henry Kendall did not want to make proposals for Ng'ambo without further surveying. And, indeed, Ng'ambo was again the subject of a survey during the last years of colonial rule.⁵

The only intervention of any importance carried out in the late colonial period affecting the Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area, was the conversion of the Banjo into a small park, designed by Kendall's assistant Geoffrey Mill (figure 6).

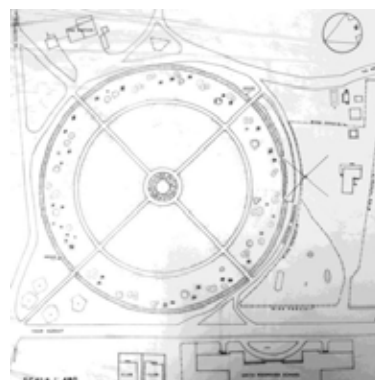


Figure 6
The Banjo Park designed by Geoffrey Mill in 1959
(source: Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Zanzibar).

The first president of independent Zanzibar, Sheikh Abeid Amani Karume, had some completely different ideas than those of the colonial planners. As early as 1964, the year of the Revolution overthrowing the Sultan, he made it clear that he wished to erase the divided city, by clearing up

Stone Town and have Ng'ambo rebuilt as Zanzibar New Town. On advice from various parties, he left Stone Town for later and concentrated on Ng'ambo where, with the help of the GDR town planner Hubert Scholz, Zanzibar New Town was designed (figure 7).



Figure 7
Model of Zanzibar New Town to the 1968 Masterplan by Hubert Scholz
 (source: African Architecture Matters).

Ng'ambo was to be replaced by a town of new multistory blocks placed in a green environment, around an axis connecting Stone Town to the new city centre, 'the Crown' of the new city of Zanzibar (Scholz 1968: 23). This east-west axis, intersected by a perpendicular axis connecting the northern and southern coastal roads was elaborated to a grandiose scale, with double carriageways of some fifty meters wide and a great roundabout with a monumental fountain. The connection to Stone Town was made at the former location of Darajani Mpyia, where the ruling party, the ASP, had just erected their new headquarters (figure 8).



Figure 8
The ASP Headquarters and Michenzani Trains in the early 1970s
 (source: Capital Art Studio, Zanzibar).

As a prelude to the execution of the centre of Karume's New Town, the model neighbourhoods of Kikwajuni and Kilimani were erected on remaining green field locations in and around Ng'ambo. These housing complexes were erected in order to shift those citizens of Ng'ambo

who would have to move from their old houses that were due for demolition to make room for the grand Zanzibar New Town project.

However, the design for the buildings along the main axes was seriously modified by Karume after the departure of Scholz and his East German comrades. Instead of the loosely arranged blocks of limited height that Scholz had sketched for the Kisimamajongoo and Kisiwandui area (figure 9), Karume designed a line up of twelve 300m long apartments blocks of up to 8 floors. These were to become the ‘Michenzani Trains’, or ‘German Blocks’, as they would become popularly know (figures 1, 8 and 10).

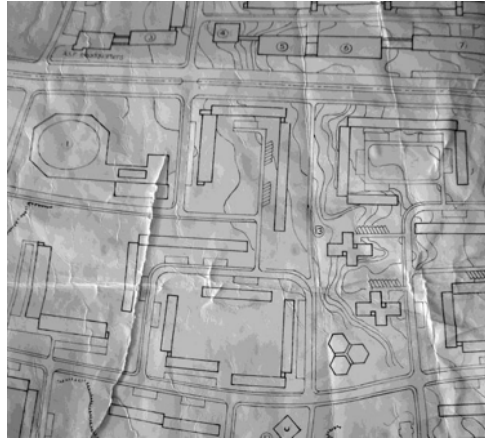


Figure 9
Redevelopment proposal for the
Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area by Scholz cs., ca 1969
(source: Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Zanzibar).



Figure 10
Michenzani Trains setting out drawing ca 1970
(source: Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Zanzibar).

For other neighbourhoods of Ng'ambo, other teams in the mean time worked on proposals for the rebuilding. One of these proposals, for Miembeni, was prepared by a team from Lund University in Sweden, headed by Sten-Åke Nilsson in 1969. Interestingly, Nilsson (1969: 34), in

his conclusion to the proposed development schemes, suggests that a gradual rebuilding, based on the existing tissue, be considered as possible alternative.

The Michenzani project was continued after Karume's premature death in 1972, with the Blocks 11 and 12 only completed as late as 2008. But Michenzani was also to be the swansong of Karume's New Town. The rebuilding of Ng'ambo, though commenced energetically, came to standstill due to the high costs of the investment and the small return in rent, as most of the citizen of Zanzibar were not able to afford this type of housing.

In 1982, the fourth master plan for Zanzibar was drafted, this time by a Chinese team headed by Qian Kequan. The plan started from a rearrangement of the administrative division of Zanzibar into neighbourhood units. The south-eastern quadrant of Michenzani New Town, in which the Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area is located, became neighbourhood unit 2.

This Chinese masterplan departed from the clean slate rebuilding proposals for Ng'ambo and instead proposed a partial rebuilding, based on a rationalized existing urban tissue. As an example for this approach, a plan was drawn for Mwembetanga, the area opposite the Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area on the northern side of Michenzani (figure 11).



Figure 11
Redevelopment proposal for Mwembetanga by Kequan cs., 1982
(source: Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Zanzibar).

The plan further elaborated the ideas of the new city centre of Zanzibar, as proposed by Scholz in 1968. The centre was proposed to be divided into two sectors; a commercial sector north

of Michenzani junction and an administrative centre at the former Darajani Mpyia location, with monument at the end of the road from Michenzani junction (figure 15). Opposite the ASP Headquarters, a new government office was proposed, which would mean the sacrifice of the park at the Banjo.



Figure 12
Plan for new Zanzibar City Centre by Kequan cs., 1982
 (source: Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Zanzibar).

Since recently, ideas that are based on the conservation of the existing Ng'ambo substance and ideas based on a clean slate redevelopment of Ng'ambo, exist side by side. The draft guidelines produced by a team from the University of Pretoria, headed by Karel Bakker in 2012, respect existing tissue and heritage but allow development and densification, subject to design guidelines and codes. At the same time, the Zanzibar Government is inclined to a more drastic approach, as is apparent in a pilot plan drafted by the Department of Urban and Regional Planning in 2013⁶ for a small area within the Kisiwandui-Kisimamajongoo area and that is based on realigning the roads, in this manner creating new city blocks and integrally rebuilding the area.

As can be seen from the above, a pendulum movement in the planning approach to Ng'ambo can be discerned over time, from status quo to complete rebuilding, and back. The plans of Lanchester (1923), the Ng'ambo Folder (1948), Kendall (1958), Nilsson (1969), Qian Kequan (1982) and Bakker & White (2012) start from rationalized conservation, whereas Scholz (1968), Karume (1970) and DoURP (2011) propose a clean slate approach.

In retrospect, the only time that substantial rebuilding effectively took place in Ng'ambo, was by Karume in the late 1960's. It needed a Revolution with an authoritarian and charismatic president to 'crucify' Ng'ambo.⁷ Other initiatives to redevelop Ng'ambo according to a 'formal', or official plan, have failed to materialize thus far.

Yet, over time, almost unnoticed, Ng'ambo densified and modernized. The traditional Swahili houses with their wattle-and-daub walls and makuti roofs have been modernized or replaced by new buildings that were established on the existing footprint and, by and large, respecting the historical urban tissue and cultural components. In the architecture of the new buildings, reference is made to the traditional Zanzibari architecture. Zanzibar doors, barazas, arches, roof parapets and other decorative or spatial elements reappear in combination with tinted glass curtain walls, precast banisters and cement roof tiles, to form a contemporary, hybridized architecture that may not always meet the appreciation of the academically trained architect, but does certainly pay homage to Zanzibar's past.

Possibly, Ng'ambo of today can be regarded as the natural, organic outcome of a new Stone Town, not a 19th century one, but a version of today (figure 13).



Figure 13
Kisimamajongoo in 2013
(photo: Berend van der Lans, *African Architecture Matters*).

Notes

1 Abdul Sheriff in his lecture given during the Historic Urban Landscapes Workshop on Zanzibar, February 2014.

2 Kisimamajongoo: the Well of the Millipedes.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 3 | Kisiwandui: Chicken Pox Island, named after the islet in the Creek where mariners suspected of carrying chicken pox were kept in quarantine around 1900. | 5 | Survey carried out by Abdul Wahab Allawi, government town planner. |
| 4 | The Ng'ambo Folder, The National Archives, Kew. TNA (PRO)CO1054-146 MAPS&PLANS AFRICA | 6 | Consulted by author at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning in 2013. |
| | | 7 | Abdul Sheriff in interview by author, Zanzibar, November 2013 |

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Antoni Folkers (1960), is an architect and urban designer. After reading art at John Carroll University in Cleveland he obtained his masters in Architecture cum laude at Delft University (1986). He was researcher and designer in Ouagadougou before joining the Institute for Tropical Building of Georg Lippsmeier in Starnberg (1987) for whom he became Resident Architect for East Africa in 1988. He is founding director of FBW Architects & Engineers (1995) based in Manchester, Dar es Salaam, Utrecht, Kampala and Kigali. He is founding director of ArchiAfrika, platform for African architecture, in 2001 and African Architecture Matters in 2011. Antoni Folkers published a wide range of articles on architectural subjects and (co-)edited the proceedings of the African Perspectives conferences at Dar es Salaam (2005), Kumasi (2007), Delft (2007) and Pretoria (2009). In 2010 he published *Mtoni – Palace, Sultan & Princess of Zanzibar* and *Modern Architecture in Africa*. The latter book is the basis of his PhD (2011).

Is Corbusian Chandigarh an “openly black African inspired” city in India?

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African-American architect and author, Melvin Mitchell, proposes that Chandigarh, in India, is an “openly black African inspired” city. It was designed by the Swiss-French architect, artist and city planner, Le Corbusier, and his team in the early 1950s, and has remained controversial to this day. Africa’s pre-colonial urbanism is largely outside mainstream architectural curricula and scholarship, which makes Mitchell’s proposal a compelling hypothesis, which demands further exploration. Mitchell’s opinion that Ghana was a major source of inspiration for Le Corbusier frames the study, which is predominantly based on typological analyses. The large number of similarities between modernist forms and African idioms suggests that the formative role of Africa in the study of modernist architecture and town planning can no longer be ignored, and should be reconsidered.

Keywords: Chandigarh, Kumasi, Le Corbusier

Is die Corbusiaanse Chandigarh ’n “openlike swart Afrika-geïnspireerde” stad in Indië?

Die Afrika-Amerikaanse argitek en skrywer, Melvin Mitchell, stel voor dat Chandigarh, in Indië, ’n “openlike swart Afrika-geïnspireerde stad” is. Dit is in die vroeë vyftigerjare van die twintigste eeu deur die Frans-Switserse argitek, kunstenaar en stadsbeplanner, Le Corbusier, en sy span ontwerp, en word tot op hede as kontroversieel bestempel. Omdat Afrika se voor-koloniale stadsbeplanning grootliks buite hoofstroom argitektuur-leerplanne en navorsing val, is Mitchell se voorstelling ’n dwingende hipotese wat verdere ondersoek vereis. Mitchell se mening dat Ghana ’n belangrike bron van inspirasie vir Le Corbusier was, vorm die raamwerk van hierdie studie, wat oorheersend op tipologiese ontledings gebaseer is. Die groot aantal ooreenkomste tussen modernistiese vorms en Afrika idioome dui daarop dat die vormende rol van Afrika in die studie van modernistiese argitektuur en stadsbeplanning, nie verder geïgnoreer kan word nie, maar heroorweeg behoort te word.

Sleutelwoorde: Chandigarh, Kumasi, Le Corbusier

Le Corbusier (1887-1965) – the Swiss-French architect, artist and city planner – was the undisputed leader of the Modern Movement. He was a passionate urbanist, and produced countless town planning proposals and publications, of which only one was successful: Chandigarh, India. In his seminal book *The Crises of the African-American Architect*, the accomplished African-American academic and practitioner, Melvin Mitchell (2003: 294) claims that Chandigarh is “openly black African inspired”, suggesting West-African sources, and Ghana in particular, as a possible spiritual and cultural core.¹ In 2009 (before reading Mitchell) I wrote in a paper, entitled “Le Corbusier’s concepts as catalysts for solving urban problems in sub-Saharan Africa”, that “Chandigarh could easily become the model for a new African urbanism”. The temptation to explore his assertion was irresistible since my perception at that time was that Le Corbusier, rather than Africa, was the agent of influence, which was the opposite of Mitchell’s view.

My research theme is narrow and direct: which of Chandigarh’s urban characteristics are so similar to those of West African cities and towns, that an experienced scholar is motivated to make such a provocative statement? The investigation was made further complicated by the fact that Le Corbusier makes no explicit reference to West Africa (or any part of sub-Saharan Africa for that matter) anywhere in his writings. However, the cross, drawn approximately where Ghana is situated on this sketch of the world map, is a tantalizing clue (figure 1). This study is

therefore a comparative exploration of typologies (based on visual assessment) at three scales of human settlement, namely the city, neighbourhood and building. As a consequence, while some similarities may seem superficial, it should be considered that a typical weakness of any comparative typological analyses is that the deeper similarities are perceived to exist, the less robust they probably are, especially if abstract theorisation is required to explain connections.



Figure 1
Vicinity map of Ghana in relation to a sketch responding to a question on “rational regionalism”
(source: Sketch from Le Corbusier 1947: 97; inset map from Rutter 1971: 153).

Chandigarh in context

After the partition of India, in 1947, into mostly Hindu India and almost entirely Muslim Pakistan, the divided Punjab Province needed a capital. The Indian government insisted that this capital should be a modern and efficient city. It was called Chandigarh, located northwest of Delhi, just south of the Shivalik Mountains. Matthew Nowicki and Albert Mayer created the initial master plan. After Nowicki died in a plane crash in 1950, Le Corbusier was invited to become involved and was appointed principal architect and planner in 1951. His collaborators were Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew (after several years practicing in Ghana), his cousin Pierre Jeanneret, as well as a number of young Indian architects and planners, including the renowned Balkrishna Doshi. The plan was produced in only six weeks (Le Corbusier 1995, volume 5: 114) and has since become iconic and instantly recognisable (figure 2). Le Corbusier completed the urban framework, architectural guidelines and the design of some prominent buildings. Housing types and other buildings and complexes – including the new university – were divided among the members of his team, hence the phrase ‘Corbusian’ in the title of this article.

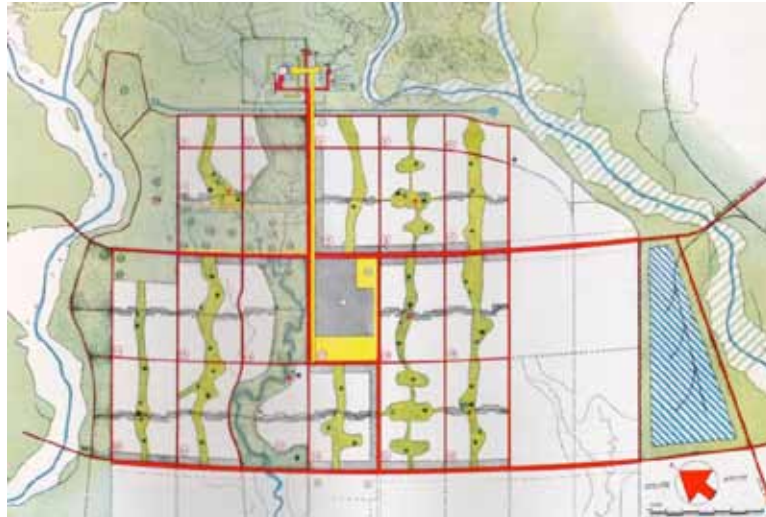


Figure 2
Chandigarh, 1951
 (source : Le Corbusier 1995, volume 5: 122).

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, had a vision of “clean open spaces liberating Indians from the tyranny of the overcrowded and filthy cities, as well as from the confines of agricultural village life” (Curtis 1986: 189). Some authors suggest that Le Corbusier simply copied the Nowicki-Mayer master plan, but the reality is considerably more complicated. Although the Indian government insisted on a modern and efficient city, the oppression of colonialism, and the catastrophic consequences of the partition orchestrated by the British, precluded an obviously Western urban paradigm. Le Corbusier’s choices were therefore quite limited; he was forced to adopt and develop a post-colonial model of a city that would celebrate freedom and progression. His own conspectus of unbuilt city designs ranged from the Contemporary City of 1922 (which was like Sir Edwin Lutyens’ 1911 design of New Delhi, inspired by Pierre L’Enfant’s 1792 plan of Washington, D.C.) to some rather bizarre, hypothetical geometric city forms that he produced in the early thirties (figure 3).

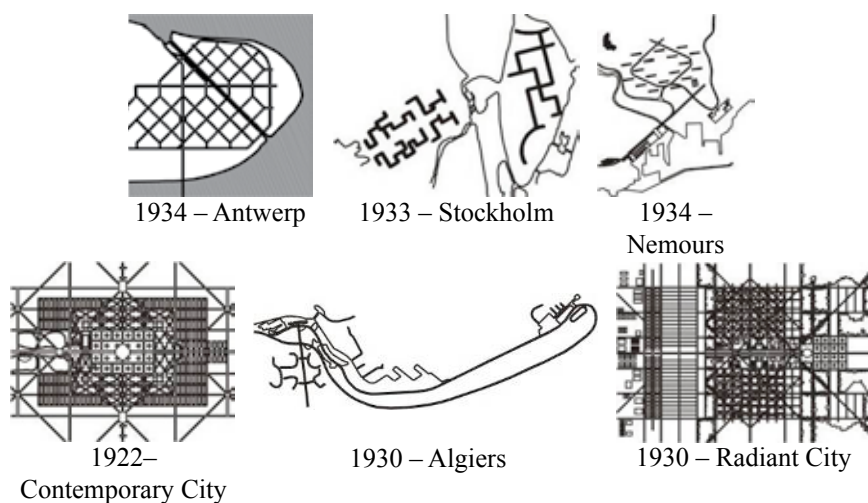


Figure 3
 Some of Le Corbusier’s town plans before World War II, not to scale
 (drawing by the author).

Le Corbusier (1958: 210) insisted that Chandigarh's plan evolved from his innovative but unbuilt design for Bogotá of the previous year (1950). He undeniably retained some key aspects of the Nowicki-Mayer leaf-shaped plan (figure 4), especially the spatial relationships between the key elements (government, city centre, university and industries), which have largely been determined by the geography of the land and the locality of the railway line. The Nowicki-Mayer plan featured a Radburn-type pedestrian network, which is not surprising since Mayer had worked for Clarence Stein (who together with Henry Wright designed Radburn New Town in 1929). However, pedestrian networks have been consistent features of all Le Corbusier's town plans.

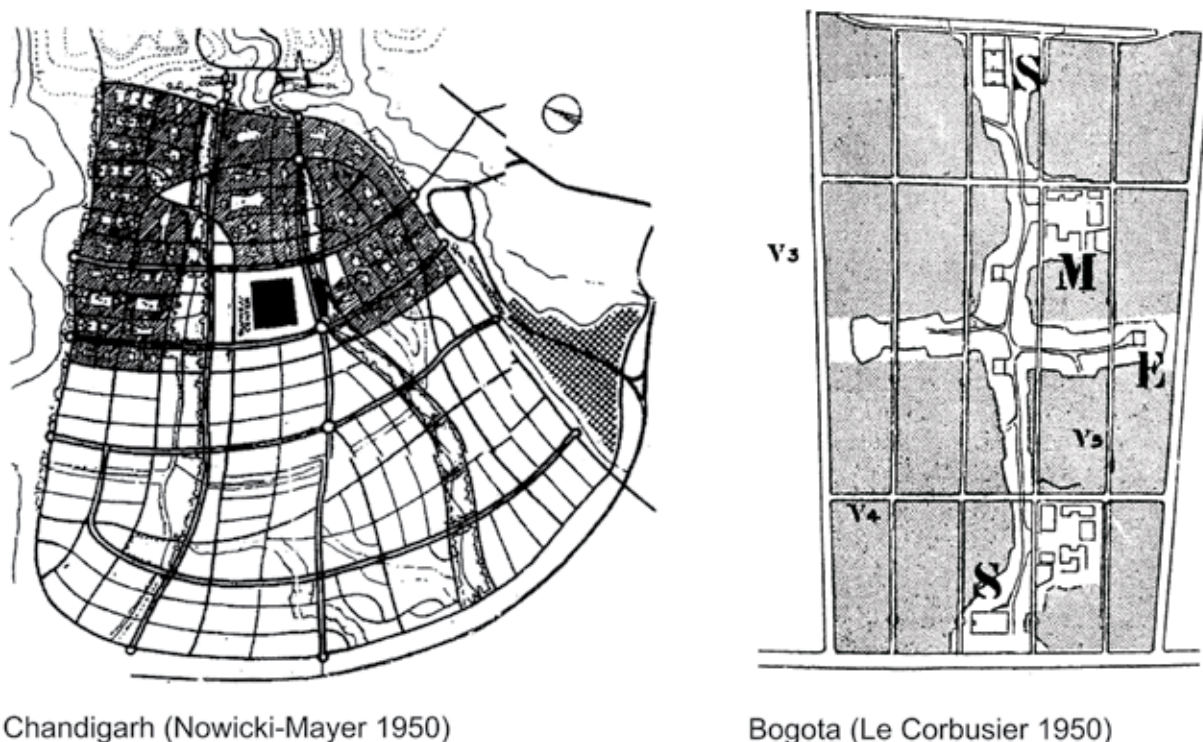


Figure 4
The Nowicki-Mayer plan and the plan for Bogotá
 (sources: Beinart 2002: 143; Le Corbusier 1958: 221).

City scale – Kumasi and Chandigarh

Le Corbusier and his team designed Phase One for 150,000 people. A deconstruction of the plan reveals three layers, constituting (1) a primary vehicular roads network configured as a supergrid, (2) commercial strips and local market streets, and (3) footpaths, parks and connecting greens (30% of the city has been allocated to parks and recreational areas). The resulting 1,200m x 800m superblocks are called sectors (figure 5).

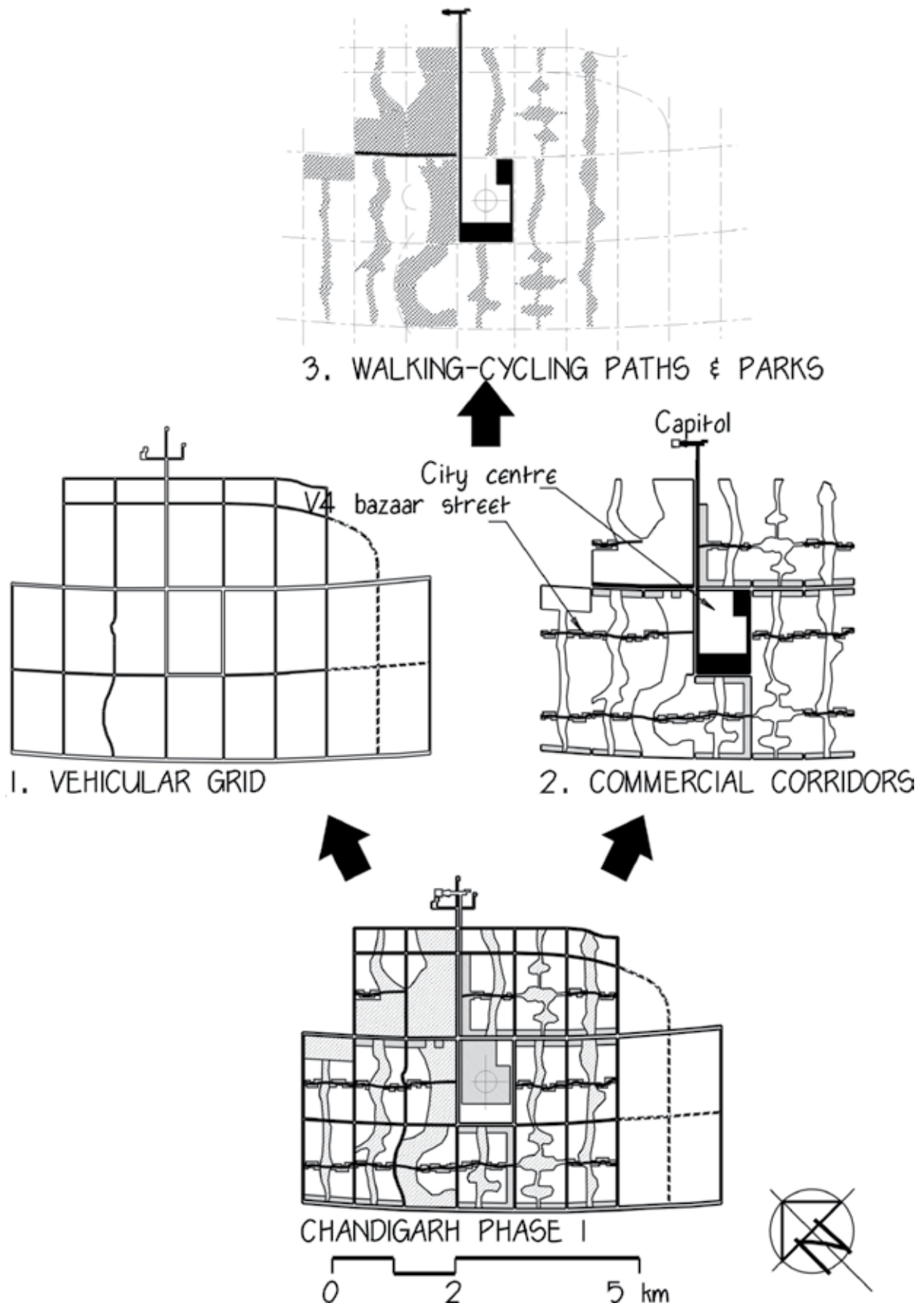


Figure 5
Chandigarh deconstructed
(drawing by the author).

Mitchell's (2003: 16) reference to Ghana as the "spiritual and cultural key" to Afrocentric architecture, leads logically to Kumasi as a precedent for comparison (figure 6). The choice is justified by the Senegalese historian Sékéné Mody Cissoko (1986: 16), who claims that the West African coastal cities in the Benin-Yoruba tradition (which includes Kumasi) "presented a certain modernity in their urban structure".

Kumasi (the capital of the Asante Confederacy) was founded in the early 1680s (Blier 2012: 125). The Asante economy relied on plantation agriculture, gold mining, and long distance trade, both north, linking up with the trans-Saharan trade routes, and south to the coast (Rutter 1971: 157). It was also famous for its jewellery and Kente cloth. The art and technology of weaving the latter was apparently imported from a neighbouring community in 1723 (Hull 1976: 107). Kumasi is also notorious for its involvement in the Atlantic slave trade, which became dominant in the mid 17th century (Coquery-Vidrovitch 2005: 172).

In 1848, an early visitor to Kumasi commented that "Kumasi is very different in its appearance from any other native town that I have seen in this part of Africa ... The streets are generally very broad and clean" (Rutter 1971: 154). They form a grid with very large urban spaces (Hull 1976: 42). The four main avenues were each between 50 to 100 yards wide, and edged with the decorated two-storey houses of the local dignitaries. The palace compound is eccentrically located, while its residential areas were compartmentalised into 77 quarters according to crafts. Hull (1976: 41) maintains that the layout was typical of politically centralised societies in West Africa, of which the Asante are one. Kumasi's population was estimated at between 12 000 to 15 000 in 1870 (Coquery-Vidrovitch 2005: 192).

According to Hull (1976: 116), Kumasi survived as the capital despite a British invasion in 1874, because of "its symbolic value [as a symbol of national unity] for all Asante people". Other pre-colonial cities confronted by the destructiveness of colonial military intervention "succumbed to similar challenges". In fact, Hull (1976: 117) suggests that Kumasi and other cities with pre-colonial origins "experienced new vitality during the colonial period", and have become the "economic cornerstones of flourishing modernizing economies". Finally, Coquery-Vidrovitch (2005: 195) states that "Kumasi is especially fascinating because of its remarkable urban continuity".

The origins of Kumasi remain controversial. Portuguese or Western influence on the modernity of its urban structure is questionable since it functioned in relative autonomy due to its inland locality "deep in the Akan forest behind the Gold Coast" (Hull 1976: xvi).

Kumasi and Chandigarh share some pertinent characteristics, namely the superblocks (called 'sectors' in Chandigarh), the grid (distorted in Kumasi's case), and the relative positions of the main public space and the centre of political power. According to Hull (1976: 90), Kumasi's superblocks included:

[C]lusters of compounds [that] were usually grouped into wards. Each ward had its own community wells, marketplace, and centre of worship. Groups of wards, or quarters, were separated from one another by broad avenues or corridors that converged at a large open community space in the heart of the town or city.

This is an arrangement that prevailed throughout West Africa and can also be found in Hausaland and Yorubaland. However, the pre-colonial cities there looked considerably less modern in comparison to Kumasi.

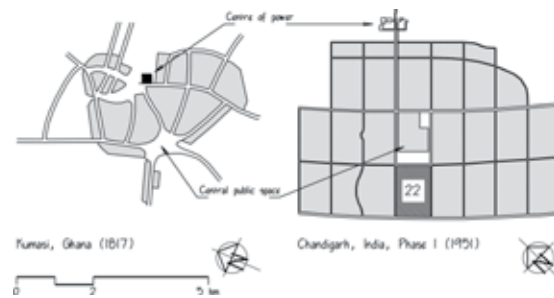


Figure 6
Kumasi and Chandigarh. The number 22 identifies the residential sector discussed below
(drawing by the author).

Village/neighbourhood scale – Asante village compared to a typical sector

The key to the territorial definition of each sector in Chandigarh, is the hierarchical road system that not only delineates the sector as a superblock, but also keeps fast-moving traffic out. Fast moving-traffic is restricted to surrounding roads classified as V1 (arterial inter-state roads), V2 (major boulevards) and V3 (sector defining ring roads). V4 is an internal bazaar street, V5 a rather narrow looped internal neighbourhood street, and V6 the lanes into the estates and street blocks. V7 is a pedestrian path, and V8 a cycle track in a green strip.

This road system takes a person from the vehicle-dominated ring road, into the bustling public bazaar street and then, via increasingly quiet and less-public streets and lanes, to the sanctuary and privacy of the private home. This system bares similarities to one of the characteristics of vernacular West African settlement patterns, which according to Andrew Rutter (1971: 158), include the persistence of courtyards and the continuing importance of the gradation of spaces, from public to private, within the settlement (figure 7).

Chandigarh's residential sectors are planned with the V4 bazaar street running roughly east-west, and the green strip (V7 and V8) running north-south. Rutter (1971: 161) points out that Asante settlement planning is based on "a main street pattern whose axis east-west or north-south had religious significance", and that in smaller settlements "a simple pattern based on a single main street was sufficient" (1971: 162). This is once again the same as the arrangement inside a sector. Unlike Islamic cities, like Timbuktu and Djenné, that were enclaves, it is clear that Cissoko (1986: 16) was correct in stating that Kumasi extended into the countryside through the surrounding villages.

A typical superblock sector is approximately 1 200 by 800 metres, occupying 96ha, and is subdivided into neighbourhood-sized quarters of about 24ha each. Each has a looped internal street providing access to a finer grain of wards, quarters and estates, and can be considered the equivalent of an urban village in terms of contemporary urban design dogma. Duany and Plater-Zyberk (in Katz 1994: xvii) suggest that "a single neighbourhood standing free in the landscape is a village. Cities and towns are made up of multiple neighbourhoods and districts, organised by corridors of transportation or open space".

The as-built plan below (figure 7) was traced from a Google Earth satellite image. Many of the 13 residential unit designs by Le Corbusier's team are to be seen here, always as clusters

and row houses, and many around courtyards. Nevertheless, it does offer great functional and typological variety. The V4 shopping street has been discussed above, but on all edges except the northeast, there are shops, twelve hotels, taxi ranks, public service facilities, filling stations, and a fruit and vegetable market. Inside the sector there are no less than five schools, a nursery school, a veterinary hospital, a chest clinic, a poly clinic, four places of worship, and a cinema. There are 48 parks and greens spread throughout the sector. They occupy 19ha or 20% of the sector's area. The smallest is just 570m², the largest nearly four hectares and the average is 4 000m².

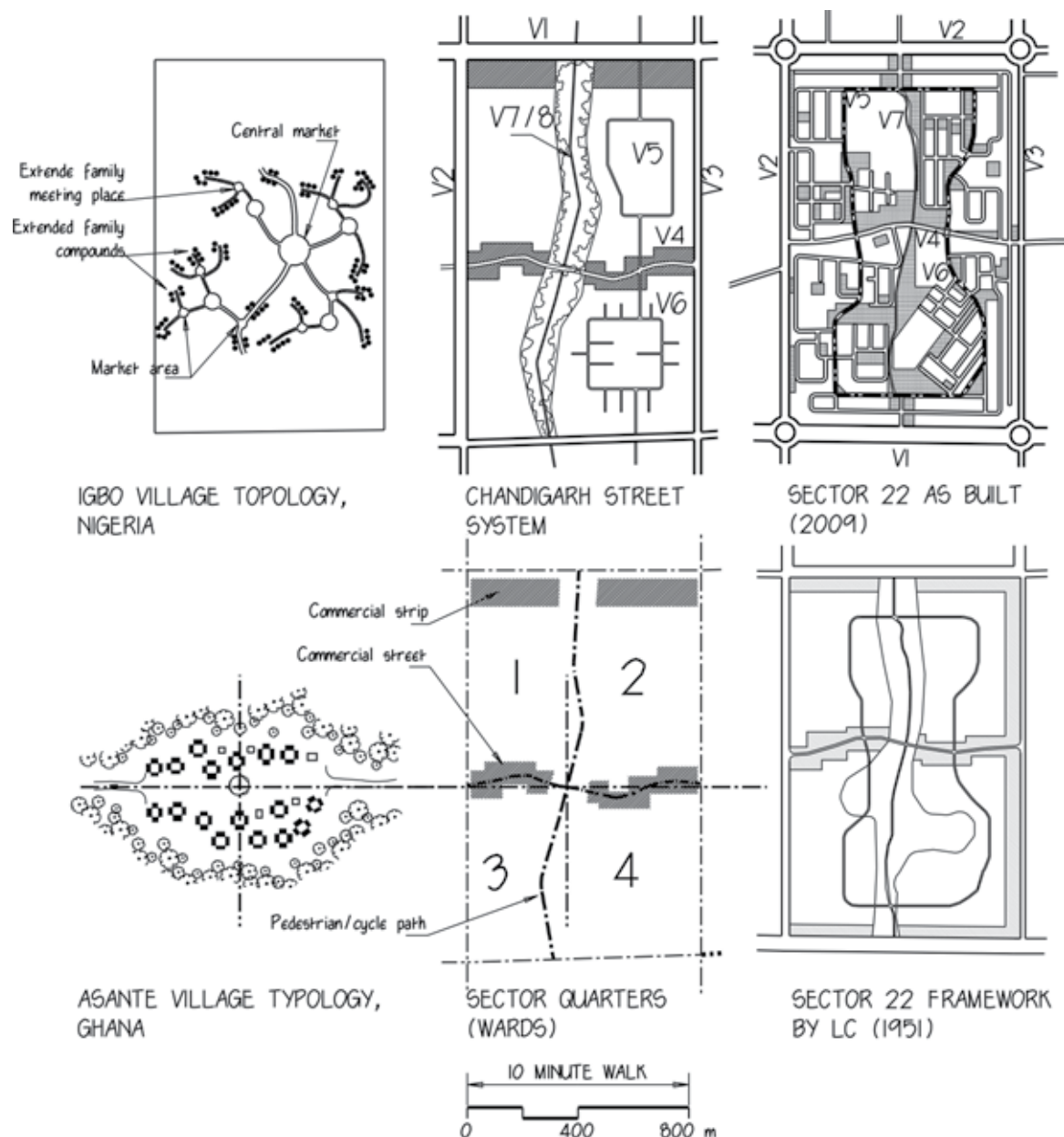
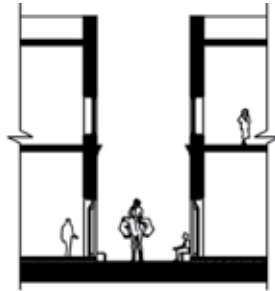


Figure 7
A hierarchy of roads, streets and lanes
(drawing by the author).

Léon Krier (1984: 70), who designed Poundbury for the Prince of Wales, and developed the Les Quartier (urban quarters) theory, proposes that “[a] beautiful centre is a necessity”. In a

residential sector, such as Sector 22, the V4 bazaar street is the centre (figure 8). Le Corbusier's comments on these V4 streets are informative (Besset 1992: 169):

V 4 channels off the city traffic from points of intense activity. V 4 is the road that gives its particular character to each sector of the city. Therefore each V 4 will be different from the others and equipped with specific characteristics, for it is indispensable to create an urban setting of great variety and to provide the inhabitants with the elements of classification. It is V 4 that will fulfil the traditional social functions of the street.



Typical Arab shopping street (suq)



Market street in Asante village, Ghana



Sector 22 Bazaar Street, Chandigarh

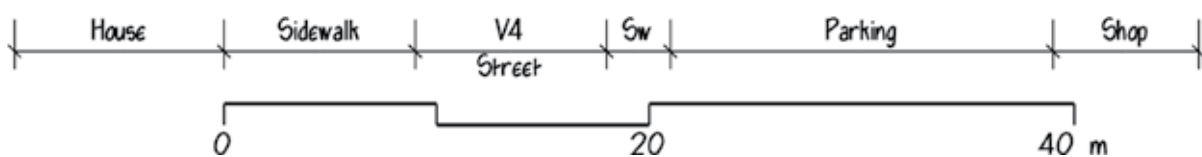


Figure 8
Street sections compared
(drawing by the author).

Community/compound scale – compounds

Coquery-Vidrovitch (2005: 195) states that Kumasi “gives us a picture of a very special kind of urban design. It combined the urban features of a city, divided into quarters and controlled by a very visible authority, with traditional African residences similar to those found everywhere else”. “Everywhere else” means not only the rectangular courtyards found in Kumasi’s rural hinterland, but also the courtyards of the Yoruba and Igbo to the east, in this case.

The courtyard assumes very special psychological, as well as territorial, functional and spiritual significance, in Kumasi. Kumasi is located in a dark, damp, rainy forest, described by Rutter (1971: 158) as a “dominant but gloomy environment”, with a stark contrast between the bright light of the streets and the “gloomy twilight of the Forest”. Rutter (1971: 158) states that a “strictly controlled man-made environment, for which the courtyard houses, grouped along a street in a brilliantly sunlit clearing, devoid of growing things except for a few shade trees, was a logical answer.” Blier (2012: 127) observes that “[i]nhabitants entered by a small door at the side. The interior space was divided into alternating areas of light and darkness as defined by courtyards, verandas, and rooms”.

Oliver Marc (1977: 116) suggests that “African villages are usually planned in a circle around a central area, a garden for everyone”, where the individual psyche prefers a communal rather than isolated setting. This characteristic is the logical result of a collectivist worldview, where the social obligations eclipse individual rights. But the value of the courtyard goes beyond the purely societal, to the metaphysical. Crouch and Johnson (2001: 272) declare that “[t]he courtyard in all its guises is one of the most satisfying of these gathering places”, and Norberg-Schulz (1985: 98) declares that it has served as the “inner world” of the private dwelling since ancient times. It is therefore clear that a courtyard has physical, as well as symbolic and psychological significance.

Rutter (1971: 154) observes that houses in market towns contain 15 to 20 people, but that there may be as many as 80 people in the large courtyard houses of Kumasi. There is a consistency of form that has been reported even by 19th century visitors; in rural villages, an extended family would occupy the whole house, but in Kumasi a number of rooms may be for letting (Rutter 1971: 171).

Sector 22 is primarily a residential area, and one of the first sectors to be built. Its 13 categories of dwelling units were intended for government employees of all ranks. Although Le Corbusier dictated the basic principles, mainly sunscreens, cross-ventilation, threshold areas and generous outdoor and rooftop living areas, he did not design a single house type in Chandigarh. Evidently Jane Drew, Maxwell Frey and Pierre Jeanneret produced most of the designs.

After work in Sector 22 commenced, a fourteenth residential category was designed by Jeanneret and an Indian architect, Malhotra. This category offered minimum standards for poor people, providing small row houses, each on a 62 square metres plot. Most were clustered, facing communal courtyards in such a way that “a group of 750 inhabitants forms a village” (Le Corbusier 1995, volume 5: 158). These seem to fuse the communal courtyard of the large compound houses of Kumasi, with the privacy of the private courtyards found in village houses (figure 9). In his inaugural address at a conference celebrating Chandigarh, the then president of India, Mr Narayanan (2002: 21) commented on the innovative nature of the “design and layout of these modest dwellings”. Only a few were built, but regrettably none survive, all having been replaced by improved housing (personal observation).

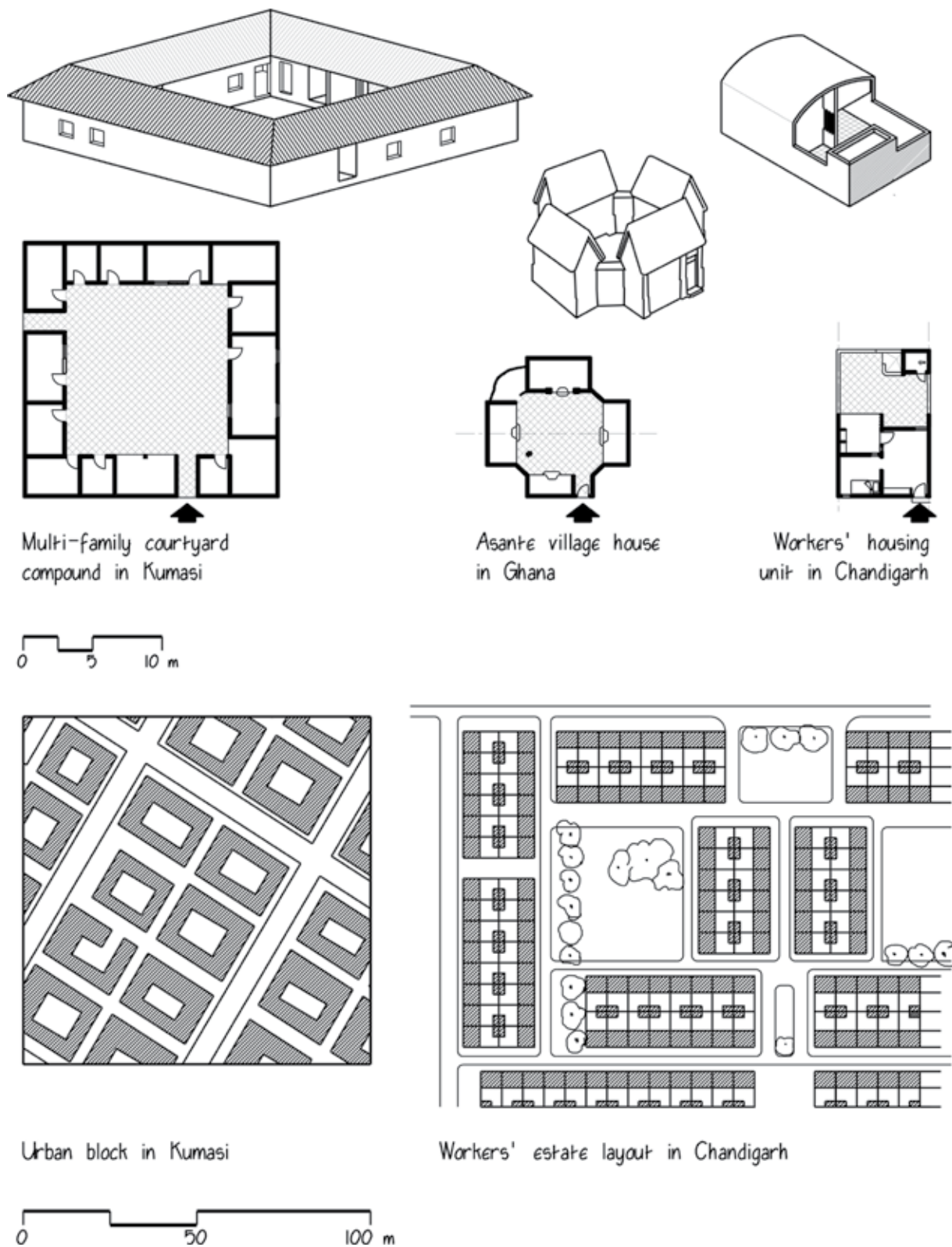


Figure 9
Kumasi urban blocks compared with workers' housing in Chandigarh
(drawing by the author).

Le Corbusier's African affinities and sources of information

Although Le Corbusier's first direct contact with black people only occurred when he visited South America in 1929 and the United States in 1935, his initial exposure to African culture evidently occurred when he settled in Paris, in 1917. Mardges Bacon (2001: 221) explains Le Corbusier embraced African art for its "geometrical, formal, mechanistic, decorative and expressive properties", under the influence of Amédée Ozenfant and Fernand Léger. The Paris intelligentsia at that time, generally shared an intense interest in West Africa. As Jaime Ferris (2010) explains: "The colonization [sic] of West Africa... resulted in a flood of African art into these countries at the end of the 19th century. This influx... led prominent artists of the period to collect and study these pieces themselves, and to incorporate some of the elements they saw into their own work."

Giedion (1977: 520) may probably have been somewhat puzzled when, in *Space, Time and Architecture* (first published in 1941) he commented that Le Corbusier cruised the Parisian museums looking at "primitive and prehistoric art – woven carpets and carved idols". "Puzzled" because pre World War II modernist architects looked to technology for inspiration, and certainly not to vernacular constructions in distant colonial lands.

Long before Ghana was subject to British colonial rule (1895 to 1957), enterprising visitors recorded their observations with maps, drawings and narratives in books that are still available today. Some include *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee* (Edward Bowdich 1819), *Journal of a Residence in Ashantee* (Joseph Dupuis 1824), and *Travels and Life in Ashanti and Jaman* (Richard Freeman 1898). Bowdich's map and drawings of Kumasi, produced before the British invasion of the city in 1874, are exceptionally informative (figure 10).

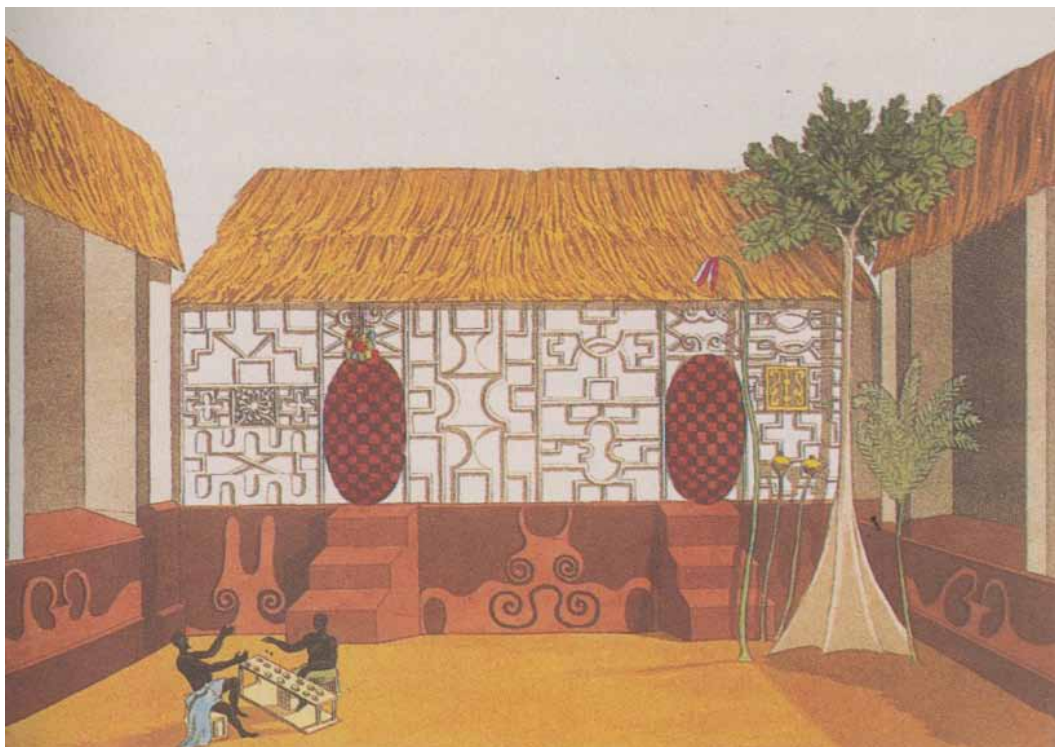


Figure 10
The king's private courtyard in Kumasi by Bowdich, 1817
(source: Blier 2012: 129).

When he organised an art exhibition for Louis Carré (who represented Léger) in 1935, a Greek statue, a large pebble, and a 16th century bronze head from Benin were prominently displayed. Later that year, in New York, he visited galleries with “bronzes and ivories from Benin” (Bacon 2001: 222). Bacon (2001: 221-8) elaborates extensively on Le Corbusier’s admiration for all forms of African art and intense empathy for black people and their indomitable spirit.

During his frequent trips to Algeria from 1929 to 1942, he was obviously very impressed by both the Kasbah in Algiers, and the ksar of Beni Izguen in the M’zab (in present day Mauritania), which he visited in 1930. He wrote glowingly about both in his 1933 book, *La Villa Radieuse* (The English version entitled *The Radiant City* was released in 1964), and started implementing lessons learned almost immediately in a number of buildings that are all a radical departure from the smooth, white, light, floating and transparent forms that he had produced up to that point. Some became visibly vernacular, rougher and earthier, as exemplified by the Weekend House in Paris and the holiday home at Mathes (1935). After World War II, he also applied North-African urban principles to the designs of the residential estates of La Sainte-Baume, on the Côte d’Azur (1948), and Rob et Roq at Cap Martin (1949), where he clearly wanted to emulate the dense, compact carpet morphology. Le Corbusier certainly did not derive the rough textures and natural colours that he applied so regularly after World War II, from the Asante. There, surfaces were of coloured and polished clay (Blair (2012: 127).

Artefacts and the spatial organisation found in sub-Saharan settlements seem to have been intrinsic to, and had generative aspects of Le Corbusier’s purist theories, exemplified in the Five Points and Four Compositional Systems [referred to in my article, prompted by Mitchell’s (2003: 263) reference to the “Picasso-Cubist inspired architecture of Le Corbusier”, entitled “The manifestations of African Art in Le Corbusier’s Architecture” (Steyn 2013: 133-155)]. Le Corbusier’s proposal for Bogotá in 1950 is unquestionably evidence of a drastically different approach. My contention is that at this stage he realised that just as West Africa could inform unique architectural ideas (his purist theory), so the region could inform contemporary urban solutions. And just as he concealed his West African conspectus from his peers, so did he hide Ghana, and specifically Kumasi, as sources of conceptual ideas. It was while he was shaping his new urban theories that he – absentmindedly I believe – made a cross where his secret inspiration was located, while contemplating comments on regionalism (Le Corbusier 1947: 97).

It is perhaps pure coincidence that in 1947, Fry and Drew produced their book entitled *Village Housing in the Tropics*. The husband-and-wife team worked in West Africa from 1944 until they joined Le Corbusier in India in 1951 for three years, after which they returned to Ghana until 1956 (Folkers 2010: 51, 163). Later, they also wrote the seminal *Tropical Architecture in the Dry and Humid Zones* (1964). Since they studied vernacular patterns, it is not inconceivable that they shared their expertise with Le Corbusier who, as we know, considered the Indian climate quite a challenge, to the point where he invented the Climatic Grid to be able to respond adequately. Figure 11 clearly demonstrates Fry and Drew’s understanding of wards as constituent social and territorial entities, as well as the need for pedestrian pathways and market streets, as essential elements in settlement planning in that part of the world.

Hannah le Roux (2003: 353) discovered that:

The designs for Opukuware, Mawuli and Prempeh colleges in the Gold Coast in the 1950s by Fry, Drew and Partners exemplified many of the principles for tropical buildings. The windows and passages were roughly oriented towards the south and north and shaded with louvres or breezeblocks, while the short east and west elevations were blank walls.

These are exactly the patterns applied to nearly all buildings in Chandigarh.

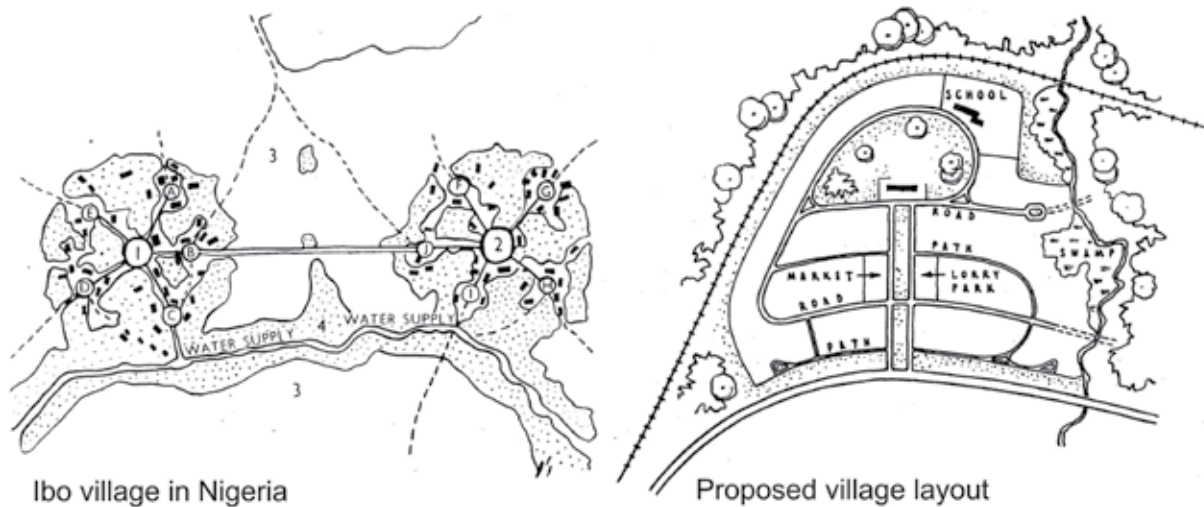


Figure 11
An Ibo village showing the ward system, and a proposed village layout in Nigeria
(source: Fry and Drew 1947: 56, 66).

Chandigarh's formative concept – separating cars and pedestrians

Until Le Corbusier's unsuccessful proposal for Bogotá – which he claims was the precedent for Chandigarh – the shape of his pedestrian networks have always been geometrically regulated. Of Bogotá he writes that he reconfigured the Spanish squares to accommodate traffic (1958: 210), but what is more significant is the fact that the pedestrian realm is now organic for the first time, and comprises not only pathways, but also greens in an integrated manner. The north-south and east-west axes are similar to those found in vernacular Asante villages. For Bogotá this pedestrian realm was overlaid with the quintessential colonial gridiron, of which the bastide plan of New Orleans is typical (figure 12).

Clarence Stein hoped that the principles he had devised for Radburn would be applied to Chandigarh as a whole (Beinart 2002: 146). On the one hand, Radburn is undoubtedly an infinitely better suburban environment than the car-dominated dispensation currently still being constructed, although the pedestrian and cycle paths are clearly a subordinate structure, consisting of footpaths between properties and some left-over spaces in the middle of some superblocks. At Chandigarh, on the other hand, the pedestrian realm is a dominant, essentially self-contained urban environment.

In an African setting, or any developing country where car ownership is low, having an arrangement where cars and pedestrians share streets is not ideal. Most cities in sub-Saharan Africa are evidence of how pedestrians, hawkers and the various forms of public transport (buses, minibuses and scooter taxis) compete for the streets and sidewalks. Unsurprisingly, taxi drivers drive fast and usually quite reckless in order to deliver their passengers as quickly as possible, and then pick up new ones. The result is that even crossing a street in central city areas is dangerous. For that reason, the separation of pedestrians from vehicular traffic and the allowance of only controlled interfaces are non-negotiable prerequisites for successful African urban forms.

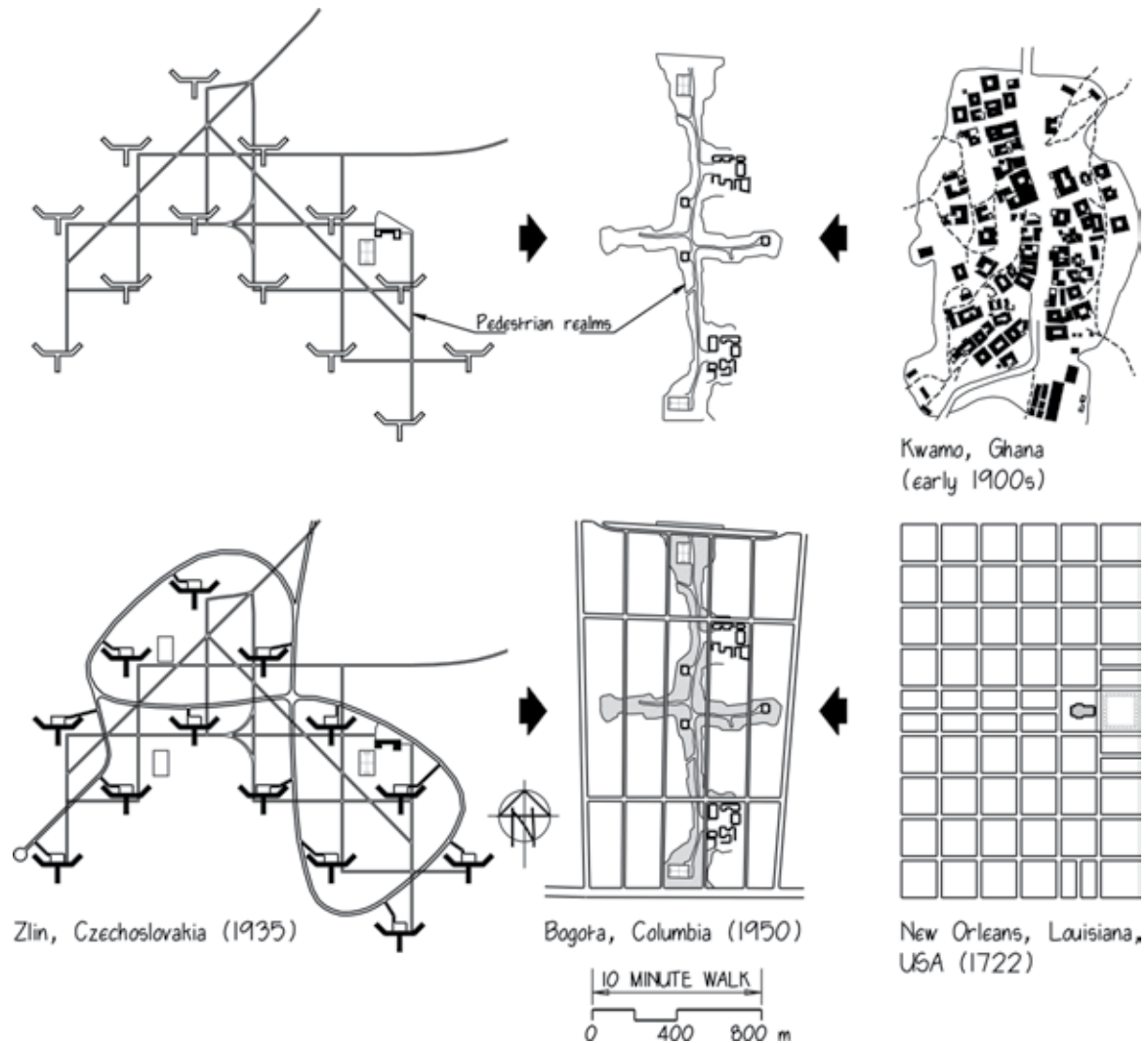


Figure 12
Impacts on the form of the Bogotá plan
(drawing by the author).

Relevance to contemporary theory

Like all residential sectors in Chandigarh, Sector 22, with its convenient pedestrian and cycle friendly setting, safe interface with public transport, abundant public spaces, and full range of amenities for education, commerce, health care and entertainment, satisfies the requirements for a mixed-use urban village as specified by the Charter of the New Urbanism of 1999 (UDA 2003), in all respects. However, despite of all these desirable attributes, Chandigarh is bound to be contentious, simply because it is so different from the Western perception of a city.

Chandigarh has been widely misunderstood. Even well known American architect and author, and one of the most astute contemporary analysts of the built environment, Christopher Alexander (1966), classified it as a tree, without the semi-lattice structure associated with “good” cities with overlapping, interdependent neighbourhoods. Also, when all of Chandigarh’s urban elements are considered, and especially when one of its sectors is scrutinised, a complex composition and layering of geometries and extensive connectivity, as well as a host of patterns for good towns, as listed in *A Pattern Language* (Alexander, Ishikawa & Silverstein 1977), can be readily identified. The main vehicular grid certainly looks sterile and simplistic, but with

the roads configured for different types of traffic, Charles Jencks (2000: 287) suggested that “it might become the first coherent and safe motorway city of the [twenty-first] century”.

Richard Hull (1976: 46) insists that “the rural character of [traditional African] towns was enhanced by a remarkably efficient use of space within enclosed communities”. He also remarks that “precolonial [sic] African towns and cities minimized urbanism and the feeling of congestion while making maximum use of urban space” (Hull 1976: 48). This is exactly what Le Corbusier managed to achieve. Sidney Brower (2000: 59), author of the thoroughly researched *Good Neighbourhoods: A study of In-Town and Suburban Residential Environments*, recognises “Le Corbusier’s ideas for building country-like settings in the city”.

Considering that the small village is the norm in Asante society (Rutter 1971: 158), Le Corbusier’s solution was ingenious: he filled in the supergrid with villages, each relatively self-contained, complete with its own shopping street and wards, as well as replicating the hierarchical access and spatial network.

Legacy and lessons learned

Figure 13 shows the current extent of the city. It has evidently been expanding incrementally and logically sector-wise, in a south-westerly direction. The Nowicki-Mayer master plan was eventually built as a satellite new town called Panchkula, to the south-east. Chandigarh currently occupies an area of 114km², and has a population of approximately one million, yielding an overall density of 8 400 people per km². To contextualise: London’s population density is 5 650 people per km², and the Tshwane Metropolitan Area (where I live) has only 940 people per km². Whereas London is known as a compact city, Tshwane is notorious for its sprawl, social and economic fragmentation, and low population densities. Some critics still criticise Chandigarh for not being Indian, probably because they expect the frenzied ambience of Old Delhi. Critics seem to be unaware of the tremendous pride its citizenry has in the place, and certainly do not realise that it is coping better than most with rapid growth.



Figure 13
Chandigarh today, with Panchkula to the south-east
(drawing by the author).

The need to enhance African built environment scholarship

Architects and town planners have been equally reluctant to recognise the existence of the indigenous material cultures that shaped the built environment (pre-colonial African architecture and urban entities), never mind the idea that they may have influenced the most innovative city form of the 20th century. The City in History (Lewis Mumford 1961), Design of Cities (Edmund Bacon 1967) and History of Urbanisation before the Industrial Revolution (Morris 1994), the seminal works on the history of urbanisation, say nothing about Africa.

Hull (1976: xiii) reiterates an emotion echoed many a time in literature: “A popular misconception about Africa is that blacks did not build towns”. To which Coquery-Vidrovitch (2005: 318) adds: “[T]he richness of the history of urban Africa has been, if not ignored, at least very neglected until recently”.

During the 18th and early 19th century, travellers produced more accurate settlement studies than their successors in colonial administrations, according to Paul Oliver (1971: 11) who is also adamant that “[i]n spite of the growing sophistication of research techniques in the twentieth century there has been no substantial advance in the study of African shelter types; rather, there has been a regression.” It is now 40 years after Hull’s grievance, and nothing has changed.

Although neglected, pre-colonial African urban entities were very complex and sophisticated conceptions. Coquery-Vidrovitch (2005: 318) emphasises that “[i]n both space and time, African cities were not physical constructions but spatial and social dynamics that were constantly changing”.

Conclusion

Since there is a lack of tangible evidence, it is impossible to prove beyond any doubt that Le Corbusier purposefully used West-African settlement characteristics as precedents. However, the typological similarities are remarkable, and it seems that his concepts evolved quite logically from the West-African patterns discussed.

Villa Savoye (1930) signaled the end of Le Corbusier’s use of smooth, white forms. After that he would increasingly draw ideas from the rougher, regional Mediterranean vernacular. He was not terribly pedantic in his regionalist ideology; concepts from North Africa were wilfully applied on the French Coast at La Sainte-Baume and Rob and Roq (1948 and 1949 respectively). He had no qualms with transporting the concepts to a different setting either, for example Weekend House in Paris (1935), and Houses Jaoul at Neuilly-sur-Seine (1954).

My speculative argument is that, confronted with what was essentially an empty landscape at the site selected for Chandigarh, and having to respond to a demand for a modern city, Le Corbusier reverted to the source of ideas that informed his modernistic purist theories in the first place; the art and artefacts of West Africa. In the process, he wrote the rules for a truly modern city (based on humanistic parameters), that preceded the Alexandrine, and subsequently the New Urbanist doctrines, by decades. It is a pity that the built environment professions are as blindly critical of Chandigarh’s significance as an urban prototype, and so completely indifferent to Christopher Alexander’s theories. The New Urbanism has been redefined as a model for exclusive enclaves for wealthy communities. Meanwhile, most cities of sub-Saharan Africa

remain patently dysfunctional environments, with the poor still confined to marginal townships out of sight and far removed from employment opportunities.

The concept for low-cost housing in Sector 22 is inspiring, especially when compared with the bland little boxes that are being built for the low-income people of South Africa. Hopefully the Corbusian urban concepts that were so pragmatically developed along a trajectory from pre-colonial Kumasi to Chandigarh can be holistically extrapolated into the present, and maybe into the future, to provide African populations in particular with humane and sustainable cities.

The Chief Architect, prompted by a range of stakeholders, was preparing the application for the inclusion of Chandigarh in the UNESCO World Heritage Site listing, at the time of writing this article (July 2013).

Note

Melvin Mitchell, a practicing architect in Washington, D.C., is the former Director of the School of Architecture & Planning at Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD. He is currently adjunct professor of Architecture at the University of the District of Columbia. He agreed to share his views with me once

I have recorded mine. He responded as follows: "I am elated at how you have taken my several un-researched but deeply felt observations and then proceeded to do the hard scholarly work Bravo!"

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Méliès' moon is a late 19th-century colonial moon ... "my lunar landscape is just outside Johannesburg"

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Although the contemporary South-African artist William Kentridge has practised his creativity in many domains (as observer, activist, artist, storyteller and thinking director) in a wide range of media (including land art, sculpture, etchings, video installations, shadow plays, stage, theatre and opera productions), it is chiefly his large charcoal drawings in process (*Drawings for Animation*) and his unique, short, handmade, animated films and their projection that have given him international fame and added to his dynamic stature. The question is how technological media underwent a process of retrospective alienation in William Kentridge's animation processes. The development of Kentridge's large wall drawings to drawings for Animation and projection is discussed, while mark making, montage and editing within the greater filmic whole are emphasised. Although Kentridge uses Méliès' idea of a trip to the moon and a moon landing, he transfers the voyage to the moon and the lunar landscape to the Highveld landscape that is known to him.

Key words: William Kentridge, performance, theatre, multimedia, animation, *Drawings for Animation*, *Drawings for Projection*, Georges Méliès

Méliès se maan is 'n laat 19de-eeuse koloniale maan ... "my maanlandskap is net buite Johannesburg"

Alhoewel William Kentridge as kontemporêre Suid-Afrikaanse kunstenaar uiting aan sy kreatiwiteit op verskillende maniere gegee het (as waarnemer, aktivis, kunstenaar, storieverteller en denkende regisseur) in 'n wye verskeidenheid media (waaronder landkuns, beeldhou, etse, video installasies, skaduspel, en verskeie verhoog-, teater-en operaproduksie (*performance*)), is dit veral sy groot, performatiewe houtskooltekeninge (*Drawings for Animation*) en sy unieke kort, handgemaakte animasiefilms en die projeksie daarvan, wat hom internasionale erkenning besorg het. Dit het die vraag laat ontstaan hoe tegnologiese media 'n proses van retrospektiewe vervreemding in William Kentridge se animasieprosesse ondergaan het. Die ontwikkeling van Kentridge se groot muurtekeninge tot tekeninge vir animasie en projeksie word ondersoek, wyl merkmaking, montage en die redigering daarvan binne die groter filmiese geheel beklemtoon word. Alhoewel Kentridge Méliès se idee van 'n reis na die maan en 'n maanlanding gebruik, verplaas hy die ruimtereis en die maanlandskap na 'n landskap buite Johannesburg wat aan hom bekend is.

Sleutelwoorde: William Kentridge, *performance*, teater, multimedia, animasie, *Drawings for Animation*, *Drawings for Projection*, Georges Méliès

This article examines how early film-pioneers, August and Louis Lumière and Georges Méliès left their mark on Kentridge work. It was especially Méliès's *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (1902) that encouraged Kentridge a hundred years later to make his commemorative animation films, *Journey to the Moon* and *Seven Fragments for Georges Méliès* (2003), in which he too uses stop motion photography, unpretentious story lines and visual tricks. Kentridge links his filmic themes and subjects to the work and themes of early twentieth-century filmmakers such as Dziga Vertov, Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, and comments on them in this way. It was their interest in the machine, the Kino-eye and film as a product for the masses that influenced Kentridge's oeuvre.

In his *Drawings for Projection* and his stage productions Kentridge incorporated a wide variety of old and new media, drawings, graphic prints, and ragged waste paper. He filmed and photographed these bits and pieces repeatedly, used these with some mechanical constructed figurines, added miniature theatre models which he displayed on tables and other surfaces, and projected some experimental footage on an old school blackboard, or used front and rear projections on miniature theatres. The completed animated film as a work of art is used in stage productions (theatre/opera) and in performances as both decor element and narrator, and provides the audience or spectators with a unique experience to be decoded and enjoyed. In his double-portrait film installation, *Balancing Act* (2003), Kentridge experiments with illusory filmic images and the reality of the film as he moves in and out of paintings.

Many contemporary artists and filmmakers make use of technology and other methods to engage with entertainment, leisure and pastime options, for example the magic lantern, film, television, projection, puppets and the automaton.² Horkheimer and Adorno (2002: 109), however, totally reject this critical aspect of enjoyment, seduction and distraction, scattering and enjoyment/entertainment (art as *divertissement*)³ because it is not only the opposite of art, but its complementary extreme (Horkheimer & Adorno 2002: 113). According to them, “[a]musement congeals into boredom [...] well-worn grooves of association” because the viewer needs no preconceived ideas of himself, because the product determines the response. Moreover, they state that “Amusement itself becomes an ideal, taking the place of the higher values it eradicates from the masses by repeating them” (Horkheimer & Adorno 2002: 115).

Michael Fried (2009: 12) compares and visualises the concept of theatricality to the cinematic experience in the book *Why photography matters as art as never before*. He claims that large fragmented, projected film images “are the shards of the outmoded thespians.” The viewer is therefore presented as a part of society shaped by the communal process of continuous exposure and proliferation of these images. He continues, “The audience is not watching the product of the action of a machine; [...] it knows it through the labor or trying to forget it [...] Cinematic spectatorship is a somnambulistic approach towards utopia.”

In his introduction to Mieke Bal’s *Looking in: the Art of Viewing* (2001: 1) Norman Bryson questions the origin, formation, meaning and causality of the artwork. According to him, Bal’s art of the past lies undeniably in the present, “the present life or images is part of their on-going history” and each viewer brings his own frame of reference and codes by which the work will be seen and interpreted (Bal 2001: 2-3). Bryson (2001: 4) stresses the fact that the viewer cannot fully interpret the work of art by only seeing it once and concludes that in this respect “her writing goes against the goal most art historians believe they are pursuing.”

Photography and the motion picture camera

When the word “photography” is translated from Greek, it literally means to draw with light and shadow. By means of photography a focused, projected, chemical-fixated and chemical-developed shadow is captured, i.e. a mechanical image of some object(s) is captured on photographic paper in the space in front of the camera.

James Gibson (1980: xi-xviii) joined the image of the *camera obscura* and the *camera lucida* and identified ten variations/image concepts from it. Gibson makes a clear distinction between a camera image and the photographic camera image. He describes the camera image (*camera obscura*) as the picture that is projected through the pinhole on the inside surface of a

dark room or a reflection on the opposite wall. According to Gibson (1980: xvi), this projected image is often classified as the arrested image when it is in fact much more progressive. Gibson (1980: xvi) describes the photographic camera image (*camera lucida*) as an image captured (arrested) by a complex process that includes the camera shutter, the film emulsion, a latent image on the film emulsion, a negative image on the film and a positive image on another surface. The photographic image is thus caught while the camera shutter is open.

According to David Company (2008: 7), although photography has existed for about sixty years, the film was indeed a new development. According to Laurent Mannoni's article, "The art of deception", film was established in 1895 when the first public film projections in Europe and the United States occurred (Mannoni 2004: 41).⁴ Throughout 1895 the Lumière brothers displayed⁵ their films at private performances. On 22 March 1895 the Lumières screened their first film, *Sortie des Usines Lumière à Lyon*,⁶ for a small, private audience. Their first public performance for a paying audience followed on December 28, 1895 in the Salon Indien, Grand Café, Boulevard des Capucines, Paris. When the realistic film images of a fast moving train were projected on the theatre screen, pandemonium broke out in the room as the naive audience was frightened and they started screaming and running around – thus the cinema was born! This filmic breakthrough immediately gave the Lumières the status as inventors of the cinema; the novelty did not last long: the spectators were looking for films with an underlying story – and this is where Georges Méliès played an important role.

Georges Méliès

The word "cinema" has its roots in the Greek word for movement, namely "kinetics". It can refer to film and films (cinematography) or a movie theatre or cinema. A film can be described as a series of still images that are recorded in sequence and projected by means of a cinematic projector to display an action, event or movement.

After Méliès attended the Lumière brothers' public Cinématographe film projection on 28 December 1895 in Paris, he realised the new illusionistic possibilities that the Lumière *Cinématographe* could offer his theatre. He approached the Lumières with an offer to purchase the Cinématographe, but they refused to sell it.

Three months later, Méliès bought an early *Animatographe* projector from Robert W. Paul⁷ in London. With the assistance of his engineer friend, Lucien Reulos, they modified the projector into a film camera with which he could film special film effects like disappearances and metamorphoses: objects and people were for one moment visible on the screen and the next moment they disappeared altogether; or some characters magically flew through the air or metamorphosed into other objects. Méliès specialised in optical tricks to easily make everyday objects such as furniture, tools, paintings and other objects appear or disappear.

The spectator/audience and reception

According to Butler et al. (2009: 194), drawing was exalted in the early 1990s from a less popular art form to an important contemporary art form with expanded meaning, subjectivities and innovation as subscribed in a new globalised world. William Kentridge's geopolitical signed *Drawings for Projection* films reflect the narrative timelines, his unique and structured drawing activities which he also captured on film. According to Butler et al. (2009: 195), Kentridge's

drawings dating from the 1990s already “seemed to map a space of embodied consciousness”, while the story is being revealed. Kentridge reversed the drawing process by using his eraser to erase parts of the drawings and making new drawings between and within frames (redrawing). Kentridge as director integrated the visual, auditory and theatrical movement elements within the stage production as a central metaphor that the spectator/audience could perceive and interpret in order to understand the underlying narrative.

As an artist and director, Kentridge communicates his message through the visual and auditory work of art (his stage production and film) – the sets and screens he presents to his audience on the stage. Through his filmic animations Kentridge portrays widely differing emotions, such as anxiety (e.g. when *Felix Teitlebaum’s anxiety fills the house* in *Johannesburg* (1989), fear (e.g. ironic logo in his work, *Arc/Procession: develop, catch up, even surpass* (1990), hope (Kentridge uses for example Tatlin’s iconic *Monument to the Third International* as a symbol of hope (McCrickard 2012: 34)), happiness (for example, when Felix Teitlebaum and Mrs Eckstein lie in a pool of water in *Sobriety, obesity and growing old* (1991)) and trust (e.g. the miniature pet rhino in *Mine* (1991)) in the portrayal of his production. His underlying message is devoted to social, cultural and historical values.

A number of basic components are involved in the audience’s reception of the work of art, namely their participation, the appropriation of the performance (*Aneignung*) and the completion of the theatrical performance by the participation of the audience. Secondly, there is the social component of reception. Kentridge’s audience consists of gallery visitors who see and experience his multimedia artworks, his *Drawings for Projection* drawings, the miniature theatre models, and grand multimedia productions and performances. Kentridge involves his audience/fans through his multimedia works of art – see, for example, his *Phenakistoscope* (2000), when the handle of his phenakistoscope is turned, the central mounted disc decorated with sequential drawings turns and it seems to the viewer as if the figures on it would move. In his theatre model, *Preparing the Flute* (2005), Kentridge displays his passion for live theatre and film, mechanical objects (automata) in motion, *Drawings for Animation*, archival photographs and documentary material. This work reflects Kentridge’s passion for bringing the theatre to the studio (Rosenthal 2009: 54) and “it also represents a novel variation on the installation or large-scale art manifestation, wherein the viewer is immersed in a theatrical experience within the museum milieu.”

Kentridge brings this fully machine-operated theatre model to the gallery space, art fairs, biennials and museums. He exhibits this multimedia theatre in the centre of the gallery space with his *Drawings for Projection* artworks hung on the walls. He places rows and rows of chairs (as in a conventional theatre) where visitors to the exhibition space can sit and experience the theatre production and become part of the larger gallery-cum-theatre experience. The third component of reception coincides with the historical experience of reception. At Documenta 13 Kentridge displayed his latest filmic multimedia procession entitled, *The Refusal of time* (2012) in the Hauptbahnhof.⁸ When the public sit and watch a Kentridge theatre production, they are in the process agitated and provoked, while their social-emotional experience and judgement are led by the imagined virtual reality to the fictional realities of the artist/producer (to an imaginary world).

In Méliès’s film, *Le portrait mystérieux* (1899), a man (Méliès himself) walks behind a large, empty gilded picture frame, then in front of it, then behind it again, before he climbs through it to prove that this is empty indeed.⁹ When the empty backdrop sheet with a painted landscape is rolled up, a (painted) castle becomes visible. The man then picks up a canvas and

fits it securely in the frame and puts a chair in front of the canvas, which is still within the frame. The same man takes a seat on the chair outside the picture frame. While he stares at the painting, it gradually becomes hazy before it gradually intensifies again. The same man now sits on a chair in the new painting. The two similar men communicate (gestures and responses) with each other and it even seems as if they share a joke. Thereafter the portrait becomes hazy and the empty chair stands in the empty landscape once again (film ends). By using these special effects, Méliès stands out as a highly professional stage illusionist.

In essence, the viewer is confronted with the superimposition technique whereby the mysterious double portrait becomes alive and converses with Méliès himself (a film within a film). In this short film Méliès clearly portrays the filmic transition between the painted landscape and the living portrait. Instead of using a quick cut, he rather brings the filmic image within the frame slowly into focus, while the frame, background and actual Méliès remain in focus.

Just as Méliès in *Le portrait mystérieux* (1899) (figure 1), Kentridge uses double photographic images of himself in his studio for his ambiguous animation movies like *Balancing Act* (2003), *Seven Fragments for Georges Méliès* (2003) and *Carnets d’Egypte: Acquire* (2010) (figure 2). In the Musée du Louvre’s book, *William Kentridge: Carnets d’Egypte*, Kentridge writes (2010a: 55-56) that he always took his sketchbook along when visiting museums such as the Louvre. He would make written notes rather than drawings: “What drawings there are, are diagrams, rather than renderings ... my drawings and sketchbooks are rather drawings of sketchbooks, or the idea of traveller’s notes. The real sketchbook is the video camera” (Musée du Louvre 2010: 56). In his double portrait works of art Kentridge divides the screen into different invisible parts where two or three selves can act on the same screen (figure 2).



Figure 1

Still image from Méliès’ film, *Le portrait mystérieux*, 1899, 2”0’

(source: <http://www.dvdclassik.com/test/dvd-georges-melies-a-la-conquete-du-cinematographe-studio-canal-livre-3dvd>).



Figure 2
Double portrait of Kentridge working in his Johannesburg studio – a still image from his film, *Carnets d’Egypte: Acquire 4’34”* (Drawing Lesson 40) 2010, 4’34”
 (source: copied by the author).

With his video camera as sketchbook Kentridge made his drawings, amended and re-photographed the drawings until he was satisfied with the end product – see for example his film, *Carnets d’Egypte: Isis Tragedy* (6’05”) and *Drawing Lesson 30* (2010) in which four performing artists are portrayed: two euphonium players (both Kentridge) – one of these musicians also delivers spoken and sound contributions, while the other tempers the sounds of his tuba with a rubber drain plunger; while the next actor (also Kentridge) delivers monologues and makes different sounds;¹⁰ and a moving megaphone on a tripod sings soprano.¹¹ Although the title refers to a “drawing lesson”, it is not a traditional drawing or drawing lesson that is offered, but rather a drawing made with audio and visual performance images. The different sounds and voices are recorded separately and thereafter joined by means of collage and editing (Kentridge 2010a: 60). In his film, *Carnets d’Egypte: Nubian Landscape* (2’42”) (2010), Kentridge performs by experimenting with the sounds of five metronomes – each set to their own beat while they add to the central sound composition.

Kentridge’s Seven Fragments for Georges Méliès

In his art film installation series, *Seven Fragments for Georges Méliès*, Kentridge uses the double portrait technique as used in the *Balancing Act* double portrait. In this film installation series Kentridge acts as magician/artist at work by collecting objects around him and making drawings while walking around in his studio, waiting for something to happen (McCrickard 2012: 65). Kentridge is portrayed as a gloomy and ubiquitous actor in front of a wall with changing drawings in his studio – during his performance he draws and meditates for a few moments, while walking backwards like Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times* (1936), and putting pieces of torn drawings together in order for them to metamorphose into an original drawing (telekinesis/ambiguity).

Throughout his career Kentridge has engaged in different kinds of productions (animations, short films, movies, videos, plays, puppet theatre, opera, installations, performances, and multimedia performances) to convey his narrative. Kentridge, however, hides his narrative from the visual surface in order for the spectators to discover, experience and decode. Because of their participation in the Kentridge production, the spectators feel that they are inherently part of the filmic and theatrical presentation of such reality while sitting in the audience, experiencing and enjoying the stage production.

Repeatability and repetition are features of all performing arts and can be compared with “performativity” and “reproduction”. By means of the film medium the filmic recorded reality may be experienced and enjoyed by the spectators. Decoding runs continuously throughout the production as part of the appropriation of reception. Each member of the audience may therefore have another interpretation of the theatrical events. According to Scheub (1998: 04), the diversity of the different interpretations of the story lie in the harmonisation of the “idiosyncratic experiences and histories of the members of the audience; it occurs within the context of the audience’s emotions.” Consequently every member of the audience will have another meaning or a different explanation for what is presented visually, whether by film screenings or stage productions.

With the invention of the motion picture camera, film and the projector, a new set of visual rules was established when filming and interpreting everyday events. Social changes occurred in combination with technical devices such as the camera, film, and projector (for example, new distribution channels, theatre spaces and public spaces) away from the individual onlooker and a work of art in a museum. Together this became the new medium. Film, as a new medium, divided what was invisible to the naked eye into the fatal distinction between popular mass entertainment within the theatre space and an elitist avant-garde that embraced revolutionary pretension. When the filmed images were projected on a screen, they left a tremendous impact on the viewer or viewers and some images would be remembered long after being projected, whilst others might rapidly disappear into oblivion.



Figure 3

Left: Still image from Méliès’ 19th-century colonial moon from his film, *Le voyage dans la Lune* (source: copied by the author).

Right: The moon above the Kentridge’s *Highveld Lunar Landscape* (source: copied by the author).

Méliès' *Le voyage dans la Lune* versus Kentridge's *Journey to the Moon*

In 1902, Méliès made his first successful epic science fiction film, *Le Voyage dans la Lune*.¹² In this film Méliès combines the underlying narrative with elements of fantasy and humour, for example when the rocket spacecraft hits the right eye of the man in the moon, which subsequently sheds a tear.

Kentridge's film, *Journey to the Moon* (2003), refers to the French director and cineaste, Georges Méliès's masterpiece, *Le voyage dans la Lune* (1902). In Kentridge's tribute the artist drinks coffee in his studio, while he makes drawings of a naked woman and the moon in his sketchbook. Suddenly the espresso cup transforms itself into a telescope with which the artist gazes at the stars. Then the coffee pot transforms itself into a spacecraft that takes off and collides with the lunar landscape. This lunar landscape conjures up images of the African landscape that are so much part of Kentridge's visual experience (figure 4).

Although the cameras of both Méliès and Kentridge are static, as he films his images, Méliès incorporates filmic tricks such as "dissolves", "disappearances" and "metamorphoses" in order to make his film visually interesting for the spectators. Apparently, Méliès's camera became stuck one day when he was shooting a horse cart. When Méliès's film started rolling again, the later movements of the horse were filmed directly after where it stopped. Once the film was developed, Méliès experienced the magical leap between first and last scenes, which became known as stop-motion photography.¹³ Because Méliès stopped his film at calculated moments in time to make amendments and changes before continuing to film, he accomplished clear illusions of movement and metamorphosis. Méliès' stop-motion technique can thus be seen as an important precursor of animation.

In his *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (1902) Méliès metamorphosed a telescope into a chair, while creatures from the moon disappear phantasmatically in a cloud of smoke. Paul Wells (Nelmes 2003: 214) claims that this film brought Méliès international fame:

Animation can defy the laws of gravity, contest our perceived view of space and time, and endow lifeless things with dynamic vibrant properties. In short, animation can change the world and create magical effects, but most importantly, it can interrogate previous representations of 'reality' and reinterpret how 'reality' might be understood – a point well understood by pioneer film-makers such as Georges Méliès, and early animators, [...] Emile Cohl.

A hundred years later, Kentridge too uses stop-motion photography, simple storylines and spectacular stunts which make objects appear, disappear or transform into completely new objects in commemorative animation films, such as *Journey to the Moon*, *Seven Fragments for Georges Méliès* (2003), and *Day for night* (2003). Méliès was also honoured in the recent Martin Scorsese film, *Hugo* (2011).

For his film, *Seven Fragments for Georges Méliès*, Kentridge was inspired by the creative films of artists such as Bruce Nauman¹⁴ who made their films in their studios, the photographs of Hans Namuth, the films of Jackson Pollock's action painting, and the experimental films of Georges Méliès. Like these artists, Kentridge uses his body in "improvising actions within the studio context" (Rosenthal 2009: 53). According to Butler et al. (2009: 201), Kentridge was especially inspired by Nauman's early films, where he moved backwards and forwards in his studio¹⁵ (just like the Méliès films with their painted backdrops). While Nauman moves restlessly in his studio "as waiting for an idea to come to him", Kentridge portrays himself as quiet and comfortable while drawing, giving a talk or conversing, just talking, lying down, acting, moving and performing while he visualises time (Rosenthal 2009: 201).

In his essay, “William Kentridge: portrait of the artist”, Mark Rosenthal (2009: 53) argues that while Kentridge made his films *Seven Fragments*, *Journey to the Moon* and *Day for Night*, he made a dramatic move by portraying himself at work in his studio. Kentridge took upon himself the identity of cinematic author by referring to the work of François Roland Truffaut (an influential French film director and creator of the model-author theory stating that the director was the “author” of his work with his own unique style and influences), Georges Méliès and Dziga Vertov.¹⁶ Kentridge as South African *auteur* referred to both French and Russian examples and found parallels in the contemporary visual arts, for example Bruce Nauman’s *Mapping the Studio* (2001), as well as in films of other artists working in their studios.¹⁷

It was, however, Méliès’s use of magical qualities, emerging film technologies¹⁸ and his film, *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (1902) (figure 3), that Kentridge (2010a) explored and used freely as he feels in a creative manner very close to Méliès. Kentridge’s tribute consists of a series of eight video projections¹⁹ that combine film, performance art and animations to a creative peak. Kentridge (Rosenthal 2009: 13) writes that the seven short Méliès film fragments are not only a tribute to Méliès as film pioneer, but these films also hint at the studio as subject. The series consists of the studio as model, the artist as model, and the model as a model. In works such as *Seven fragments for Georges Méliès* (2003) and *Journey to the Moon* (2003), the studio holds a double function: it is both the subject and the work of art.

For his narrative film, *Journey to the Moon* (2003), Kentridge used elements from Méliès’s masterpiece *Voyage dans la Lune* (1902), as well as previously used objects and drawings from his Méliès fragment films. Kentridge filmed known, everyday objects and materials from his studio space, like an espresso cup which he used as a telescope; an Italian mocha/espresso coffee pot which was used as a spacecraft; an ordinary white saucer which was used as a moon (figure 4); and hordes of crawling ants to complete his spatial pictures. Kentridge made drawings (cloud patterns) with sugar water on paper – the small household ants completed the “drawing”. The negative images of these ant drawings form the zodiac constellations in his Méliès films.

Kentridge combined and used all of the above objects and images like exotic items in a *Wunderschrank*’s drawer or a *Kunstkammer*’s shelf with simple filmic tricks to make his Méliès fragment films. The negative image theme and negative shade as positive were later re-used in his film, *Day for night*, whereby the black ants become white in their new environment. Rosenthal (2009: 51) describes it as: “as the paper’s coloration reverses, befitting the title”. He sketched objects from his immediate environment with a charcoal stick and video camera, thereafter redrawing them before photographing them once again. Kentridge used these *Kunstkammer* images again and again in works of art to follow.

Kentridge states: “I discovered that the studio, which I had hoped could be a whole universe, became only the enclosed rocket” (Rosenthal 2009: 13). While making these films, Kentridge hoped to escape the restrictive space of his studio, but he “ended up still stuck inside it, looking out through the window of the rocket ship (i.e. staring at a sheet of black paper pinned to the studio wall)” (Rosenthal 2009: 13).

All kinds of different and unusual objects from Kentridge’s studio – even the emptiness and anxiety of a clean page – are used to portray the voyage to a distant planet in space. While he is busy telling the story of a great lunar landing visually, a parallel story is being told by various visual fragments: the historical colonisation of Africa – the theme and so-called mapping of the “Dark Continent”, the domestication and advocacy, as well as the ultimate possession thereof.

In Kentridge's *Journey to the Moon* (2003) Kentridge is portrayed in his studio with an espresso cup. Once the cup is empty, he uses it both as a magnifying glass and as a telescope to survey the approaching procession in the landscape and watch the celestial bodies. Both the coffee pot and espresso cup have some magical qualities that allow him to see through objects, beyond his immediate space, while the coffee pot slowly departs to the moon, just like Méliès's rocket. Kentridge states the following about his version of *Journey to the Moon* (2003):

A bullet-shaped rocket crashes into the surface of the moon; a fat cigar plunged into a round face. When I watched the Méliès film for the first time at the start of this project, I realized that I knew this image from years before I had heard of Méliès. I was far advanced in the making of the fragments for Méliès. I had resisted any narrative pressure, making the premise of the series, what arrives when the artist wanders around his studio. What arrived was the need to do at least one film which surrendered to narrative push.

Other similarities between Kentridge's *Journey to the Moon* (2003) and Méliès's *Voyage dans la Lune* (1902) are the march of the ants and the procession of people, the Highveld and the moon, and the man in the studio and the man in the moon. Although Kentridge had a trip to the moon, he returned to his beloved South Africa. Kentridge (Rosenthal 2009: 52) explains that Méliès' moon is "a late 19th-century colonial moon [...] My lunar landscape [...] just outside Johannesburg" (figures 3 and 4).

In this article the researcher investigated how Kentridge experimented with huge charcoal drawings as a graphic medium and how he incorporated optical toys and devices and film and photography fragments into his drawings. Because he frequently made use of obsolete techniques and technological media that he displaced to a contemporary environment and modern technological infrastructure, he consequently showcased the expressive features of his medium meta-referentially. Kentridge can indirectly be described as a visual wizard because he used and researched existing old techniques and technologies, deconstructed, renewed and made it his own – consequently created a type of *Wunderkammer* or cabinet of curiosities, images and graphics in which he created his own iconography.

Notes

- 1 In Michael Auping's interview with Kentridge (Rosenthal 2009: 244-245) he states: "The productions [with the Junction Avenue Theatre Company] were often political, but not dogmatic – mostly about the absurdities of apartheid, very Brechtian. It was almost like a support group of multidisciplinary people – artists, performers, psychologists, writers, everyone contributed to the narrative."
- 2 See the video projections of Susan Chen: *4 x 5 degrees* (2012) (Retrieved on 7 April 2014 from <http://www.susanchen.com/video/4-x-5-degrees>) and *Fata Morgana* (Retrieved on 7 April 2014 from <http://www.susanchen.com/video/fata-morgana>); Mat Collishaws installations: *Midnight Icarus* (2010) and *Magic Lantern* (2010) (Retrieved on 7 April 2014 from <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/m/mat-collishaw-magic-lantern/>); as well as Pierre Huyghe's puppet theatre and super 16 mm film with quadrophonic sound, *This is not a time for dreaming* (2004) (Retrieved on 7 April 2014 from <http://vimeo.com/5705760> and <http://www.pbs.org/art21/images/pierre-huyghe/this-is-not-a-time-for-dreaming-production-still-2004>).
- 3 Griffiths (1987: 65): "The same is 'the principle of blind spot' (lethargy) (divertissement) and the ruse (the means) used by the work to lead us through a certain reverie (detachment, blindness), 'put to sleep' by fiction, towards the lucidity of that wakefulness that leaves the book, the work, in order to devote itself to its outside (i.e. life) while remembering the works, while knowing 'what it's all about'."
- 4 In 1895 Louis and Auguste Lumière's patent for their Cinématographe movie camera and projection system was approved (Campany

- 2008: 7) and they could thus start their public performances.
- 5 After the Lumière brothers saw the Edison kinetoscope peepshow in Paris in 1894, they patented their own movie machine in February 1895 and baptised it *Cinématographe* – it was a camera, printer and projector all in one. Unlike Edison’s kinetoscope where only a single observation was possible through a single peephole, the Lumière *Cinématographe* projected the film image on a large, central screen that could be enjoyed by a bigger audience all at once.
 - 6 *Sortie des Usines Lumière à Lyon* (1895), 48 seconds.
 - 7 The Englishman Robert W. Paul experimented with images of old cars – he made them disappear and then magically let them reappear (Manvell 1980: no page numbers).
 - 8 In his filmic multimedia work, *The refusal of time* (2012) (c. 24 minutes), William Kentridge, Philip Miller and Catherine Meyburgh join hands to project his five channel projections in conjunction with megaphones and a resuscitator that simulates the breathing of an elephant. See <http://d13.documenta.de/#/research/research/view/the-refusal-of-time-2012>.
 - 9 See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlvftGgps24&feature=related>.
 - 10 The monologues delivered include Percy Bysshe Shelley’s *Ozymandias* (1818), chunks of text from the sacred Haggadah, a Jewish prayer book for Easter, Richard Huelsenbeck’s poem, *Holla da funga*.
 - 11 The soprano, Linda Von Copenhagen, interpreted portions of Jean-Baptiste Lully’s *Isis Tragedy* (1677) [C’est lu do not les Dieux ont faix choix [...] c’est and Vain que l’Envie a Ligue Aunt Roys [...] Heureux l’Empire qui suit six lois!]. Euphoniums played by Daniel Bouyer (tuba) and Etienne Mecloen (trombone) (Kentridge 2010a: 60).
 - 12 *A trip to the Moon*, 35 mm, black and white silent film, c. 11 minutes – different lengths of this movie are in circulation. The film roll was 825 feet, or 14 minutes. The first part of the film was inspired by the Jules Verne’s (1828-1905) novel, *De la terre à la lune* (*From the Earth to the Moon*, 1865); while the second part was inspired by HG Well’s story, *The first one on the Moon* (Frazer 1979: 98). The central theme of the film is a man’s journey through space and his visit to the moon.
 - 13 Stop-motion photography required that the movie camera be stopped so that elements could be moved or added. Once the scene was changed, the filming continued. By using this stop and continue action technique a definite movement effect is created in the film. Thomas Edison’s assistants used the technique as early as 1895, but they did not develop it further. In Méliès’ film, *Cendrillon* (*Cinderella*, 1899), all the movie scenes are sequenced together almost as with slideshows. According to Salt (1992: 34), Méliès did not use this technique to portray elapsed time, but it was used to join loose film shots/fragments.
 - 14 During his New York residence (2002), Kentridge attended several Nauman exhibitions at the Columbia University as well as a lecture on Nauman at the Dia Art Foundation, New York Shipping (Rosenthal 2009: 53).
 - 15 See the Bruce Nauman-film, *Walking in an exaggerated manner around the perimeter of a square* (1967-68). Obtainable from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qml505hxp_c (accessed 06 September 2013).
 - 16 Dziga Vertov is the pseudonym for David Abelevich Kaufman who specialised in Soviet documentary film, newsreel director and cinema theorist. The name ‘Dziga’ refers to the sound the film makes when it goes through the projector; also “spinning top”.
 - 17 See Hans Namuth and Paul Falkenberg’s film, *Jackson Pollock 51* (1951), which portrays Jackson Pollock while painting his enormous canvasses in his studio (http://www.metacafe.com/watch/yt-CrVE-WQBcYQ/jackson_pollock_51/).
 - 18 See http://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/agency_and_automatism_photography_as_art_since_the_sixties.
 - 19 In this series of films Kentridge pays homage to Georges Méliès who had “the magical possibilities that the nascent technology or film could afford” (Retrieved on 7 April 2014 from <http://www.atjoburg.net/?p=75>).

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Morality of cities: Renaissance images and texts

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While cities in all their history and complexity are analysed, admired, discussed, and planned by academics and professionals, one aspect which is eschewed in our present time is the effect on a city's form and fabric of what might be its moral character. It seems that effects of prevailing moralities are not reckoned to impact upon a city's functional, physical determinants, or be reflected in its form, or the character of its buildings. This is surely an intractable enquiry for the architectural discipline, indicative of a conceptual disconnect between societal and architectural values. The transition from the Middle Ages to Renaissance Europe produced a new mode of depicting cities in art; and there was a corresponding literary genre providing rationales for cities increasingly in the mode of secularism, materialism, and idealism. This article brings together paintings of cities in which some ethical, moral comment is evidently intended, and texts which clearly provide just that. However difficult as commentaries on entrenched moralities of modern cities, a place is warranted for such reflections in urban and architectural criticism, and some influence in practice.

Key words: Renaissance, art, architecture, cities, morality, ethics

Die moraliteit van stede: Renaissance-afbeeldings en -tekste

Terwyl stede histories en in hulle volle kompleksiteit deur akademici en professionaliste ontleed, bewonder, en bespreek word, word die aspek van die uitwerking van 'n stad se vorm en die samestelling van die morele karakter daarvan, vermy. Dit blyk dat die uitwerking van gangbare moraliteite nie beskou word as 'n invloed op die funksionele, fisiese determinante van die stad, die vorm daarvan of die karakter van sy geboue nie. Dit is beslis 'n probleem wat vir die argitektuurdissipline moeilik is om te ondersoek, want dit dui op 'n konseptuele breuk tussen die waardes van 'n samelewing en argitektoniese waardes. Die oorgang van die Middeleeue na die Renaissance in Europa het aanleiding gegee tot 'n nuwe wyse van stadsvoorstellings in kuns, asook 'n ooreenstemmende literêre genre waarin stede toenemend gerasionaliseer is ten aansien van sekularisme, materialisme en idealisme. In hierdie artikel word egter skilderye van stede afgebeeld waarin daar klaarblyklik 'n mate van etiese en morele kommentaar bedoel is, tesame met aangehaalde tekste met dieselfde bedoeling. Nieteenstaande die problematiek van die ingewortelde moraliteit van moderne stede, is daar sekerlik plek vir nadenke oor moraliteit in stads- en argitektuurkritiek, wat moontlik tot 'n mate van invloed in die praktyk kan bydra.

Sleutelwoorde: Renaissance, kuns, argitektuur, stede, moraliteit, etiek

Cities, creations of communities and cultures, are places potent with noble expressions of the human spirit. Exchange between people makes them always dynamic, subject to experiment and change. The uniqueness of every individual person predicates diversity, harmony, and respect. Social contract aims at unity, peace, and the greater good. The reality of human experience is that such an absolute ideal has never prevailed, the perfect city has never been realised. Expressions of the human spirit are fraught with compromise. Exchanges engender tensions. Conflicts of interest militate against the greater good. Every analysis that might be done of every city would have to admit that they are all imperfect. Following this, the premise for any effort for change must be that the imperfection and perfection are, in final analysis, moral.

The physical appearances of the civic structures of great, materially sophisticated cities often have an evident grace and goodness, which supposedly reflects the state of the citizens.

Invariably the real condition of a city is more complicated and concealed, and no city great or small is without the impact of the problems of social friction. While some cities have acquired notorious reputations and many have been eulogised, none has been found perfect. These characterisations have been subjects of art and architectural portrayals in the past. The devices used vary. The outward appearance of the city may be good, while its real state is indicated by portrayals of its people and their actions; or the city's outward form may itself be expressive of the moral character of the society. This article looks through the physical appearances to the moral character of representative cities. We may admire the qualities of famous cities—what we can still discern in the material elements surviving and in records such as drawings and paintings. We see the compactness, patterns that comprise the form of the whole, and intricacies that beggar rational analysis. We may then be led to infer what social and civil qualities may have produced such cities. However, it is very useful to consult contemporary written commentaries, or those nearer than we are to the mentality of the time. Because there are moral judgements which have been, or can be made about cities—i.e. the citizens' mores and conduct—there is no shortage of written commentary upon them.

Thus the six paintings considered in this article will not be discussed in an art-historical context, but in the context of literary works from the same period. Some are fairly closely contemporary, while others are of a different century but indicative of the social and civic cultures within the Renaissance era. No direct connections or derivations are inferred between pictorial examples and literary texts; however, the texts, as explicit sources, provide a means to appreciating philosophical and sociological perceptions which had currency. The literary sources enable deductive interpretations of the paintings, rather than inductive. Moral critique is usually eschewed as cities strive to create liveable and viable environments, yet there is a strand of ethical concern running through history and literature articulated by thinkers, philosophers, and theologians. It lies within the prerogative of art history to discuss this.

1. City of Polity



Figure 1
The Effects of Good Government in the City (detail). Ambrogio Lorenzetti, 1337-39
(source: Rolf Toman, *Gothic*. Cologne: Könemann, 1998).

Only about sixteen years after the death of Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), Ambrogio Lorenzetti (c.1290-1348), was painting the fresco known as 'The Effects of Good Government' in Siena (figure 1). Dante's own beloved native city was Florence, though it was so politically fractured that the effect for him had been a life in exile. Nevertheless, in *Paradiso* he wrote of its best times thus (1962: 16. 148-52):

With men like these, and more in ample dower,
Did I see Florence, with no woes accurst
To weep for, tranquil in her place and power.
With men like these I saw her glorious erst,
A righteous folk and wed to righteous rules.

In the Siena fresco of the high Middle Ages the subject is conveyed explicitly in the title, which was probably given by Lorenzetti. This is one half of the fresco, the other (joining the right side) depicts the country environs of the city, and is shown full of well organised rural industry serving the city. The site of this work being in the Palazzo Pubblico obviously associates the subject with the City of Siena; yet it does not depict civic buildings, the seat of government. Rather, it renders its title accurately—the social scene and urban environment are the effects of good government. This then is the social organism fostered and come to fruition under a well organized administration. It is ordered, yet with a sense of liberty—no officials, no exploitation, no surveillance. It is social, with high participation in virtuous activities. There is unity and evident harmony—epitomised by the central group of women dancing. Such qualities characterise the architecture also. It is ordered, yet with a relaxed arrangement of parts—not regimented or very formal. It is communal, yet the buildings provide seclusion and privacy; there is a high degree of connectedness, and it is compact. There is lively variety of quietly handsome architecture within a unity and general functionality. The city, and society, is not corrupt, dissipated, or pretentious.

Dante's *De Monarchia*, which predated the fresco by only some twenty years, provides a corresponding text, serving as a commentary on the subject. Here the polity of an ideal monarchy is argued—even the polity which is integral to the very idea of a city (1940: 1. 5):

If we consider a city, the end of which is to live well and suitably, there must be a single rule, and this not only in a rightly ordained polity, but even in a wrong one. For if it be otherwise not only is the end of civil life missed, but the very city itself ceases to be what it was.

The 'single rule', i.e. not a politically divided government, is reckoned to be the key to civic life, and the city as a whole. For a good city the single rule of integrity becomes a moral imperative; and derives from some fount of high and stable values.

Not only are there righteous rules and a righteous populace, a third ingredient would be right working artisans and artificers. We can observe them in Lorenzetti's fresco. They, and their contribution, are described in the Apocryphal book of *Sirach* (38. 31–34 (RSV)):

All these rely upon their hands, and each is skilful in his own work. Without them a city cannot be established, and men can neither sojourn nor live there. Yet they are not sought out for the council of the people, nor do they attain eminence in the public assembly. They do not sit in the judge's seat, nor do they understand the sentence of judgement; they cannot expound discipline or judgement, and they are not found using proverbs. But they keep stable the fabric of the world, and their prayer is in the practice of their trade.

The effect of Dante's political treatise was limited: it was an individualistic manifesto for a revived Roman Empire, but such a possibility was doomed even in his own lifetime. The influence of the ancient *Sirach* may be difficult to trace, but there are clear resonances in medieval claustral writings, where the ideals of polity were epitomised. The ethical basis of many benign human

societies was derived from an active acceptance of divine sovereignty. Even while the monastic structures persisted in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the secular city of polity of the Renaissance marked a revision of the ideal—it became much more world and human centred.

Sir Thomas More (1478-1535), in the first verse he appended to *Utopia* (1516), wrote, ‘I one of all other without philosophy / Have shaped for man a philosophical city.’ In the second verse he said he was filling out, and exceeding, the plan of Plato’s city, ‘With laws, with men, and treasure fitly, / Wherefore not Utopia, but rather rightly / My name is Eutopia: a place of felicity’ (1910: 119). Reading *Utopia* we realise what an influence such a vision had; not carrying a political history like Florence, nor limited by the religious functions of a great abbey, here was the ideal future order.

After many days’ journeys, they found towns and Cities and public weal, full of people, governed by good and wholesome laws. [. . .] so he rehearsed divers acts, and constitutions, whereby these our Cities, Nations, Countries, and Kingdoms may take example to amend their faults, enormities and errors. (1910: 16, 17)

They say that king Utopus himself, even at the first beginning, appointed, and drew forth the plan form of the city into this fashion and figure that it has now, but the gallant garnishing, and the beautiful setting forth of it, whereunto he saw that one man’s age would not suffice; that he left to his posterity. (1910: 53)

A great multitude of every sort of people, both men and women, go to hear lectures [. . .] as every man’s nature is inclined. If any man had rather bestow this time on his own occupation, he is not hindered nor prohibited, but is also praised and commended as profitable to the common wealth. After supper they bestow one hour in play; in summer in their gardens; in winter in their common halls; where they dine and sup. There they exercise themselves in music, or in honest and wholesome conversation. (1910: 56)

They thus joining and dwelling together do easily agree in one fashion of living, and that to the great wealth of both the peoples. [. . .] Certainly in all kinds of living creatures either fear of lack causes covetousness or ravin, or in man only pride, which counts it a glorious thing to pass and excel other in the superfluous and vain ostentation of things. This kind of vice among the Utopians can have no place. (1910: 60, 61)

They define virtue to be life ordered according to nature, and that we be hereunto ordained of God. And he that follows the course of nature, which in desiring and refusing things is ruled by reason. Furthermore that reason chiefly and principally kindles in men the love and veneration of the divine majesty; of whose goodness it is that we be, and that we be in possibility to attain felicity. And that secondarily it stirs and provokes us to lead our life without care in joy and mirth, and also moves us to help and further all others in respect of the society of nature, to obtain and enjoy the same. (1910: 73)

More describes the city as having ‘all things that may be requisite either for necessity, or for commodity, also for pleasure, so that the same pleasure be true and natural.’ (1910: 58) This is akin to the architectural formulation of Vitruvius—*utilitas, firmitas, venustas*, and that there be *decorum*, or propriety. These characterize the city of polity. They are the effects of good government conveyed in Lorenzetti’s fresco.

We can see in the nuances of the last passage cited above the ethical balance which largely arose with, and shifted after, the Renaissance. ‘Life ordered according to nature’—not without acknowledging God, but not interfered with by God. ‘Following the course of nature’—and in that being ruled by reason. Then the use of reason, to firstly acknowledge the goodness and blessing of the ‘divine majesty’, is secondly (and pragmatically) aimed at a felicitous individual life in a humane society. It indicates a transition from the medieval ethics, and anticipates the seventeenth-century Enlightenment.

2. City of Peace



Figure 2
Jerusalem, Hans Memling, 1470/71 Galleria Sabauda, Turin.
(source: Mark Trowbridge, 'Jerusalem Transposed', JHNA 1.1 (2009) online).

The setting of the painting by Hans Memling (1430-94), generally called 'Scenes from the Passion of Christ' (figure 2) is, of course, Jerusalem, which means 'the Peace of Jehovah'. The painting has a theatrical form, in which the whole city comprises multiple sites for the scenes of Passion Week. Other contemporary paintings, particularly of Bearing the Cross to Golgotha, depict the city as an architectural object in the scene, significant, but the citizens are not evident.¹ Here, the intensity of the action seems to be reinforced by the presentation of the architecture, and the city as the physical entity is implicated in the moral issues.

Through much of its existence Jerusalem had been more like a battleground, a place in agitation and division, even itself the physical site and earthly arena in the relationship between humanity and deity. The 'peace on earth' paradox has as its central motif the cross. The depiction of the preparation, the passage, and the distant spectacle of the cross heightens the dynamic movement. A rubric for the painting could appropriately be taken from Dante: 'I saw entire the threshing-floor, whereon fierce deeds are done.' (1962: 22. 150-51). Nor do the numerous cameos of events preceding the crucifixion show this as being a city where peace might be found even in a corner; for there is no place safely apart and uninvolved. The peace of a city must be more than superficial; it would have to run throughout, to every corner, and in every building.

There is the suggestive power of this historical action being the central and crucial event in Jerusalem's history. The topic is of universal import, yet the time and place are particular and unique. Although there is no sign of siege or war it is the city at the nadir of its peace. Memling here seems to show the religious rejection by the City, the emptying of the Holy City of its recognition of God. And while Biblical subjects continued into the Renaissance, they are, unlike the works of the Middle Ages, art informed by an increasingly questioning and agnostic culture.

The act by the city of the crucifixion of its messiah is a symbol of the inevitable tendency of every city to destroy its own peace. Memling worked in a milieu of Christian belief—meaning that the peace of the city, Jerusalem being the model, was bound up in its God. In his painting

he makes this matter conspicuous; but in the moral structure and acts of every city the 'peace of God' is the real issue, however dimly perceived. Obviously, in relation to Jerusalem we can refer to Biblical texts, and most relevant to Memling's painting are accounts in the Gospels recording the attitude of Jesus to the moral dilemmas of Jerusalem. The physical, historical city was an inseparable personification of the moral state of the people.

'I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth [. . .]. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!' (Matthew 23.34-38).

'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' And some of the pharisees in the multitude said to him, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples.' He answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.' And when he drew near and saw the city he wept over it, saying, 'Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you, when your enemies will cast up a bank about you and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and dash you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another in you; because you did not know the time of your visitation' (Luke 19.38-44).

A city's peace involves many moral issues; and history's lesson is that they are intractable. The crucifixion of Christ was the outcome of human failure to recognize God, yet it was also the divine visitation by which peace was possible. But Jerusalem has been visited by conflicts and tensions like no other city. In the recent memory of the late Middle Ages its peace and freedom was the cause the Crusades pursued with bitter results.

Then Dante Alighieri, whose circumstances gave him little consolation, envisaged the only hope of peace for the city states of Italy as lying in the intervention of Henry VII of Luxemburg, and the renewal of the Roman imperial unity. Thus in *De Monarchia*:

If we consider a special kingdom, the end of which is the same as that of the city, only with better assurance of tranquillity, there must be one king to rule and govern, else not only do they in the kingdom fail to reach the goal, but the kingdom itself lapses into ruin, according to that saying of the infallible truth, 'every kingdom divided against itself shall be laid waste' (1940: 1.5; 141).

If we go through all the states and periods of man, even from the fall of our first parents, which was the point at which we turned aside on our wanderings, we shall find that the world was never quiet on every side except under divus Augustus, the monarch, when there was a perfect monarchy. (1940: 1.16; 171)

But what the state of the world has been since that seamless garment first suffered rending by the nail of covetousness we may read [. . .]. O race of men in what storms and losses, in what shipwrecks must thou needs be tossed, so long as, transformed into a beast of many heads, thou strivest after many things! Thou art sick in either intellect, sick in affection (1940: 1.16; 172).

What this place and what this people were is sufficiently manifest [. . .], to wit, Rome and her citizens or people. The which our poet [Virgil] too has touched upon right subtly in the sixth, introducing Anchises admonishing Aeneas, the father of the Romans, thus: [. . .] '*Roman! do thou be mindful how to sway the peoples with command. These be thy arts; to lay upon them the custom of peace, to spare the subject and fight down the proud*' (1940: 2.7; 200-01).

To Dante, looking back, Rome's peace, 'Pax Romana', had been the earthly ideal, and in his treatise he shows the temporal authority to be divinely ordained. The sense of theatre in Memling's 'Passion of Christ', shows what was done for peace on the world's threshing floor, Jerusalem, under Pontius Pilate, in the about the sixtieth year of the Pax.

3. City of Power



Figure 3
Genoa, Christoforo de Grassi, 1597 (after a drawing of 1481)
(source: www.medievalists.net/2013/12/14/the-zaccaria-deal-).

Although the painting by Christoforo de Grassi is of the late sixteenth century, it was a rendering of a drawing of a century earlier.² In its detail it clearly purports to be a faithful portrayal of the particular city, an artistic possibility which evidently first became an interest of artists in the fifteenth century. Before this time cities were portrayed only abstractly and notionally, albeit often in much detail—which also tended to be conventional, as in Lorenzetti's fresco, and imaginary, as in Memling's painting.

This is consistent with the essential difference in intention; and one can argue that the shift in the manner of dealing with the subject of the city, corresponding to the transition from medieval to renaissance art, does not so much reflect the individual artist's interest as that of the whole culture. Thus in the School of Giotto depiction of St Francis casting out the devils from Arezzo, in S. Francesco, Assisi, of c.1300, the city of Arezzo is an abstract image; and in Giovanni di Paolo's scenes of c.1445, illustrating Dante's *Paradiso*, Florence and cities of Tuscany are miniature models merely notional.³ In all such art in the medieval idiom, cities appear as the context only—albeit maybe having symbolic function—for the essential subject of the painting, which generally centred on the story, the people and their actions.

The Renaissance interest in depicting a city accurately is not (not yet) merely for the sake of literalism; but the concern is with the city as an integral part of the power structure, as product of the culture, and as player in the politics. The drawing of 1481 was doubtless done to fittingly record the naval parade which commemorated the Battle of Otranto against the Turks that year. From the Middle Ages Genoa had been an independent city-state, with one of the first merchant banks, with maritime trade rivalling other western Mediterranean cities, with a large navy, participating in the Crusades, and prominent in slave trading. It was the great rival of Venice, and its fortunes suffered in the fifteenth century; then recovering to make the sixteenth century its most glorious. The 1481 drawing also marks the resurgence of power at the same time as Christopher Columbus, a Genoan, was voyaging around the coast of Africa and making his first exploration of the West Indies. Christoforo's painting in 1597 probably had the purpose of celebrating the Republic at the height of its power.

It is of some interest that the artist's viewpoint gives a long bird's-eye perspective of the whole geography of Genoa. There are numerous medieval depictions of cities where the artist offers a bird's-eye view, but this may be innovative in attempting to make a careful literal and geographic record. What we see is Genoa's strategic and secure aspect, its ideal harbour, and key position on the Mediterranean Sea. This, along with the emphasis on the maritime fleet, speaks of power and prestige. The city itself, and immediate environs, is highly developed, evidently functionally efficient, and protected with walls and towers.

Genoa had long had a reputation for power, and a tendency to its ruthless exercise—though it was hardly alone in that. In the early fourteenth century it received this invective from Dante in the *Inferno* (1949: 33. 145-57):

O Genoa, where hearts corrupt and rot,
Lost to all decency! will no man hound
Thy whole tribe from the earth and purge this blot?
For with Romagna's vilest spirit I found
One of such rank deeds, such a Genoan,
His soul bathes in Cocytus, while on ground
His body walks and seems a living man.

Duplicity, corruption, and oppression is as old and prevalent as human civil society, and often received such condemnation. Yet a later Florentine than Dante, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) argued that in the organisation of a city or state expediency, advantage, and slavery could be deemed useful and therefore acceptable in order for a prince to maintain power. Public and private morality could be independent of each other. He published *The Prince* (*Il Principe*) in 1513 (1969: 487).

Since [all men] are dishonest and do not keep faith with you, you, in return, need not keep faith with them; and no Prince was ever at a loss for plausible reasons to cloak a breach of faith. [. . .] It is necessary, indeed, to put a good colour on this nature, and to be skilful in simulating and dissembling. But men are so simple, and governed so absolutely by their present needs, that he who wishes to deceive will never fail in finding willing dupes. [. . .]

It is not essential that a Prince should have all the good qualities which I have enumerated, but it is most essential that he should seem to have them; I will even venture to affirm that if he has and invariably practises them all, they are hurtful, whereas the appearance of having them is useful. Thus, it is well to seem merciful, faithful, humane, religious, and upright, and also to be so; but the mind should remain so balanced that were it needful not to be so, you should be able to know how to change to the contrary. [. . .]

[A prince] must therefore keep his mind ready to shift as the winds and tides of fortune turn, and, as I have already said, he ought not to quit good courses if he can help it, but should know how to follow evil courses if he must. [. . .] Every one sees what you seem, but few know what you are, and these few dare not oppose themselves to the opinion of the many who have the majesty of the State to back them up. Moreover, in the actions of all men, and most of all of Princes, where there is no tribunal to which we can appeal, we look to results. Wherefore if a Prince succeeds in establishing and maintaining his authority, the means will always be judged honourable and be approved by every one. For the vulgar are always taken by appearances and by results, and the world is made up of the vulgar, the few only finding room when the many have no longer ground to stand on.

What interpretation should be put on his arguments—whether he held those views personally, or whether ironical, and to whom directed—this others have debated elsewhere. What it articulates is what is well known—that a major effect of powerful oppressive rule and power struggles is often the undermining of the moral integrity of cities. The effects are also often in the physical face, in the structure, and in the architecture, of a city of power.

4. City of Pleasure

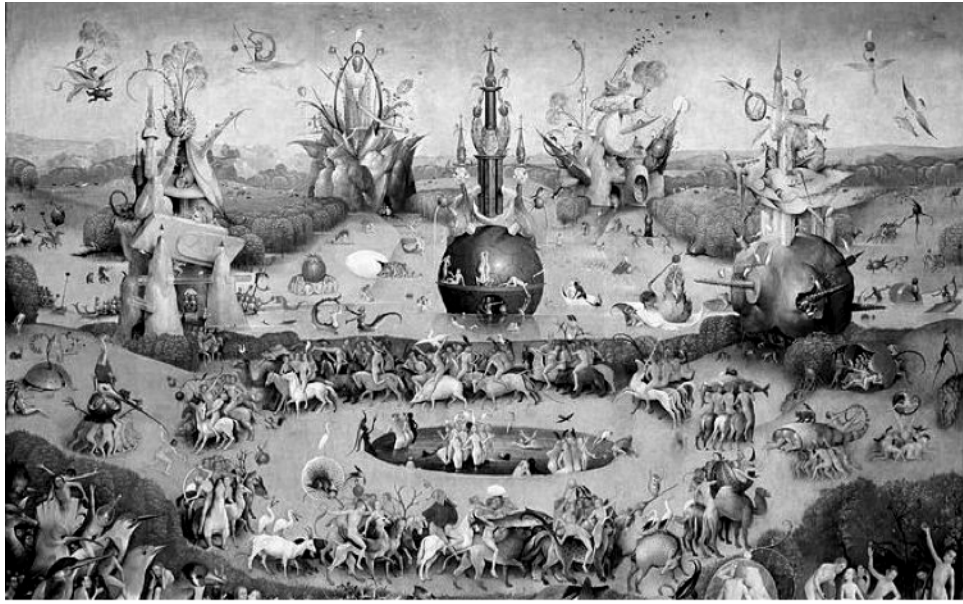


Figure 4
Hieronymus Bosch, 'The Garden of Delights' (centre panel). c.1510
(source: Carl Linfert, *Hieronymus Bosch*. New York: Abrams, n.d.).

Hieronymus Bosch (c.1453-1516) was an almost exact contemporary of Leonardo da Vinci, yet his artistic idiom seems more akin to the Middle Ages than the Renaissance. But the differences from medieval art are considerable: Bosch freely deals with human psychosis and values of an anthropocentric world-view; the works are accounts or explorations, even where their narratives seem to defy verbal expression; there is a strong pictorial spatial landscape and an architecture, however disturbing. An obvious feature (this in common with medieval subjects) is that the scenes are packed with people. Thus any account of them must attempt some commentary on the communal mores, and social meaning. Such a gathering as depicted (figure 4) might well illustrate a community pleasure garden, like a fun-park. To suggest that that is as far as it goes ignores the deep themes of all Bosch's works. Here the sense of time and place is such as suggests that this is the philosophy of the whole of life, illustrating the narcissistic nature of self-pleasing. Carl Linfert (1974: 30, 31) offers a description thus:

The garden of delights on the middle panel represents a world still far from last judgment, even from the threat of it. These naked humans [...] are scarcely touched by passion, or at most in passing only and without immoderate appetite, and no premonition of a less happy fate disturbs them. Neither compunction nor envy intrudes on the universal amity. [...] Nothing binds them except the present moment. [...] The basic theme does seem to be blissful caprice—do what you will [...].

The left-hand panel of 'The Garden of Delights' has some conventional aspects of Eden paradise, and prominently the Lord is communing with the Adam and the Eve. There is an ambiguous presence of fantastical, unnatural creatures, as also of curious hybrid naturalistic-architectural forms in the landscape—which seems to be 'gripped in some unparadisiacal spell' (Linfert, 1974: 106). The right-hand panel is a depiction of something like hell (figure 5b) as will be discussed in the next section. Thus 'The Garden of Delights', while it is completely devoid of religious references within itself, does not easily escape from the implicit moral context which serves the artist's purpose. This itself conveys the message that the careless and transitory present offers

only illusory joys and amusements however they purport to be an end in themselves.⁴ There is an absence of any sense of deity or even sacred place.

An important feature of this scene (as with many of Bosch's works) is the vital presence of very bizarre architectural constructions. Linfert (1974: 108) rightly sees their role thus:

By no means mere decorative accessories to the foreground scene, they are rather the origin and starting point for everything that is taking place. Moreover, here they are more like real buildings than natural outgrowths, though their reality is of the very nature of fantasy itself. Stretching out and up, and at the same time frozen static, these bold inventions in shell, glass, and crystallized, petrified vegetation are monument-like, three-dimensional towers which, though they defy every rule of architecture, really could have been built, even in the past.

Viewing the actual correspondence and interaction between the inhabitants of the scene and these fantasies or follies which equate to buildings, we can see this 'garden' as the continuous resort of a society of pleasure seekers. In this way it is a symbolic image of a city of pleasure. The citizens are not driven by power or material wealth. There are no paupers, no want or discomfort, nothing to offend the sophistication of taste, but no ostentation either. The civic life here is egalitarian, a-political, and libertine. There is idleness of spirit and gratification of the senses. It has no reference to anything outside itself, or relevance to the actual world.

Only a few decades later, in 1542, François Rabelais (c.1495-1553) wrote *Gargantua*. It is a satirical tale of the building and functioning of an ideal Abbey of Theleme. The second section, '*What manner of dwelling the Thelemites had*', describes at length the provisions for sport, entertainment, and pleasure. There was a play-house, and admirable baths in three stories. 'By the river-side was a faire garden of pleasure: and in the midst of that the glorious labyrinth' (1966: 29). It could almost be a description of Bosch's Garden of Pleasure. Although it is an abbey there is nothing concerning spiritual life and governance. The fourth section (1966: 32) gives deeper insight:

How the Thelemites were governed and of their manner of living.

All their life was spent not in laws, statutes or rules, but according to their own free will and pleasure. They rose out of their beds, when they thought good: they did eat, drink, labour, sleep, when they had a mind to it, and were disposed for it. None did awake them, none did offer to constrain them to eat, drink, nor to do any other thing; for so had Gargantua established it. In all their rule, and strictest tie of their order, there was but this one clause to be observed: *Do what you will*.

Men that are free, well-born, well-bred, and conversant in honest companies have naturally an instinct and spur that prompts them to virtuous actions, and withdraws them from vice, which is called honour. Those same men, when by base subjection and constraint they are brought under and kept down, turn aside from that noble disposition, by which they were formerly inclined to virtue, to shake off and break that bond of servitude, wherein they are so tyrannously enslaved; for it is agreeable with the nature of man to long after things forbidden, and to desire what is denied us. By this liberty they entered into a very laudable emulation, to do all of them what they saw did please one.

Such a pragmatic and easy philosophy has had currency probably as long as people have enjoyed civic life. Bosch's imagination seems not so far-fetched now that cities are being mindlessly remodelled by specious architecture, ostensibly to delight the populace, but seriously self-absorbed and vacuous. The epigram 'Do what you will' concerns one of the essentially moral elements of society. It also has ramifications in modern much-vaunted creativity. It leads to satiety and ennui in a city of ephemera and illusion.

5. City of Perdition



Figure 5a
'The Hay Wain' c.1500 (right panel of triptych)
(source: Carl Linfert, *Hieronymus Bosch*.
New York: Abrams, n.d.).



Figure 5b
Right: 'Garden of Delight' c.1510
(right panel of triptych)
(source: Carl Linfert, *Hieronymus Bosch*.
New York: Abrams, n.d.).

In three of Bosch's major works having the triptych form the flanking panels have subjects seemingly in common. In 'The Hay Wain' (which signifies commerce and cupidity), 'The Garden of Delights', and 'The Last Judgement', the centre panel is flanked by Eden paradise on the left, and some sort of Hell on the right (figures 5a and 5b). In the Last Judgement this scene, following convention, and according with the judgement, is of damnation in Hell. However, in the schemes of the other two subjects, the right hand panels depict tortures not as punishments determined by the divine Judge, but, rather, as consequences of the activities of the central panels. The subject of these two panels might be thus be called Perdition—even within this world—rather than the Hell of future and final destiny.

These locales seem to be not a subterranean or unearthly hell, but rather of perdition on earth. These are environments that might even have been the products of human debased imagination and perverted invention. Indeed, prominent in the Hay Wain panel (figure 5a) is a tower being constructed by members of the populace, while the background is dominated by a tower blasted and grotesquely 'deconstructed'. The objects that fill the Garden of Delight panel (figure 5b) appear as the anarchic constructions and installations of an art counter-culture. On these readings, human-kind is shaping its own perdition.

In both scenes the more extensive background is an architectural vision, which we may justifiably see as a city-scape. It seems to prophesy the doom of great cities, which are turned

from the pursuit and products of greed ('The Hay Wain') and gratification ('The Garden of Delight') into horrors. In the end such cities provide no security or refuge. The bizarre happenings depicted suggest that the real nature of the evils done by and to people are never comprehended by themselves, or by society. The picture is of individual experiences, but in aggregate it is social, and a moral commentary on civic organisation—or dissolution. Where is the city as a fabric and infrastructure? It is shown in its end—disorder and pandemonium, futility and waste; there is no place of refuge nor surviving architecture. Cities have physical dwellings as their most fundamental element—here there are none. All that they can provide—shelter, peace, rest, family, refuge—is denied. Nor are there buildings or places (not even a town square) representing civic organisation.

Such images of the end of the city, the impossibility of civic life, and the annihilation of order; characterised by the grossness of evil, alienation, and loss of hope, are remarkably expressive of the most intense literary exposition of perdition, namely Dante's *Inferno*. In the eighth canto (lines 67-78) Virgil brings Dante (as protagonist) to the infernal city (1949: 118):

'See, my son! it now draws nigh,'
Said my good lord, 'the city named of Dis,
With its sad citizens, its great company.'
And I: 'Already I see its mosques arise
Clear from the valley yonder—a red shell,
As though drawn out of glowing furnaces.'
And he replied: 'The flames unquenchable
That fire them from within thus make them burn
Ruddy, as thou seest, in this the nether Hell.'
We were now come to the deep moats, which turn
To gird that city all disconsolate,
Whose walls appeared as they were made of iron.

Then in Canto 11 (lines 31-51), on the brink of the horrible pit, Virgil explains how three levels of perdition correspond to contempt of the threefold commandment to love God, oneself, and one's neighbour (1949: 135):

God, self, and neighbour—against all these three
Force may be used; either to injure them
Or theirs, as I shall show convincingly.
Man on his neighbour may bring death or mayhem
By force; or damage his chattels, house, and lands
By harsh extortions, pillage, or fire and flame;
So murderers, men who are violent of their hands,
Robbers and plunderers, all find chastisement
In the first ring, disposed in various bands.
Against themselves men may be violent,
And their own lives or their own goods destroy;
So they in the second ring in vain repent
Who rob themselves of your world, or make a toy
Of fortune, gambling and wasting away their purse,
And turn to weeping what was meant for joy.
Those men do violence to God, who curse
And in their hearts deny Him, or defame
His bounty and His Natural Universe;
So the third ring sets its seal on the double shame
Of Sodom and of Cahors, and on the speech
Of the froward heart, dishonouring God's great name.

The entire picture is of an anti-city in which is the abrogation of every social ideal, the destruction of civic order, and the desecration of the world. The perdition is the consequence of pursuit of material things and illusory pleasures, instead of the things that endure, the permanent city.⁵

6. City of Pride



Figure 6
Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Tower of Babel, 1563
(source: *Rassegna (Turris Babel)*, *Rassegna* 16: 4, 1983, figure 61).

With good reason this characterisation of a city could have been treated first, because it is the great first moral comment on the city, as received from the Biblical text. The hubris of city building expressed the aspirations of the Sumerian migrants settling in Mesopotamia:

‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.’ And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, ‘Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language [. . .]’. And they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel [. . .]. (Genesis 11.1-9)

Pictorial images of the Tower of Babel began to appear in the tenth and eleventh centuries, reaching great popularity around 1550 to 1650, especially in northern Europe. There was a revival of it as an artistic subject in the twentieth century.⁶ The best known Renaissance conception of the unfinished tower is by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1520-69) in two similar paintings of 1563 (figure 6) and 1567.⁷ It is not less fitting to treat this subject last, because it is seen at the end in the Biblical Revelation in the drama of the destruction of the earthly city.⁸ The consistent interpretation has been the pride and presumption of human society.

Depictions in art are usually of the tower under construction, sometimes even while the top has become derelict. In medieval works, such as the mosaics of c.1220 in the narthex of San Marco, Venice, the construction is observed by heaven—the moral question of the human enterprise is explicitly related to God. In Renaissance works the emphasis was on its massiveness, indeed it became virtually a city in itself; and divine observation was now absent. In the twentieth century, in an extraordinary painting of around 1967 by Cobi Reiser the entire tower is formed by massed human beings.⁹

There are also, less commonly, works showing the great tower being catastrophically destroyed; one, as early as c.1002, in the Bamberg Apocalypse, has a model of Babylon being cast, upside down, into hell. One dramatic Renaissance example is an etching by Cornelis Anthonisz, probably of the 1540s. A modern apocalyptic conception of the global judgement of human pride is in the series of drawings of around 1955-66 by Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Commenting on earlier works (specifically mentioning Bruegel's) he wrote, 'For me, the tower was always too small. It was never the Tower as such. On my drawings you can always see the curvature of the Earth.' Further (Dürrenmatt 1978):

All my pictures in the *Tower of Babel* series are about the senselessness of wanting to build a tower that would reach the sky, and hence about the senselessness of human endeavor altogether. The Tower of Babel is an emblem of humanity's hubris. The tower collapses, and with it the human world comes to ruin. What humanity will leave behind are its ruins. *Tower of Babel IV* and *V* show this collapse. It occurs simultaneously with the end of the inhabited Earth. The exploding star in *Tower of Babel IV* is a supernova.

Dürrenmatt's tower seems a prophetic commentary on the presumption and pretentiousness of ever-higher structures, as also on the extravagant creations of wealth and cleverness.

In many of the Renaissance examples the artist's objective viewpoint is indicated by observers in the foreground of the scene, detached from the action, even of a different time. From their vantage point they can appraise what has happened, with the inference that it is a moral lesson. It may not have been in the minds of the artists but there are Biblical incidents suggestive of such observation. Thus Abraham observed the destruction of the Cities of the Plain from a place at some distance; and thus Jonah sat outside the great city of Ninevah, waiting to see the divine intervention.¹⁰ Alternatively, it may be that the Renaissance artists enjoyed the subject of the gigantic tower as an opportunity to show their own architectural and structural inventiveness; and there is a strong sense that the foreground observers are filled with awe and admiration. There seems to be real ambiguity in many cases, whether the tower's incomplete form is because the building effort is still on-going, or whether it has ceased because of the confusion of speech—the Biblical intervention. Commenting on an early sixteenth-century breviary illustration Helmut Minkowski (1983: 31) writes,

The daring building rises and rises without any hindrance. We can feel that the author does not yet feel doubtful about God's intervention spoken of in the Bible, but avoids [sic] to include it in this scene which is viewed with sheer realism. The Renaissance man, with his sound self-consciousness, feel [sic] sure that such a building can be completed. The tower is higher than it has ever been before, yet God is not hurling his thunders.

Seeing it in the context of the confidence of the Counter-Reformation, Massimo Scolari (1983: 116) says of a painting by Karel van Mander (1548-1606): 'But it was not violent divine punishment which would make it crumble but the results of that *libero arbitrio* which Luther denied: the tower which was "rooted" in man's belief in his supremacy gave in at the base and the construction leaned to one side.'

A text to put alongside the subject of Babel, the so-called manifesto of the Renaissance by Pico della Mirandola (1463-94), is a contemporary essentially ethical view of mankind. His *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1969: 472,73) was published in 1486. Here are excerpts:

I have read in the records of the Arabians that Abdala the Saracen, when questioned as to what on this stage of the world, as it were, could be seen as most worthy of wonder, replied, 'There is nothing to be seen more wonderful than man.' In agreement with this opinion is the saying of Hermes Trismegistus: 'A great miracle, Asclepius, is man.' [. . .]

At last it seems to me I have come to understand why man is the most fortunate of creatures and consequently worthy of all admiration and what precisely is that rank which is his lot in the universal chain of Being—a rank to be envied not only by brutes but even by the stars and by minds beyond this world. It is a matter past faith and a wondrous one. Why should it not be? For it is on this very account that man is rightly called and judged a great miracle and a wonderful creature indeed. [. . .]

God the Father, the supreme Architect, had already built this cosmic home we behold, the most sacred temple of His godhead, by the laws of His mysterious wisdom. [. . .] But when the work was finished, the Craftsman kept wishing that there were someone to ponder the plan of so great a work, to love its beauty, and to wonder at its vastness. Therefore, when everything was done (as Moses and Timaeus bear witness), He finally took thought concerning the creation of man. But there was not among His archetypes that from which He could fashion a new offspring [. . .] nor was there in the seats of all the world a place where the latter might sit to contemplate the universe. All was now complete; all things had been assigned to the highest, the middle, and the lowest orders. [. . .]

At last the best of artisans [. . .] took man as a creature of indeterminate nature and, assigning him a place in the middle of the world, addressed him thus: 'Neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself have we given thee, Adam, to the end that according to thy longing and according to thy judgement thou mayest have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions thou thyself shalt desire. The nature of all other beings is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by Us. Thou, constrained by no limits, in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand We have placed thee, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature. We have set thee at the world's center that thou mayest from thence more easily observe whatever is in the world. We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgement, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine.' O supreme generosity of God the Father, O highest and most marvellous felicity of man! To him it is granted to have whatever he chooses, to be whatever he wills.

The sheer optimism of this account of human dignity fails in the light of reality of perpetual failure to choose rightly, to not degenerate. The polity of good government, and every social improvement of the city is flawed and undermined by an ethic of arrogance and a morality of self-assertiveness. A theme emerging in this study is that the crux of the building of a good society is the ability to exercise a common will, to choose rightly and simply. It would have to be uncompromised by any evil influence or effects. At the point at which we stand a new moral and ethical Enlightenment would merely impress on the global City that this idealism is impossible; such moral strength and ethical power does not lie within us individually or collectively, however happily it may at times and places be effective.

Conclusion

These art histories and texts speak of the failure of the ideals of Polity and of Peace; the immorality of pursuit of Power and of Pleasure; the reality of the chaos of Perdition; and the ultimate confusions of Pride. The artists of the six paintings quite evidently were conveying

messages. The point, however obvious, is that it has ever been the case that stresses of cities in their material and organisational struggles are not unrelated to ethical values and morality. The critique can extend to new manifestations in modern cities—in social isolation, physical insecurity, legal impositions, domination of nature, in wastefulness, in threatening paralysis. It is increasingly perceived that some feared collapse or implosion will be human-induced. The megalomania of building meaningless iconic structures and the competition of constructing ever-higher towers will have limits. There is a prophetic element in most of the examples adduced, which prompts the question whether humanity can go on this way for ever.

Abraham and Jonah were mentioned. The two incidents are in striking juxtaposition. Abraham, knowing the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, interceded (with small results) for such righteous souls as may have been in Sodom; he could do no more. Jonah preached so powerfully that all Nineveh from the king down changed their ways and the city was transformed; yet the prophet was vexed. The morality of cities is the crux of their future. Lorenzetti's 'Effects of Good Government' is of the Middle Ages; but the other five works are of the Renaissance, and seem to challenge the new confidence in human achievements. There have, no doubt, always been some few visionaries who can see the truly crucial issues, which they make the substance of their art and intercessions.

Today the work of city planners in conceptualizing, analyzing, making policies, and reporting on how their city needs to function and be enjoyed, does not do what the material studied here seeks to do, namely engage with realities of moral issues. These reflections from history present the spectre of inescapable human dilemmas, reiterated endlessly. One might look back at such examples to try to discern whence the initiative might come for a city (or state) to understand and somehow recognize the moral imperatives as they affect the life of the city (and nation) and its very form and fabric.

If in the twenty-first century that task is beyond the remit of urban theorists or planners, they nonetheless need to apprehend the issues and espouse ethical initiatives. To be legislators or enforcers of morality is also beyond the abilities of monarchs, presidents, parliaments and judges, though they are entrusted to direct a free, just, and humane society. Ideally the matter should be pursued by the populace, by all individuals; then improvement—if not transformation—of society might be hoped for. However, in this article the sources speaking to their own time indicate the role of another element in society—its artists, poets, and writers. These plead for the message not to be lost in the recipient's attention to the medium. Even as readers of this Journal we are involved in the mediation; and we might see the serious nature of it as we grasp the visions of Lorenzetti, Memling, de Grassi, Bosch, and Bruegel.

Notes

- 1 Examples are: Christ Bearing the Cross, by an unknown artist, possibly of Utrecht, c.1470 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); the same subject from the circle of Jan van Eyck, c.1530 (Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest); the Crucifixion, by Gerard David, 1475 (Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid). The importance of these depictions of the city of Jerusalem as the setting of the Passion of Christ, is connected to the Medieval-Renaissance cult of pilgrimages to Jerusalem, or surrogate cities in Europe. Thus
- 2 Netherlandish painters depicted Jerusalem in appearance much as their own cities.
- 3 The 1481 drawing is apparently not now extant.
- 4 See John Pope-Hennessy, *Paradiso: The illuminations to Dante's Divine Comedy by Giovanni de Paolo* (Thames & Hudson, 1993), e.g. pp. 99,103.

- 4 An alternative interpretation of the triptych reading from right to left is given by Rolf Gross, who also gives it an early date of c.1476.
- 5 The permanent city is asserted notably in several Biblical allusions and visions, such as Hebrews 11. 10, 16, and Revelation 21. 2, 10.
- 6 A comprehensive survey and monographs is in Rassegna (Turrus Babel), *Rassegna* 16(4), 1983.
- 7 A reproduction of the other painting, and discussion, is in Or Ettlinger's article, 'In search of architecture in virtual space: an introduction to *The Virtual Space Theory*,' in *South African Journal of Art History* 22(1), 2007: 11.
- 8 Revelation 18. 2-9. Babylon is the harlot who has prostituted the civilisation of humanity: "The woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth." (17. 18)
- 9 See reproduction in Helmut Minkowski's essay, fig. 135, in Rassegna (Turrus Babel), *Rassegna* 16: 4, 1983, p. 75.
- 10 See Genesis 18: 22 – 33; Jonah 3.

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Observing the city: imagining through faceless figures

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This essay explores the ways the image of the city has been imagined, depicted and experienced by various artists in specific eras. The involvement of the human body in the image, through depictions of faceless figures with their backs turned to the spectator, communicates empathetic projection. Based on the depicted environment of the faceless figure, the spectator projects an imagined identity or presence for the figure in the depiction, giving a face to the city dweller and identity to the city. The spectator's imaginative participation is the means whereby the identity of the faceless figure proceeds to the invisible whole of a specific city image. Representations of the city in its various forms, from the contained walled medieval city, to the idealized views of the impressionists, or the fragmented and multi-layered interpenetrations of the photo realists, indicate the various kinds of identity cities are imbued with in our imagination. The embodied memory of cities that we have recognised is integrated with our self-identity and becomes part of our body and being. Does the city destroy individual identity, enveloping it with its own, or does it provide the city dweller with a unique identity through experience?

Key words: empathy, projection, embodied, urban environment, relay, *rugfiguur*

Beskouings van die stad: verbeelding deur gesiglose figure

Hierdie artikel ondersoek die wyses waarop die beeld van die stad deur verskeie kunstenaars in spesifieke eras veronderstel, uitgebeeld en ervaar is. Die betrokkenheid van die menslike liggaam in die beeld, deur uitbeeldings van gesiglose rugfigure, kommunikeer empatiese projeksie. Gebaseer op die omgewing wat deur die gesiglose figuur uitgebeeld word, projekteer die toeskouer 'n denkbeeldige identiteit of teenwoordigheid vir die figuur in die uitbeelding, wat aan die stadsbewoner 'n beeld en identiteit die stad verskaf. Die toeskouer se verbeeldingryke deelname is die wyse waardeur die identiteit van die gesiglose figuur vorder tot die onsigbare geheel van 'n spesifieke stadsbeeld. Uitbeeldings van die stad in sy verskeie vorme, van die ommuurde middeleeuse stad, tot die geïdealiseerde sieninge van die impressioniste, of the gefragmenteerde en gelaagde interpenetrasies van die foto-realistie, dui die verskillende tipes identiteite aan wat stede in ons verbeelding aanneem. Die vergestaltung van stede wat ons in ons geheue in herinnering roep, is met ons eie identiteit geïntegreer en raak deel van ons liggaam en wese. Vernietig die stad individuele identiteit en verswelg dit met sy eie, of verskaf dit aan die stadsbewoner 'n eie unieke identiteit deur middel van ervaring?

Slutelwoorde: Empatie, projeksie, beliggaam, stedelike omgewing, skakel, *rugfiguur*

The opportunity for empathetic bodily projection is possible in various depictions, be it paintings or photographs. This is especially true when a human figure is depicted in an urban setting. The figure presents the opportunity of imaginative placing of the spectator in the image and highlights the how the individual relates to the urban landscape. Esrock (2010: 219: 224) describes empathy as the highest level of projection of some aspect of one's self into objects. This forms the basis for interpretation of these images related to the city. I will refer to several examples that allow for this interaction and will base the argument that this projection allows for the projection of identity, based on the views on embodied reaction of Esrock and Pallasmaa (2005).

The *rugfiguur*¹ (Van den Berg 2009) (a human figure standing with their back turned to the viewer) draws one in, inviting spectator participation in the depicted scene. The *rugfiguur*

may take several forms, but this faceless figure creates the possibility for the spectator to imbue the body with the identity of an imagined face. An architectural feature, such as a column, can also serve to introduce the body. The anthropomorphic quality of the column allows for it to be interpreted as a faceless *rugfiguur*. In imagining this facial identity for the depicted figure, the spectator also imagines it as mirroring the specific urban setting, creating a confluence of the character of person and scene.

In the *Annunciation* by an anonymous artist from the workshop of Fra Filippo Lippi (figure 1), a prominent column is placed very specifically near the centre of the depicted scene. This basic architectural element with its origins and orders based in human form could be viewed in different ways. It could be a remnant of a scenographic reduction of a whole edifice, remaining as part of the wall that has been removed, revealing the image as an event on the stage. The column is further a way of emphasising the moment of interaction between the figures in the scene, the Angel and Virgin, and draws the spectator's gaze toward this activated space. It provides for a shift of focus toward the dialogue space. This space in between creates an opening for the spectator. When the anthropomorphised column gains the quality of a third figure in the image it places the spectator *in* the narrative. In this way the spectator is included in the event and its experience is made personal. Through the bodily projection into the image by means of the column as a quasi-human figure, the narrative gains vividness as is intended in the depictions of biblical events. The depiction of the Annunciation reveals the invisible moment of the Incarnation. The spectator is required to add to the image through their imagination and knowledge of the narrative so as to create a vivid image.



Figure 1
Fra Filippo Lippi (workshop). The Annunciation, ca. 1406-1469, tempera on wood, 40x69cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.
 (source: Casey 2002: 2).

The column is placed exactly in front of the doorway in the rear wall of the cell-like enclosure. The doorway opens on the exterior scenery (perhaps a garden, perhaps a human settlement) – but the spectator's view on this exterior world is obstructed, also indicating that an extraordinary effort is required to imagine the invisible environment in which the Annunciation events take place.

Depictions of the city as viewed by a *rugfiguur*, or from an elevated perspective such as a map, provide a way to understand both ways of experiencing and imagining the city. As the city changed and continues to change, the interpretation of these places, the edges and boundaries that are experienced physically or through projection into an image, are explored in order to

communicate the sense of these places. The comparison between two apparently divergent methods of depiction, that of mapping and painting, are brought together through the experience of the lived body (Casey 2005: xiv, xviii).

Casey describes the role of the lived body in terms of landscape, but it can also be applied to the experience of urban spaces. The human body generates the sense of place, so we may understand what it is to be there and to navigate through it:

Such a body is at once the organ and the vehicle of the painted or constructed map, the source of “knowing one’s way about,” thus of knowing how we can be said to be acquainted with a certain landscape (Casey 2005: xvii).

Next we proceed from a depiction of an inanimate column to the faceless human figure as the locus of imaginary projection. If we move from one depiction of a narrative where the body is invited in as a spectator, to a similar religious scene by Jan van Eyck, the exterior world of the city beyond the palace is revealed, visible to the spectator between the arcade rear of a chancellor’s ornate palace chapel. In the *Annunciation* (figure 1) the interior place is the focus; the only reference to the exterior is suggested through architectural openings, a door or window. In the Van Eyck, the centre of the scene is provided with a relay in the form of two small figures leaning over the balustrade of the palace, seen from behind and peering out over the city. They cross the threshold between the interior of the chapel and the exterior of the urban environment. Doorways, windows and a balustrade as in this case, act as pictorial as well as social thresholds. The exchange between the life within and without, between interiority and exteriority, public and private as well as the imagined internal world and physical external reality are captured in these elements.

In the Van Eyck (figure 2), the city recedes into the background and is only partially visible such as a bridge over a river that recedes toward the horizon. Some buildings of a walled medieval city are visible on the banks of the river. We can imagine the city as spread out below us and extending outward from the vantage point of the palace as the two small figures peering out over the balustrade. The threshold between the chapel and the exterior activates our imagination and the two small faceless figures provide a position to participate in this imaginary and largely invisible extension of the urban and natural environment. We participate in this imagined world through the figure of chancellor Rolin as well, in the same devotional manner, kneeling with his prayer book open at the Mary litany, ritually repeating the Ave Maria greeting and the words of the angel of the Annunciation.

The miraculous appearance of Mary before his devotional eyes is similar to the ‘appearance’ of the city before our imaginative eyes. Due to the absence of the modern differentiation of private and public spheres (resulting from the privatisation of religion in secular urban environments) the chancellor’s Marian devotion in his chapel extends into the urban domain. If we compare the map of Brussels (figure 3), the urban environment Van Eyck experienced as he served in the court of the counts of Burgundy, the urban environment is seen as dominated by a cathedral as institutional sign of the ecclesiastical dominance of medieval society. The bird’s eye view of this city offers a mixture of topography and mapping and as Casey (2005: 3) notes, in this type of depiction of the city, the map becomes a window on a place through which the spectator looks as if from an elevated place.



Figure 2

Jan van Eyck, Madonna of Chancellor Rodin, 1435, oil on panel, 66x62cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre
 (source: http://www.artchive.com/artchive/ftptoc/van_eyck_ext.html).



Figure 3

Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg, Bruxella, urbs aulicorum frequentia, 1579, 48x35.5cm
 (source: <https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/enlarge/31378>).

When we move to the nineteenth century and the advent of the industrial metropolis, the depictions of the city and the figures within it speak of the changes within the urban environment, and the physical and social constructs that governed its identity in a specific time. The figure in Caillebotte's *Jeune homme a la fenêtre* (figure.4) is depicted as casually standing at the balustrade of his apartment overlooking a section of the industrialised metropolis below. Through the open window a street is visible, flanked by the six storied apartment blocks housing the growing urban population. A section through a typical apartment by Bertall (figure.5) illustrates the class differences of urban dwellers at the time, indicating the economic differences between the various inhabitants. This outward architectural expression of the various storeys of the apartment blocks served as clear indicator of the class distinctions (Kostof 1991: 263) but also refers to the machine-like order of the urban environment and those who dwell within in it, each located within their specific sphere. The casual observer in Caillebotte's painting is a probable member of the grand bourgeoisie living on the first or second storey. His confident easy pose as he gazes

at the typical nineteenth century Parisian scene draws the spectator into this moment of relaxed free time.



Figure 4

Gustave Caillebotte (1848-94), *Jeune homme à la fenêtre*, 1875, oil on canvas, 116x80cm, private collection
(source:http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:G._Caillebotte_-_Jeune_homme_%C3%A0_la_fen%C3%AAtre.jpg).

As in the Van Eyck (figure 2), the distinction between interior and exterior is definite. The balustrade again forms an edge, a threshold between the working people below in the city, and the casual observer in his elevated setting. Below on the street we see the small figure of a woman. Both the man standing at the balustrade and the spectators of the image, view her from an elevated position of power. She is no doubt of the working class and this image emphasises the class differences, as is done clearly in Bertall's illustration. If we compare this depiction with that of the 1867 map of Paris in topographic format with a bird's eye view (figure 5), the distinct impact of Haussmann's boulevards on the city is seen. The city now becomes too vast to be contained with walls, or within the frame of the image. Before the development of these vast cities, the urban environment could be measured by walkers and understood as visual totalities when observed from outside the city limits, or from an elevated place (Resina 2003: 5).

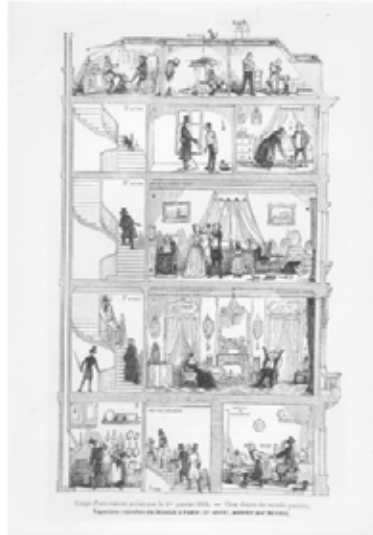


Figure 5
Charles Bertall, Section through Parisian apartment ,1845, L'Illustration, January 11, 1845
(source: Teyssot 2005:94).

New pictorial strategies had to be explored in order to be able to visually represent the metropolitan spread and differentiation of the built environment. At the same time the arts were no longer only for a select group, instead a larger and more anonymous public (mostly middle class) now viewed artists' work (Fleming 2005: 510). The inclusive image of the city as observed from a distance was no longer available except as "virtual compositions in the urban imaginary" (Resina 2003: 5). The contained city, protected by its walls and viewed in its entirety from a high vantage point had now broken the boundaries. The 19th century map of Paris (figure 6) reveals the panoramic views and open perspectives employed in an attempt to preserve the visibility and enclosed nature of the urban environment. The machine-like quality of this depiction, gained by the boulevards cutting through the dense urban fabric, is punctuated by well-known architectural features in Paris, such as the Arc de Triomphe.

The perceptual change does not mean that simply that a previously dominant architectural image has been displaced by a more abstract aviator's view. A downward-looking, remote perspective has not taken the place of an upward-looking, more absorbed one. The mutation, rather, is that architecture has become absolute as the sole or even primary medium for visualising the city (Resina 2003: 6).

We can imagine the woman in Caillebotte's depiction using such an imaginary orientation map to navigate the urban environment. The architecture as recognisable means of visualising the city could also act as relays in projecting oneself into the imagined spaces of the map. The function of a map is to show true location, and is indispensable to prevent becoming lost in cartographic space (Casey 2002: 152). The map presents our present location in relation to other possible locations, but the map forms part of the imagined city as do the possible other places we could navigate toward.

Pallasmaa (2005: 70) links the imagined and represented city to memory. Some places remain distant visual images whereas others become vividly remembered places. The strength of the remembered city impacts on the way we imagine cities and their sense of identity, both real and represented. When viewing Caillebotte's scene, we imagine both the immediate environment as it is viewed by the figure in his apartment, as it is experienced by the woman on

ground level and on a larger scale the entire city in its machine-like complexity beyond sensory experience. Casey (2002: xiv) sees the map, which allows for direct projection into the imagined urban space and even induce movement of the human body, as a more active representation than a painting of a scene.

Once maps are seen, they direct the movement of the whole body as it makes its way to the place on the map that is its destination (Casey 2002: xiv).

However, as we have seen, the *rugfiguur* acting as a relay does allow for the same level of projection even if it is on a different imaginative level. The way wherein the depiction of the *rugfiguur* and urban environment developed further brings further complexity into the possibility of embodied reactions.

The impressionists depicted moments of leisure time where figures view the workers on street level. The definitions between privacy and the experiences of entertainment as separate from the city are still in place, the *rugfiguur* views the city from his apartment behind the balustrade, the window serving as the threshold that reveals the city, although the spectator is within in the urban environment. The depictions of the futurists, where the city is experienced as an energy field and those who dwell within it become part of this vibrant dynamism is a further reaction on the increasing mechanisation of the urban environment.



Figure 6
Excursion dans Paris sans voitures: Nouveau guide du promener: Plan simplifié, indispensable
aux étrangers pour se guider seul dans Paris ,ca 1867
(source: UFS Department of Art history and visual culture collection).

In *Irumori della strada entra nella casa* by Boccioni (1911), the vivid depiction of the modern city starts to blur the clear edges between interior and exterior that thus far have been defined by balustrades, windows or doors. A fragment of the balustrade is visible as the faceless figure of a woman depicted from behind leans over it, and is drawn into the noise, movement and energy of the futurist's vision of modern industrialised city. The chapel or the *apartement* interior is replaced by the city that now penetrates the domestic space. The definition between interior and exterior that clearly existed in the Caillebotte or Van Eyck is partially erased and the threshold crossed. The destruction of the window frame as perceptual format, used since the Renaissance, forms part of the interpenetration of the city into the domestic environment. The rigid order and rhythm of the windows and structure of the apartment blocks echoing the structure of urban grid is also fragmented in Boccioni's depiction (figure 7).

Fragmentation

The changing relationship between the city dweller and the urban environment manifests in the depiction of the highly energised city and the absorption of the dweller into this dynamic ambience. Sound, movement and energy is visualised as waves breaking into the interior and the spectator is enveloped by the ever changing city, in an almost prophetic view of the city as indefinable conglomeration. The city that sprawls beyond the scope of the human sensory experience is hinted at here. Resina (2003: 11) describes the urban stage of modernity, the metropolis with new qualities of abstractness on the one hand and an accelerated rhythm of encounters on the other. The simultaneous experiences of the modern city comes into play, traffic, movement, light and sound all add to the sensory overload that the futurists revel in. The sense of enclosure, described as one of the most powerful and obvious ways of instilling a sense of position and identity with the surroundings (Cullen 1971: 29), is transcended in this depiction. The sense of position associated with the experience of the city, where the human body instinctively relates itself to the surroundings (Cullen 1971: 10) and forms part of the separate identity of the individual is enveloped by the energy field of the city. The body of the *rugfiguur* remains intact but is enveloped by the positive energy of the surroundings. The figure gains new freedom through the erasure of the edges. The apartments visible from the point of view of the *rugfiguur* gain a fragmented dynamism, also indicating the erasing of divisions between the classes and the added vibrancy of the city at the turn of the 20th century.



Figure 7

Umberto Boccioni, *I rumori della strada entra nella casa*, 1911, oil on canvas, 100x100.5cm,
Hannover, Sprengel museum

(source:http://www.sprengelmuseum.com/painting_and_sculpture/individual_artists/umbertoboccioni1.htm?bild_id=48092822&PHPSESSID=880939318fe3ba9e652c519d6e07c64d).

In Tullio Crali's work (figure.8), the interpenetration and differentiation of the urban environment is depicted from a bird's eye view, but the clearly defined identifiable city map is replaced by fragmented and imagined buildings without clear points of orientation or routes. The city and the dive bomber draw each other in and the vertiginous effect of the one on the other emphasises the dangerous qualities of the mechanised city. In this depiction the urban environment is not only the vibrant, energised entity Boccioni depicts, but Crali focuses on the elements of almost uncontrollable speed on the one hand, and the dehumanised city devoid of people on the other.

The apartment blocks are again depicted with a rigid order to the placement of window openings. The urban environment – imagined through the eyes of the faceless pilot as only a collection of buildings without human targets – fragments in the path of the plane. Even though the threshold is emphasised by the cockpit, and the window frame takes its place again as intact element, the edges between city and figure are crossed. The headlong rush of the pilot toward, and into the city, is emphasised by the light that reaches toward the figure as an explosion or a sublime invitation.



Figure 8

Tullio Crali. *Incuneandosi nell'abitato*, 1939, oil on plywood, 130x155cm, London, Estorick collection
(source: <http://www.midcenturia.com/2010/12/tullio-crali-paintings.html>).

If we compare these depictions to the contemporary photographs in the *Mannequin* series of Lee Friedlander (2012), the interpenetration and mutual fragmentation of identity of the urban environment and human body is evident (figure 8). In a monochrome photograph of a glazed storefront, a mannequin is posed to be viewed by potential consumers. The highly reflective surface of the glass, however, obscures the features of the figure and replaces the face with the reflections of the buildings opposite. The grid-like buildings obscure the face of the mannequin. In this case, the faceless substitute for the human body is consumed by the reflected environment, and is less accessible as a relay than the figures in Boccioni or Crali's paintings. Even though the mannequin faces the spectator, the embodied projection is much more difficult to achieve, because the face is not hidden and free to be imagined, but fragmented by the grid of the reflected buildings. The interplay between the figure, as a surrogate to a real human figure, and the face of the city results in the blurred edge between city, identity and the spectator of the work.



Figure 9
Lee Friedlander, Friedlander's mannequin, 2010, photograph
 (source: Friedlander 2012).

The loss of identity and continuing interpenetration of city and individual create a sense of captivity and loss of the ability to orientate and navigate beyond the vast urban setting. William Kentridge explores the notion of being held captive by the urban environment, especially in a South African context where these settings have a highly politicised connotation. In a still taken from his film, *Johannesburg, second greatest city after Paris*, the *rugfiguur* is present once again, standing at a bridge or highway overpass, confronted with the words Captive of the City written on a billboard. The figure is confronted with his own vulnerability as he faces the complex and overwhelming setting as a combat zone or urban wilderness. Again a level of interpenetration and layering is present, but in this sense the positive energy of Boccioni's work (figure 6) is replaced by the ominous reflective environment that clones and erases individual identity.

The city itself can no longer be presented as a clear model. It appears more and more fractal, as it is continuously being built up and torn down. The image of the city in this sense, if one can imagine it, is striking in its immateriality (Flusser 2005: 326, Schlereth 2004: online). Kentridge's sketches that are continuously drawn and erased capture this immateriality in charcoal lines and further illustrate the level of involvement between the body and the environment. Pallasmaa (2005: 64) states that "it is impossible to detach the image of the Self from its spatial and situational existence". With the sense of identity so closely linked to place, the fragmentation of the city and how it is understood reflects the constant changes in identities linked to the urban landscape.

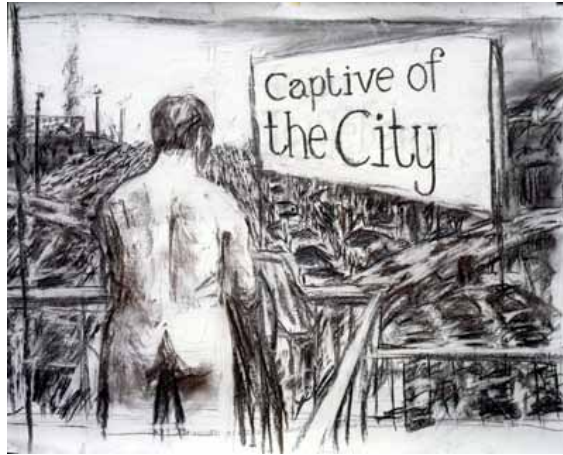


Figure 10

**William Joseph Kentridge (1955 -), Johannesburg, 2nd greatest city after Paris, 1989, film 35mm
shown as projection, 8min, London, Tate
(source: UFS Department of Art history and visual culture collection).**

In *Phone Booths*, by Richard Estes (figure 11), the reflective surfaces of the row of booths, placed in the centre of our field of vision, reflect and obscure passers-by as well as those engaged in conversation in the booth. On the one hand, it obscures the surrounding urban environment; on the other, it captures and encloses the human figures, whom in this way also become captives of the city. Casey (2002: 17) sees this type of representational painting as standing before us as a 'self announced surrogate' of the scene. In the same way that the column in the Fra Filippo Lippi workshop *Annunciation* (figure 1) functions as a scenographic remnant, as well as a possible relay, but also blocks the view through the opening toward the exterior world, the reflective surfaces of the booths form an edge between the spectator and our view of the city beyond. The *rugfiguur* is no longer recognisable and our own relay for understanding and imagining this urban space is now also fragmented. The figures we do recognise are completely immersed in the captivating city, but we as spectators cannot as easily share their immersion and are confronted with the inability to project into the fragmented urban environment.



Figure 11

**Richard Estes, Telephone booths, 1967, Acrylic on board, Madrid,
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza
(source: http://www.museothyssen.org/en/thyssen/zoom_obra/382).**



Figure 12

Richard Estes, *Food City*, 1967, acrylic on board, New York, Marlborough Gallery
 (source: http://www.artnet.com/usernet/awc/awc_workdetail.asp?aid=139829&gid=139829&cid=15766&wid=425992890).

In the painting *Food City* (figure 12), Estes further explores the fragmented and cloned identity of the contemporary city dweller. The glazed storefront with the neatly stacked and priced consumables is depicted with the city outside reflected in the glass. At the same time, the figures of those inside the store or outside in the street are continuously reflected and copied. A single column in the centre of the image remains intact, reflecting only light on its steel surface. Much as in the *Annunciation* (figure 1), this column also functions as both a scenographic remnant and as relay for the observer. The column is the only element that remains intact, un-copied and is not reflected back in the city or interior. The structure gains a moment of permanence while the figures and the city itself are diffused and dispersed. The continuously reflected figures are more part of the structure of the urban environment in its reflective surfaces, than the steel column in the centre of the image. The edge between interior and exterior, public and private is essentially erased through the mutual fragmentation.

Of course, the changes in the urban environment have elicited different reactions and confronted artists with the image of a dynamically changing world (Fleming 2005: 481). Nineteenth century reactions to the highly industrialised and rapidly changing urban environment offer a glimpse into the effect on those who dwell in it. The romantic depictions of the city, viewed from a distance, where the city dwellers remove themselves from the urban environment is indicative of a level of escapism.

The idea of ‘back-to-nature’ grew steadily and became a popular way of escaping for those who lived in the city and dreamed of an idyllic country life. The role of a lone man as master over nature as in Friedrich’s *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* (figure 13) reflects the strong reaction to the consuming industrialised city. He stands alone facing the awe inspiring expanse of nature guided only by his own sense of reason and ‘inner light’. The haunting space presents a sense of imminent danger, but also the powerful aesthetic force of the sublime that could easily overwhelm him, but he remains in control (Fleming 2005: 481, 505, 509). The dangerous play between control and the loss thereof speaks of the experience of the city dweller. The environment before Friedrich’s *wanderer* is too vast for his senses to experience. Its infinity and complexity threatens destruction, but he remains in control. Through our own embodied projection we, as the spectators, also experience the uncertain balance between control and destruction.

The contemporary urban inhabitant is constantly confronted with the abyss of complete immersion in the city and the complete loss of self. Much as the nineteenth century city dweller was confronted with the mechanisation that presents both freedom and regulation, the contemporary inhabitant faces immersion in the urban environment, regulation and loss of control but also the freedom of infinite connections and possibilities. The sublime is no longer confined only to the romantic depictions of a natural environment but also captured in the city itself. Contemporary artists must confront the vast and ever growing urban environment and its implications in the same way that the romantic painters had to come to terms with the industrialised city. Elina Brotherus consciously refers to Friedrich's work in one of her photographs, *Der wanderer* (figure 14).



Figure 13
Caspar David Friedrich (1817-1818) *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer*, 1818, oil on canvas,
Hamburg Kunsthalle
(source: Fleming 2005: 480).

A woman in this case, with her back turned to the photographer stands on the edge of a rock formation looking out over the sublime landscape. Her pose is less open and confidently relaxed than the man in Friedrich's painting. She stands with arms folded and seems to be tentatively considering the possibility of being overwhelmed. There is less power over the environment than in Friedrich's work, but it remains an escape. In the contemporary city the all-encompassing communication networks, digitised and wireless connections in essence urbanises not only those who dwell in the city but all those who have a connection to the network. The possibility of being overwhelmed by the city is more threatening and more immediate, the possibility of losing control tangible.



Figure 14
Elina Brotherus, *Der Wanderer*, 2004
 (source: <http://www.elinabrotherus.com>).

At the closing ceremony of the 2013 Tour de France, the Arc de Triomphe served as the canvas for a series of digital projections. The recognisable architectural element of Paris, which in part represents the city's identity is fragmented and re-imagined through the use of these digital projections. The structure is given a mechanised quality (0:51) or is fragmented and diffused to be replaced by new projected images. In parts of the projection the Champs de Elysées and Arc de Triomphe are projected onto the physical structure (1:10 min). The city projects its own identity onto one of its most recognisable and identifiable elements and fragments the permanence thereof. The permanent, stable structure so tangible associated with the identity of Paris is given a dynamic impermanence through the use of the same digital technology that can both connect and overwhelm its inhabitants.

The architecture that could serve as relay for imaginative projection and orientation in the physical and imagined map is given a fragmented uncertainty. If the Arc de Triomphe can be projected onto itself, then it could also be projected onto other buildings and clone itself, as the cloned and reflected figures in Estes' depictions. The image of the contemporary city now emerges from the variety of communication and digital media. It is generated by the manipulation of existing images and mechanical reproductions available to urban marketers (Resina 2003: 6). Pallasmaa (2005: 68) places emphasis on the role of presence in our capacity for remembering and imagining places:

We have an innate capacity for remembering and imagining places. Perception, memory and imagination are in constant interaction; the domain of presence fuses into the images of memory and fantasy. We keep constructing an immense city of evocation and remembrance, and all the cities we have visited are precincts in this metropolis of the mind.

If the sense of presence is diffused the way the city is imagined gains a level of uncertainty. Yet, the identity of the city and our own imagining of it might be enhanced by this sense of immersion.

An embodied memory has an essential role as the basis of remembering a space or a place. We transfer all the cities and towns that we have visited, all the places that we have recognised, into the incarnate memory of our body. Our domicile becomes integrated with our self-identity; it becomes part of our own body and being (Pallasmaa 2005: 72).

The immersion of the body in place is the key to the imagined as well as depicted urban landscape.



Figure 15
Arc de Triomphe digital projections, 2013, digital video, 1:33min,
Centennial Tour de France awards ceremony
(source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NETRpxSftpk&list=LLneX9VmlpX1tDrpfhGiJuBA>).

If we return to the contemporary South African city, Guy Tillim's photograph (figure 16) in Berea, Johannesburg reveals a woman that can engage with the urban environment presented to her.



Figure 16
Guy Tillim. Al's Tower, Harrow road, Berea, overlooking the Ponte building, 2004
(source: *Digest of South African Architecture* 2008: 57).

The woman in Tillim's photograph again takes on the role of the *rugfiguur*, but she has an added sense of dynamism. She isn't solemnly contemplating the sublime landscape of an escapee, nor is she a captive or fragmented figure. She is walking forward on the roof of the apartment block in Berea, actively participating, moving toward the city. She experiences it through her body, her bare feet on the concrete roof, her scale related to that of the Ponte building and the city below. She becomes a *flâneur* with both the sense of movement invoked by the term, but also gains a sense of detachment. She is viewing the city from above, not as casually as the man in Ciallebotte's depiction nor as vulnerable as in Kentridge's work.

The panorama induces voyeurism as the characteristically modern approach to the city; *flânerie*, so often invoked in connection to movement in the street, is, in view of the *flâneur*'s objective

detachment in his ritual scopism, less a practice than a liturgy of social self-removal (from the crowd and everything it stands for) and control through the eye – in short, a means of spectacularizing the social world while dispensing with the need to acknowledge one's position in it. (Resina 2003: 8)

As an added static observer the Ponte building occupying the centre of the image, gains the same embodied role as the column in the *Annunciation* (figure 1). It represents not only the city as a figure, the faceless identity continuously reflected in its wall of glass, but also serves as a relay, it takes on the role of the column or a second *rugfiguur* in the urban narrative. The building here creates the embodied and lived existential metaphor Pallasmaa (2005: 71) argues for, so that our being in the world may be concretised.

Dispersion

The diffusion of the natural environment with no boundary or edge or end, versus the fragmentation of the city as prison or true environment for escape are both indicative of the overwhelming power of the city and the imagination. The choice between the escape from the constraints of the urban environment and complete immersion can be understood through this final work by Hanneke Benade (figure 17).



Figure 17

Hanneke Benade, *Reservoir*, 2011, pastel on white cotton paper, Bloemfontein, Oliewenhuis.

In this work, a woman with her back turned to the viewer is walking slowly into a body of water. The sky is reflected in the surface, only slightly disturbed by the ripples caused by her tentative movement. This undefined boundless environment can be compared to both the urban and natural environment on several levels. The undefined environment that she is moving into assumes the same sense of overwhelming power and sublime immersion as the Friedrich (figure 13) or Brotherus (figure 14) works. In the same way that the contemporary city with all its complexity and overwhelming power presents an environment with no discernible end, borders or depth in the imagination, the body of water is indeterminate in this image. The city could either assume the persona of the labyrinth where you could lose yourself completely, but still have some level of control; or that of the prison that captures but also disperses those who dwell within it.

The moment in this depiction becomes an instant on a crossroads between the good or evil interpretations of the city and of the natural environment. The city can embody either good or

evil, or both simultaneously. The uncertainty of the woman's motives in Benade's image creates an intense moment of embodied projection and internal contemplation where we confront ourselves with the same choice. Is she confronting her own mortality and attempting to disperse her own self-image in the fragmented surface, caused by her own movement. Or is she releasing herself from the constraints of the environment and releasing herself into the boundless freedom?

The progression in the way the *rugfiguur* is depicted in the urban environment, and how we as spectators of the work, are able to project our own embodied reactions into the image, creates interaction.

The experience and representation of the urban environment is closely related to the embodied projection of the spectator or urban resident. Identity is influenced by the fragmented complexity of contemporary urban environments on various levels. In Tillim's photograph (figure 16), both the *rugfiguur* and architectural element are present as imaginative relays.

All art, classical and modern, is 'interactive' in the sense that it requires the active imaginative and cognitive involvement of its recipient. There is a tendency to overlook this fact and to interpret 'interaction' literally as the pressing of a button, the choosing of a link or the moving of one's body. (Van de Vall 2008: 140)

The way the human body, especially in the form of the *rugfiguur*, is involved in several depictions related to the city and its experience created a relay for interpreting the changing experience. Even with the introduction of interactive digital media into the way the city image is developed, the interactive interpretation of the environment has been possible throughout by our own interaction with the *rugfiguur*.

The importance of imaginative projection in our ability to experience the city in its various forms is brought forward by the role of the *rugfiguur*. Our own ability to imagine the city is enhanced through this relay, and hampered when the figure we are confronted with in the image is difficult to recognise or imagine. The city becomes inaccessible without the soliciting action of the recognisable human figure.

As we have seen, it is through the spectator's imaginative participation that the identity of the faceless figure extends into the invisible whole of a specific city image. The choice remains, does the city dweller allow the environment to imprison them or provide them with unique opportunities for an amalgamated identity? In the contemporary South African urban environment the choice is dynamically represented by Tillim's (figure 16) and Benade's (figure 17) works. The *rugfigure* in both images, are actively moving forward, engaging with the environment before them. Casey's (2002: xvi) statement that wherever place is at stake in human experience the body will be involved, serves to illustrate the way the *rugfiguur* allows for effective empathetic projection and how the removal of the recognisable human body impacts on the way the city is interpreted and experienced. Ultimately the choice lies in the reading of possibility.

The possibility created in this in-between moment is charged with imaginative potency. It is between spectator, *rugfiguur* and urban landscape that the imagination is activated. In order to understand this ever changing environment, both the depiction of the city and the relay that leads us in are necessary. Even in linking our identity to the city as place, we are allowing for its fragmentation and dispersion as the very essence of the urban environment is its transience in terms of its own image. As we have seen, the depictions and modes of understanding the city has adapted through the ages, to a subject that refuses to pose calmly for a portrait. The city as both character and landscape forces us to adjust the way we view it, and ourselves.

Note

I use Van den Berg's Afrikaans term *rugfiguur* here, since it accurately describes the human figure with their back turned to the spectator

in a succinct and accurate way, more so than the direct English translation of back figure.

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City Walls to city streets: utopias of dissent

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Lewis Mumford makes the case that the first (western) utopia was a City, and that the first (western) City was a utopia, and David Harvey similarly iterates that “[t]he figures of ‘the city’ and of ‘Utopia’ have long been intertwined”. The fates of these two constructs are thus seemingly indissolubly linked. Regrettably, this initial construct, the City as utopia / utopia as the City, very shortly mutated into the originary dystopia, inaugurating the conception of the City as a place of suffering and social ills. This inherent dystopian aspect of the early City can be traced to the impulse to control and exclude, a phenomenon not limited to the Cities and utopias of antiquity, but concretely constitutive of the spatial and social geographies of a critical mass of contemporary global cities. This article interprets the works of street artists Banksy, Mustafa Hulusi, Invader and Ben Wilson as exemplary of the production of an alternative utopia which seeks to undermine the dystopian elements of the City. Their work is based on criticality and dissent generated in the city street. This reading is done from a Marxist perspective, based largely on the writings of David Harvey, and interprets the praxis of the artists discussed as the visual embodiment of the explicit or implicit critique of the contemporary deep structure of the dystopian City.

Keywords: City, Utopia, David Harvey, Marxism, Graffiti, Street Art, Globalisation

Stadsmure na stedelike strate: utopias van verset

Lewis Mumford redeneer dat die Stad die eerste (westerse) utopia was en dat die eerste (westerse) Stad ’n utopia was. David Harvey beaam Mumford se stelling, en bevestig die vroeë ineenstrengeling van utopia en die Stad. Die Stad en utopia deel dus skynbaar ’n onlosmaaklike geskiedenis. Ongelukkig het hierdie vroeë konstruk, naamlik die Stad as utopia / utopia as die Stad, spoedig ontaard in die oorspronklike distopia, en sodoende aanleiding gegee tot die wyd aanvaarde idee van die Stad as ’n plek waar menslike lyding en sosiale ongewensdhede hooggety vier. Die wortel van hierdie inherente distopiese aspek van die vroeë Stad kan herlei word na die menslike impuls om te beheer en uit te sluit, en spreek dus nie slegs tot Stede en utopias uit die antieke era nie, maar verwesenlik die konkrete ruimtelike en sosiale geografie van die meerderheid van hedendaagse wereldstede. Hierdie artikel interpreteer die werke van straatkunstenaars Banksy, Mustafa Hulusi, Invader en Ben Wilson as verteenwoordigend van die skepping van ’n alternatiewe utopia wat die distopiese elemente van die Stad ondermyn, en wat gebaseer is op ’n kritiese verset wat voortspruit uit die alledaagse kultuur van die stedelike straat. Die werke word bespreek vanuit ’n Marxistiese perspektief soos gebaseer op die werk van David Harvey. Verder word die praktyk van die gekose kunstenaars geïnterpreteer as die visuele konkretisering van implisiete sowel as eksplisiete verset teen die huidige diep struktuur van die distopiese Stad.

Sleutelwoorde: Stad, Utopia, David Harvey, Marxisme, Graffiti, Straatkuns, Globalisering

Lewis Mumford (1965) makes the case that the first (western) utopia was a City, and that the first (western) City was a utopia, and David Harvey (2000: 156) similarly iterates that “[t]he figures of ‘the city’ and of ‘Utopia’ have long been intertwined”.¹ The fates of these two constructs are thus seemingly indissolubly linked. Limiting his focus to western conceptions of utopia, Mumford (1965: 271) notes that “utopias from Plato to Bellamy² have been visualized largely in terms of the city ... the first utopias we know were fabricated in Greece [and] the Greeks were never able to conceive of a human commonwealth except in the concrete form of a city”. Regrettably, this initial construct, the City as utopia / utopia as the City, very shortly mutated into the originary dystopia, inaugurating the conception of the City as a place of suffering and social ills. Mumford (1965: 271) describes this utopia almost instantly derailed

as the outcome of the impulse to control and exclude elements considered to be undesirable or threatening to social order and hierarchy. This is for Mumford the key to understanding the authoritarian aspect of utopias, in general. Whilst the fascist undertone of the vast majority of (pre-World War II) utopias is undeniable, this article seeks to explore alternative conceptions of utopia which consciously undermine authoritarianism and systemic brutality, and which do so within the context of the lived urban experience, or, the city. This alternative utopia is explored in terms of the prototypically urban art forms of graffiti and street art. In order to understand the nature and scope of the alternative conception of urban life embodied in these creative urban interventions, it is necessary to describe the orderly (fascist) utopia in more detail.

The utopia of the wall

Mumford (1965: 272) finds himself confronted by the totalitarianism of Plato's *Republic* and notes that "far from being a desirable model [the *Republic*] was the prototype of the fascist state, even though neither Hitler nor Mussolini nor yet Stalin exactly qualified for the title of Philosopher-King". The social arrangement envisaged by Plato contrasted with that of earlier agrarian dispensations, where groups of people congregated in villages and practiced subsistence farming. The City needed to be self-contained and independent (thus able to defend itself as well as attack other Cities), and to be constituted of necessarily separate classes, namely 'husbandmen' and craftsmen, military protectors, and "a special caste of 'guardians'" (Mumford 1965: 273). The breakdown of society into producers and consumers, those who 'regulate' the system, by force if needs be, and those in charge, is thus demarcated and extolled. (As an aside, it would be difficult to imagine Plato envisioning himself as a craftsman – given his antagonism towards art, generally – or a guardian, and one is left to speculate that Plato probably saw himself in the role of the king). This utopian vision necessitates a society constituted of individuals who never question their class or their role in it, who mind their own business, take orders and don't retort (Mumford 1965: 273). Mumford (1965: 273-274) fleshes out this lurid vision:

To make sure of perfect obedience, no 'dangerous thoughts' or disturbing emotions must be permitted: hence a strict censorship that extends even to music. To ensure docility, the guardians do not hesitate to feed the community with lies: they form, in fact, an archetypal Central Intelligence Agency within a Platonic Pentagon.

Mumford regrets what for him remains a severely restricted vision witnessed in other early Greek thinkers as well, none of whom were able to imagine a multi-national, poly-cultured polis (to say nothing of a polis amenable to constructive gender interaction), nor the abolition of class hierarchies, or war. In fact, Mumford (1965: 274) concludes, Plato's utopian City is a construct with one aim in mind, namely the optimisation of the capacity to make war, for the reason that "only in war is such stringent authority and coercion temporarily tolerable".

To summarise, the City as utopia, and utopia as the City, was established as a construct to impose and regulate "cosmic order" (Mumford 1965: 281), in social and spatial terms. Thus the notion of order in utopia, and in the City, is central. The City Wall, which holds chaos at bay, becomes the leitmotif of the utopia of order (see figures 1 and 2). Figure 2 shows a group of symmetrically arranged cities, described as 'slumless' and 'smokeless', around a *Central City* as conceived by Sir Ebenezer Howard. Howard's urban vision was inspired by Bellamy's *Looking backward* (Harvey 2000: 165). In Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* not only the City but society as a whole is corralled (see figure 3). More substitutes the excluding Wall with a man-made moat that severs the island from the mainland, but the notion of segregation is no less embodied.

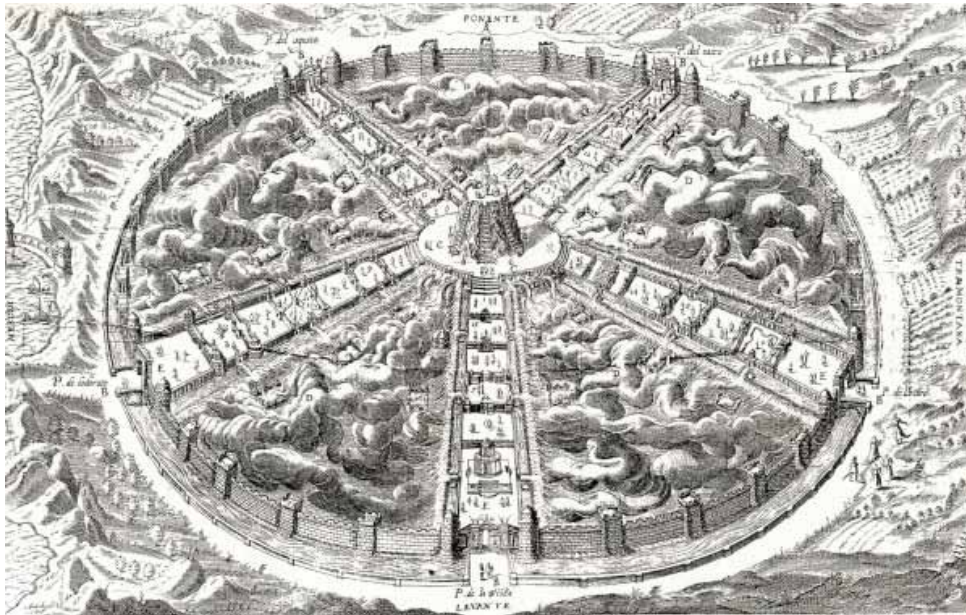


Figure 1
 Artist unknown, engraving of the *City of Truth* as conceived by Bartolomeo Del Bene, 1609
 (source: Utopias illustrated S.a.).

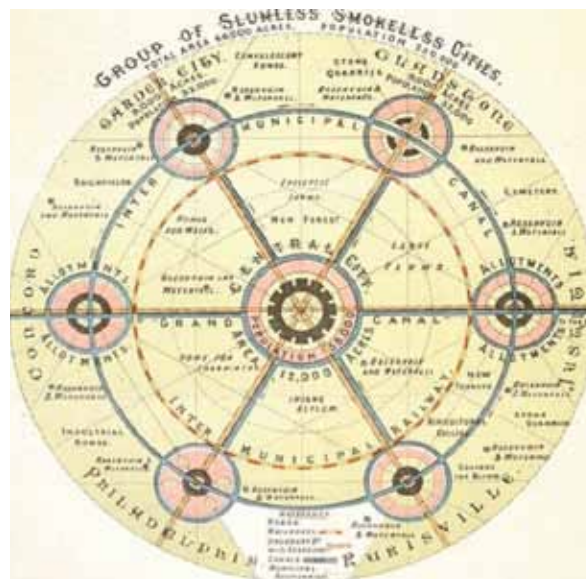


Figure 2
 Sir Ebenezer Howard, illustration of a group of cities around a *Central City*,
 inspired by Bellamy's *Looking backward*, 1898
 (source: Bliss 2011).

Echoing Mumford, Northrop Frey (1965: 325) observes that “utopia is primarily a vision of the orderly city, with its abstract pattern of streets and buildings”. Interpreting the impulse to create orderly utopias from a Lacanian perspective, Joshua Nichols (2008: 460) argues that the act of exclusion foregrounds precisely what the utopian City lacks. The City is built upon a desire

to embody order, stability and rationality, but it is arguably the inescapable presence of the opposite of these ideals that compels the City to identify *carriers* of these undesirable iniquities, and then exclude them. The City itself becomes a Wall, or barrier, and exists as “an ideal field of containment or *cordon sanitaire*³ ... [which] diagnoses and prescribes in an attempt to spatially contain, control, and if possible expel that which it judges to be pathological” (Nichols 2008: 460). This execrable aspect of the City which is constantly yet unsuccessfully in the process of being expelled coalesces as an “urban artefact that is both estranged from the city and at the heart of it” (Nichols 2008: 468), or, the Lacanian extimate – that which is simultaneously exterior and intimate, an internal shadow.



Figure 3
Artist unknown, illustration of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*.
(source: Two men enter 2012).

The City thus ontologically houses its own other, the urban abject. Karl Marx (in Nichols 2008: 469) lists this motley (revolting) assembly as “vagabonds, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, *lazzaroni*, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, *macquereaus*, brothel-keepers, porters, *literati*, organ-grinders, ragpickers, knife-grinders, tinkers, beggars, in short, the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass thrown hither and thither, which the French call *la bohème*”. This constitutes Marx’s description of the odious *lumpenproletariat* and neatly encapsulates a simultaneous distaste in chaos, rampant sexuality, indolence, criminality and

foreignness. One of the most discomfiting twentieth century visions of the cleansed and orderly City remains le Corbusier's *Ville Contemporaine* (Contemporary City), where the underclasses have been excised on an heroic scale (see figure 4). Thus the City, despite its Walls and order, is home to the unhomely, a situation which elicits Nichols's (2008: 471) pronouncement that "Architecture begins with shame". It is this architecture, "driven by the neurotic desire for utopia" – thus, the City – that has been, "up to this point, a misadventure" (Nichols 2008: 472).

Nor is the foreboding City solely an ancient phenomenon. Geographer David Harvey (2000) describes what has become of the utopian City (already somewhat of a behemoth), under neoliberal capitalism. He details several 'utopias' simultaneously vying for dominance in his home city, Baltimore. There is developer's utopia, as seen in the renewal of Baltimore's Inner Harbour, closely aligned with yuppie utopia which reflects the gentrification and renewal of the city's Canton District, and several suburban privatopias, or urban gated communities. These are the city's "ghettoes of affluence", 'bourgeois utopias' that "undermine concepts of citizenship, social belonging, and mutual support ... constructed on exclusionary lines ... of segregation (primarily of class but also with a powerful racial thread)" (Harvey 2000: 149-150). Saskia Sassen (2011: 221) similarly refers to "the growing ghettoization of the poor and rich" in the contemporary City. Baltimore's utopias of affluence have developed as an integral part of the increased disparity between the rich and poor which Harvey emphasises is the urban reality of every nation state that has adopted neoliberal capitalism as its model of development and progress, that has given itself over "energetically to the utopianism of the market" (Harvey 2000: 177). Exemplary of the phenomenon of critical disparity that is the hall mark of the neoliberal late modern City, Harvey (2000: 136-137) cites the shocking discrepancy between the world class facilities of the Johns Hopkins hospital, "among the best in the world", and life expectancy in its immediate surrounds which is "among the lowest in the nation and comparable to many of the poorer countries in the world".



Figure 4
Le Corbusier, aerial view of *La Ville Contemporaine*
(source: Wolfe 2011).

All of the development driven utopias in Baltimore, and every global City, coalesce in the meta-construct described by Harvey as degenerate utopia. Degenerate utopias (a term formulated by

Louis Marin), “perpetuate the fetish of commodity culture”, and Marin pinpoints Disneyland as a representative example (Harvey 2000: 167). Harvey (2000: 167) explains:

Disneyland eliminates the troubles of actual travel by assembling the rest of the world, properly sanitized and mythologized, into one place of pure fantasy ... stability and harmony are secured through intense surveillance and control ... hierarchal forms of authority preclude conflict or deviation from a social norm ... All of this is degenerate ... because it offers no critique of the existing state of affairs on the outside.

In short, Disneyland, or degenerate utopia, is as fascist as anything Plato could formulate, but with previously unimaginable totalised surveillance and control enabled by technology and set within the neoliberal dream of boundless consumption.

Wall Street utopia

How did the City, originally conceived as a utopia, become such a seemingly permanently ossified dystopia? One answer lies in the nature of utopia itself as explained by Mumford – utopia is born from the need for permanence and power. In the ancient City, this power was centred (as visualised in depictions of the literary and architectural utopias above), and its sphere of influence contained. The late modern City has not managed to evade this dystopian deep structure, but has merely become the concrete node of a much broader, more abstract and more ubiquitous system linked by global flows of people, goods, ideas, and, primarily, money. The dominant class, currently instrumental in the accumulation of a critical amount of wealth, determines the nature of the current utopia, shapes it to its needs, regardless of the “terrible trajectory that daily life [consequently] assumes” (Harvey 2000: 155).

The City, in the terms identified by Mumford and iterated by Harvey, has become the microcosm of the macrocosm that is global capitalist exchange, or, in Harvey’s (2000: 156) terminology, “raw money power”. Harvey (2000: 175) refers to the market driven aspect of capitalism as the utopianism of process, “by far the most powerful utopianism ... throughout the history of capitalism”. The perceived benefits of the free market were articulated by Adam Smith in the late eighteenth century, who argued that the free market economy was a system “in which individual desires, avarice, greed, drives, creativity, and the like could be mobilized through the hidden hand of the perfected market to the social benefit of all” (Harvey 2000: 175). In order to free the market, state intervention ostensibly needed to be minimised. An inherent irony of the ideology of *laissez-faire* capitalism however, is that it does in fact need to be regulated, often in ways that clash with notions of human rights and social justice. Harvey (2000: 178) states: “The free market, if it is to work, requires a bundle of institutional arrangements and rules that can be guaranteed only by something akin to state power. The freedom of the market has to be guaranteed by law, authority, force, and, *in extremis*, by violence” (original emphasis). This conception of ostensibly free *laissez-faire* trade became the principal trope of nineteenth century economists, and is the “ideology that has become so dominant in certain of the advanced capitalist countries [over] the last twenty years ... the system to which we are again and again told, ‘there is no alternative’” (Harvey 2000: 175).

Relating the forces unleashed by the global adoption (or, alternatively, enforcement) of capitalist ideologies, currently utopia as the City is predicated less on a stabilised, ordered *form* than on anarchic processes, more specifically, the processes generated by capitalist exchange and the (un)free market (Harvey 2000: 173). This utopia is not constituted of wholly disembodied

dynamism however, and shapes the urban environment in specific, material ways. Harvey (2000: 178) notes that “free-market capital accumulation plays across a variegated geographical terrain of resource endowments, cultural histories, communications possibilities, labor quantities and qualities”, and that this interplay of forces “produces an intensification of uneven geographical development in standards of living and life prospects”. An ostensibly democratising and equalising system thus acts as the engine to systemically inherent and intensifying inequality, which gives the utopian City of late modernity its particular form: pockets of dizzying affluence interspersed with ghettos and slums. This City is not regulated by a tangible boundary wall, but by the market forces emanating from Wall Street, which are every bit as exclusionary and regulatory as the ordering structures of the most rigid form-based utopias from antiquity onwards. Wall Street City has its own other: the blue collar worker, the migrant worker, the homeless, the unemployed, the refugee, the foreigner, the dissident: all members of the disenfranchised or excluded mass of humanity that seethes beneath the surface of the civilised City. The regulating capitalist Wall is selectively permeable (when for instance migrant workers are required to get the work done), but places a strangle hold on the actual opportunities and mobility of the new *lumpenproletariat*, and endangers the very odds of their physical survival. It is a less physically tangible wall, but more dangerously insidious, and cordons off whole generations and classes from reaching the safe, happy island of the mobile middle classes and the bourgeois autonomies and privileges that are, systemically, their allotment.

The mapped physical and ideological landscapes of the walled City as utopia and Wall Street utopia are gloomy. Mumford (1965: 278) feels that utopias of order, from antiquity to the twentieth century, lack “the cooperative and generative functions of life – feeling, emotion, playfulness, exuberance, free fantasy ... the liberating sources of unpredictable and uncontrollable creativity” without which “every utopia is a sterile desert, unfit for human occupation”. Besides stifling urban life, the latter (Wall Street utopia), is regarded by some as an actual impediment to survival. Martin Albrow (2011: 242) problematises the modern State’s “monopoly of legitimate violence” whereby global wars are justified in the name of democracy and development. Sassen (2011: 225) similarly highlights the danger posed to the modern City and its inhabitants by economically motivated global wars, noting that “[t]he disarticulation between national security and human security is becoming increasingly visible”. These ‘asymmetric’ conflicts also manifest as a war on the environment, and Sassen regards the erosion of human security and environmental integrity as an agenda for change.

Despite its many ominous facets, Harvey (2000) argues that utopia should not be abolished altogether, but reimagined, and calls for dialectical utopianism, where imaginative play and open experimentation form part of utopian endeavour. Rejecting the idea that there is no alternative to the neoliberal monoverse and the hold that it has on the modern urban landscape would permit “the exploration of a wide range of human potentialities (different modes of collective living, of gender relations, of production-consumption styles ...) [and would be a] means to explore alternative and emancipatory strategies” (Harvey 2000: 182). Michel Foucault challenged the spatial grid of late modern cities and the disciplining system that underlies it, by introducing the concept of heterotopia, identified as a space in which “difference, alterity, and the ‘other’ might flourish or ... actually be constructed” (Harvey 2000: 184). Of primary importance to the concept of an alternative utopia is the notion of agency, which foregrounds the reality that the social order has been constructed, and can therefore be deconstructed. Rather than exclude and regulate, altertopia takes cognisance of simultaneity, choice, diversity and difference, and, for Harvey (2000: 184):

enables us to look upon the multiple forms of deviant and transgressive behaviours and politics that occur in urban spaces ... as valid and potentially meaningful reassertions to some kind of right to shape parts of the city in a different image. It forces us to recognize how important it is to have spaces ... within which life is experienced differently [evincing] radically different social processes [that] disrupt the homogeneity to which society ... typically clings.

In this, the creative dissident plays a pivotal role, and Roberto M. Unger (in Harvey 2000: 187) argues that the “rigid grid of functional allocations ... deserve[s] to be smashed up at the micro-level of cultural-revolutionary defiance and incongruity”, a demolition on the scale of the street that nevertheless potentiates a broad, lived alternative reality.

And just as the City of stabilised form (unwillingly but by necessity) houses its abject other, the degenerate, anarchic utopia of the free market carries the anarchic seed of its own possible deconstruction within itself. Despite the repressive pervasiveness of the monoverse of neoliberal capitalist ideology and its global reach, the excluded are sensitised to the fact that there are indeed alternative ways of envisioning civil sociality and of practicing such alternatives. These alternative utopias are undermining, subversive, dangerous, funny, creative, playful, and poignant, and they are concretised in the streets of the late modern polis.

The utopia of the street

The utopias of deconstruction, which Harvey refers to as dialectical utopias, are envisaged here to be embodied in the praxis of subversive street artists in the late modern metropolis. The emphasis in this utopia of the street falls on agency and alterity, and the following section reads examples of street art as the manifestation of the will to dissent and to give artistic form to urban and systemic alienation. The utopia of the street does not seek to replace the given system with a new, overarching system, but to humanise the barrenness and hostility of Wall Street utopia and to turn the City into a city, with its potentially messy multivalency intact. In this sense, street art and the praxis of creating graffiti are interpreted as part of an ethical project.

Humour and the foregrounding of absurdity play a role in the utopia of the street, and can be deeply subversive. Georges Bataille (2001: 176) describes laughter as “the explosive and sudden revelation of the presence of being [which] casts a glance ... into the void of life”. Bringing the absurdities of the City to light is interpreted here as the production of difference, and is argued to be the core aspect of subversivity in general, and of the subversive street art discussed here, in particular. The work of London based graffiti artist Banksy is arguably exemplary of subversive, humorous street art, or, at the very least, can be described as of the best known street art globally. His praxis has earned him the accolade of representing “the cunning voice of dissent” (Lewisohn 2008: 117).

The graffiti in figure 5 is a twist on anarchist Emma Goldman’s pronouncement that ‘If voting changed anything they’d make it illegal’ (Lovely 2011). Banksy is thus reflecting on the iniquities of a system that pacifies the populace with the illusion that their vote has an effect on the system. Technically, the surface of the system can be seen to alter with the change of candidates and sometimes even of political parties at the helm, but the measurable effect of voting behaviour on the deep system is moot. Banksy is furthermore reflecting on his praxis – which he describes as Existencilism (Peiter 2009: 28) – by comparing its regulation (criminalisation) with what he regards to be the real crime of consumerist society. In response to the criminalisation of graffiti, Banksy concedes that vandalism is indeed the order of the day: he positions himself as a political vandal with an “anti-capitalist and anti-establishment message depict[ing] ... the vulnerable

and disadvantaged” (Peiter 2009: 26). However, whilst his ‘brandalism’ makes the authorities queasy, Banksy (in Peiter 2009: 28) observes that the billboards depicting Donna Karan and Ralph Lauren represent the *real* vandalism of the City, and comments that you “still sprain your ankle on a broken pavement in front of such a billboard, because the money doesn’t go back to the street itself ... real vandals come with smiles and suits and a great new winter line at knock-down prices”. Thus images generated in order to sustain and stimulate consumer culture colonise the street and suggest options in terms of which product to consume next, but don’t provide options that could enhance real emancipatory social mobility for the majority of those subjected to the images. Lastly, of course, Banksy is implying that graffiti can indeed change the system, and can do so by challenging it, and by making the invisible visible. Whybrow (2010: 197) contextualises the illegality of graffiti against the system it proscribes, stating:

It must be sanctioned, if you will, as transgressive by those ... considered to be within the law. It has to be *disapproved*. As writing [graffiti] it *hurts*: it is the outlaw’s expression of the pain of exclusion and dispossession, and it wounds what is ‘in law’. Ultimately the act is, as John Berger says of the misunderstood terrorist ... ‘a way of making sense of, and thus transcending despair’” (original emphasis).



Figure 5
Banksy, *If graffiti changed anything it would be illegal*, London,
corner of Clipstone and Cleveland streets, 2011
(source: Unurth Street Art S.a.).

Another dissident of the City of London, Mustafa Hulusi, doesn’t practice graffiti but creates street installations that “test the bounds of legality” (Lewisohn 2008: 113). Hulusi re-appropriates the offensive (but legal) billboard that Banksy refers to in an act of culture jamming, or subvertising. Lewisohn (2008: 115) describes culture jamming (or culture hacking), as the act of “speaking back to the media, back to governments and back to corporations,” and traces the roots of culture hacking back to the actions of the mid-twentieth century Situationists.⁴ Hulusi’s billboard message *London is a shit-hole* (see figure 6), was created directly after the 7/7 bombings in London in 2005, and with it Hulusi creates maximum disparity between the positioning of London as a world class, diverse city resilient to the onslaught represented by the bombings (as encapsulated by the slogan ‘We are Lon-ONE-rs’ popularised after the bombings),

and the inescapable daily experience of exclusion, discrimination and oppression borne by the City's 'other'. Hulusi could be accused of cynicism and even viciousness, but, as is the case with Banksy's graffiti, his work is meant to make hyper-visible the cynicism and viciousness of the neoliberal dispensation whose message, that "'We're all one big happy family and there are no problems and there's social equality and everyone's got freedom of speech, and *tourists, please don't flee*"' (Hulusi in Lewisohn 2008: 113), he is trying to expose in all its commercial vacuity (emphasis added). Clearly the togetherness implied by the 'we' that is 'London', does not address his lived, alienated experience of the city, and he is all too aware that the 'togetherness' referred to only speaks to the inclusion of those actively buoying the modes of production (by means of their consumption), and who never raise a voice of dissent against the Wall. In the end it is investor confidence that shapes the map of the City and which determines who does and who does not 'belong'. The work was so disturbing that Hulusi's message was removed in record time, along with the entire billboard it was on.



Figure 6
Mustafa Hulusi, *London is a shit-hole*, billboard 'subvertisement',
London, 2005
(source: Lewisohn 2008: 114).

Some utopic praxis is less politically forthright and more playful. Paris based artist Invader, who refers to his works as *Space Invaders*, cements plaques constructed from mosaic tiles onto walls in cities across the world. His images derive from archaic computer games, including the original 1970s Space Invaders, and the mosaic tiles perfectly simulate the pixilation of the early digital icons (see figure 7). The artist has methodically mapped out his 'invasions' in every city, and his official website⁵ shows a map of the world with the pin-pointed invasions. Some of the invaded sites have slow, cumbersome navigation that emphasises the arcade game context of his work. Invader wants to effect a counter-takeover of the world with his irreverent and often beautiful works, and he keeps a meticulous record of the re-conquest by numbering, photographing and indexing his installations. He explains his method as follows: "For every city I invade, I make a note of where each Invader is on a map. After certain invasions, I've drawn up an 'invasion map'

which is a kind of record of how the invasion happened ... So far I've produced 15 'invasion maps' (out of 35 invaded cities)" (Space Invaders 2008). (The French version of this site gives a number of 16 maps and 38 cities).

The figure of 38 invaded cities represents the artist's 2008 count, and a 2012 site tallies an estimated 77 cities with more than 3000 artworks (Street-artist de la semaine 2012). Invader's latest wave seems to have taken place in Hong Kong and a February 2014 entry on the *Cheers from Space* site reads: "I'm just back from Hong Kong where I have installed 48 new pieces in the city. Total score: 74 Pieces / 2180 Points" (Cheers from Space 2014). The score for a 'wave' (a series of sites invaded in a city in one trip), is tallied by adding the score for each invasion, which ranges from 10 to 50, depending on the size and nature of the image, as well as logistical difficulties encountered. In 2009 his Paris invasions stood at more than four hundred (Peiter 2009: 32), and in 2011, one thousand (Space Invaders 2011). It is hard to keep track however, as the artist says he has seen photographs of 'his' work from cities he has never been to (Space Invaders 2008). This emulation doesn't overly perturb him though, as it increases the 'viral' aspect of his praxis. The artist regards himself as a space hacker, which calls to mind the playful aspect of digital transgression: that often (non-malicious) hackers hack simply because they can.



Figure 7
Invader, *Space Invader*, cemented mosaic, location unknown
(source: Street Art Utopia 2011).

The works are fragile in the sense that they cannot be removed without breaking them, and therefore cannot be privately owned or consumed. They cannot be commoditised. This aspect of

the work most directly addresses the artist's political intent, in that they are attractive, but resist assimilation into the money system. Whereas even Banksy's work, as outspoken as the artist is against capitalism, is physically hewn from walls to become private property, Invader deftly evades the insatiable capacity of commerce to assimilate and commoditise all, including that which is most antithetical to it. For street art to be political, and to constitute the utopic praxis addressed here, it needs to resist assimilation into main stream art business, and any 'street artist' who is complicit in sustaining such commerce cannot be counted here as a co-creator of the utopia of the street, the utopia of the *city* of the outsider inhabitant. 'Commissioned graffiti', for instance, is an oxymoronic concept, turning street art praxis into ordinary art praxis: the fact that art is *in* the street doesn't inevitably designate it as street art, and certainly not as utopic praxis.

The illegality of Invader's work also plainly politicises his activity and it is essential to recognise that street artists do not merely 'tolerate' the fact that their activity is illegal, but that the transgressive nature of their art constitutes for them the core of its significance. Invader's mosaics are aesthetically attractive, and Lewisohn (2008: 133) notes that this may make it "appear totally apolitical" but that "it is in fact the contrast of the nostalgic, utopian imagery [the artist] places on the street and the often grim reality of the context that provides the work with a sense of political poignancy". Lastly, although the artist highlights the rigours of his activity by declaring (in Lewisohn 2008: 133) "[y]ou work at night, you're afraid of being caught by the cops, you become very paranoid", he also regards this aspect of his work as part of the game of his invasion. When asked whether he has had trouble with the law he answers: "Sometimes, but that's part of the game. Then it's a case of 'go to jail and miss three turns'" (Space Invader 2008).

The work of Central London based outsider artist Ben Wilson is the least apparently political of the examples discussed here. However, his status as an outsider makes his art eminently relevant to the production of street utopics as a subtly incendiary praxis. Wilson started his career by studying art at Middlesex University, but found the approach in formal art education too rigid (Wallflower Dispatches 2010) and dropped out. His approach to art making is one that emphasises the environment, whether he is creating assembled installation pieces from found wood, or painting on small discs of chewing gum stuck to the urban concrete – his main focus and passion (see figure 8). That it occurred to Wilson to paint on the otherwise utterly invisible and disregarded detritus of city life at all, attests to the close relationship he has to the environment he happens to find himself in. As part of his daily work he notices what he refers to as 'urban tumbleweed' (Wallflower Dispatches 2010), or the hair, glass and effluent that the urban denizens shed or leave behind by dwelling in the city.

Wilson is involved in various creative projects to sustain himself financially, but his focus is on the pavement works which he makes for his own enjoyment. His technique, of heating the gum with a blow torch in order to create a more durable artefact, evolved only after it became clear to him that bystanders wanted the artworks to last (Wallflower Dispatches 2010). Like Invader's work, the chewing gum images resist commodification, and in fact speak directly to (and transmogrify as by magic) the culture of consuming and waste central to western and westernised societies. Wilson paints whatever he fancies, and also interacts with bystanders and depicts stories recounted to him. The works become "small signs of personal connection, a humanising of an anonymous environment" (Whybrow 2010: 198). This de-brutalising act can indeed be seen as the artist's primary utopic contribution to the non-space of the inner city. He is adamant that he does not take commissions for his pavement art: "I call it requests ... I didn't ask to do pictures of people, people ask me. That's very important ... People can give me money if they want" (Wallflower Dispatches 2010).

As innocuous as Wilson's contribution to city life seems, he has not escaped the oppressive weight of a system that insists that its inhabitants consume in an orderly fashion or suffer the consequences, as meted out by police who regulate the polis.⁶ Reflecting on Wilson's travails with the law, Bunting (2010: 214) regrets "what little space is left for spontaneity, or even the gentlest subversion, on our streets". Wilson has been arrested for the offense of criminal damage (which was found to be an invalid charge, and dropped), and beat severely enough to prevent him from working for a number of months. A sample of his DNA was forcefully attained, and now sits in a national database and will do so until he dies, or reaches his hundredth birthday (Bunting 2010: 215). Beside this worst incident, he has been harassed and stop-searched by the police while quietly going about his painting, on several hundred occasions over the last few years (Wallflower Dispatches 2010). Thus, paradoxically, while littering *is* a public offence, painting *on* litter does not constitute damage to property, and therefore does not constitute a crime. The littering population is furthermore never harassed to the same extent (unless under pretext), and this is perhaps because their conduct can be seen to conform more closely to what is considered 'normal' consuming behaviour.



Figure 8
Ben Wilson, *Miniature city scene*, acrylic on chewing gum, 2006, London
(source: Wallflower Dispatches 2010).

Wilson is puzzled by what he, like Banksy, regards as the real vandalism of the street: the advertising media, and its message, that encroaches on urban consciousness with or without the consent of the urban dweller. Wilson is antagonistic to the invasiveness of commerce which he finds to be a spatial as well as psychological menace:

I do see some patterns, which I find abhorrent. One of them is how things are becoming homogenised; chain stores, uniformity ... Advertising and public spaces are very controlled. Really, advertisers have a monopoly over public space (and the public mind) ... Advertising is getting more and more into people's faces all the time and then I am painting a piece of chewing gum and I am getting all this mayhem (Wallflower Dispatches 2010).

The last example discussed here as utopic praxis throws light on a globally proscribed shadow, proscribed, that is, accept for the stakeholders who keep it in place (World and nation 2003). Banksy's artwork is a non-violent response to a violent and violating phenomenon (Olberg 2013: 6), the West Bank Wall, part of a projected 708 km⁷ barrier that encloses the West Bank area on three sides (the fourth side being comprised of the River Jordan to the East which is the border between Palestine and Jordan in this region). The Wall separates Palestinian and Israeli territory more or less along the Green Line (as established in 1949, and challenged by Israel in 1967), with deviations from the Line into the West Bank territory where there is fertile land and water on that side of the divide (B'Tselem 2006; Barrier Monitoring Unit 2011). The West Bank Wall is the improbable contemporary embodiment of the most anti-social forms of exclusion conceived in the worst of the many utopias of order in the history of utopias, beginning with Plato.

Banksy's work on the Wall is interpreted here as exemplary of destabilising, political, utopic agency as practiced by the street artist, the artist of the city. Banksy attacks the exclusionary Wall of the utopia of control by making its conceivable destruction visible, giving its non-existence form. There are several examples of Banksy's works on the Wall in which the concrete has been dematerialised, smashed, crashed through, perforated, marked for 'cutting', and vaporised, allowing the sky to be seen 'through' its menacing bulk. The work in figure 10 shows a man pulling a section of an eight by three meter concrete slab as if it were a drape and expressly foregrounds agency, as human intervention with the barrier is what causes its nullification here. This is in contrast with other works by Banksy in which the 'hole' in the Wall is calmly surveyed, like a scenic view through a window, or where a scene depicts the Wall at some point 'after' its pulverisation. Here, the Wall is in the process of being dematerialised. Kifah Fanni, a resident and artist in Ramallah, observes (in Parsberg 2006) of graffiti on the Wall and of this work in particular: "I don't believe the painting is institutionalizing the wall; I don't see it as acceptance of the wall. Especially the painting where the wall is removed like a curtain showing a view behind ... It's a virtual view; the Israelis can limit our sight, but they can't limit our imagination".

Banksy, by targeting the Wall as a site for his art, highlights a very foul contemporary curtailing of movement and co-existence, and there can scarcely be a greater contrast than that between the grim fascism embodied by the Wall, and the idyllic island scene exposed by the efforts of the art work's protagonist. Banksy shows the viewer the diametric opposite of what there is in the world: instead of a crushing barrier, a flimsy screen. He simultaneously intensifies awareness of its grim existence and purpose by depicting the island paradise from the bleak reality of an open air prison, an obscene inversion of More's island whose inhabitants voluntarily severed ties with their mainland.

In this, the artist demonstrates his superb understanding, and application, of the effect of making the shadow visible in a place selected to create maximal political dissonance. His installation of an effigy of a life sized Guantanamo Bay prisoner inside the boundary of a rollercoaster ride in Disneyland, California (2006), admirably demonstrates this strategy. Banksy's Disneyland installation de-sanitises the degenerate utopia that is Disneyland, brings a representative of the current global other (the Arab 'terrorist') into the core of consumer culture, whose inhabitants

would otherwise be blissfully unaware of the malpractices perpetrated on the ‘other’ side of the world in the name of state security. In an article on dissident art on the West Bank Wall, Parsberg (2006) notes Giorgio Agamben’s observations in *State of exception* (2005): “To show law in its non-relation to life and life in its non-relation to law means to open a space between them for human action, which once claimed for itself the name of ‘politics’”. The deed of showing the effects of a utopia of order on the lived experience of those not sanctioned by its system, is a political act which opens up a space of contestation. The act draws aside the veil of illusion regarding the level of (un)commonality in a commonwealth, the lack of actually manifested democracy in a neoliberal world order. In the words of Dan Frodsham (2012: 88), Banksy is rehabilitating utopia, “harness[ing] [utopia’s] potential as a dynamic mechanism for radical social transformation”. Banksy’s artistic practice “relocates the ‘no-place’ of utopia in the midst of the here and now ... thus creating incongruity within the same space”, and in doing so, instigates “a critical dialectic between *virtual* and real” Frodsham (2012: 88), or, with reference to the praxis described here, between the utopia of the City, and that of the city.



Figure 10
Banksy. West bank Wall, Ramallah, Palestine
 (source: The Real Sasha 2011).

Conclusion

The production of the utopia of the city, or, the utopia of the inclusive urban populace, whose democratic options in dwelling in the metropolis have not been whittled down to choosing between products, constitutes the praxis of the street artists discussed here. It is interpreted as “a form of dissent and self-affirmation ... a political act” (Lewisohn 2008: 100), particularly within the framework of capitalism and its effect on urban (as well as global) geographies. This aspect of the subversive utopia of the street aligns with Louis Marin’s description of utopia as a critique of the dominant society, a re-assessment that creates a discourse of alterity outside

of the ideological parameters of such a society (Frodsham 2012: 91). Street art which makes the alternative to modern urban existence visible, and thereby conceptually tangible, is, to use Marin's words, "a powerful, radical tool that creates the 'historical conditions of possibility'" (Marin in Frodsham 2012: 91), and a discursive device that "wedges itself between reality and its other" (Marin 1984: 197).

The space of the street is where "new forms of the social and the political can be *made*" (Sassen 2011: 574) (original emphasis), and in the framework of the utopic production of street art, can be, and is, made by the dissident artist. This article has briefly analysed the works of Banksy, Mustafa Hulusi, Invader and Ben Wilson within a Marxist framework as explicated by David Harvey, and interprets the praxis of the artists discussed as explicit or implicit critique of the oppressive aspects of capitalism. These oppressive aspects of the deep structure of contemporary capitalist-democratic western societies have been read as the late modern manifestations of the dystopic early utopias of order and control. Thus the modern City and its global Wall constitute the sites of contemporary dystopic utopia. The *city*, on the other hand – an urban environment that coexists with / within that of the City – is infected by the tactics of its Lacanian extimate, its 'other', including the street artist, and has become the heterotopic site from where 'positive epidemics' (Sassen's term) of alterity can 'ooze'.

Echoing Sassen and Harvey, Kostovicova and Glasius (2011: 4) draw attention to the importance of not 'giving in' to the structural determinism of neoliberalism, and of internalising the fact that (market driven) globalisation is made, and can be unmade and remade, made differently, and that in this the role of agency is critical. They furthermore argue against a simplistic conception of powerlessness which positions the disenfranchised as the contemporary "wretched of the earth" (Kostovicova & Glasius 2011: 5), and champion a "bottom-up approach to globalization" that "gives voice to those denied agency, [or rather] excluded agents". In this way exclusion is not an ontologically fixed designation, not an either / or subject position, but takes various forms on a sliding scale of inclusion / exclusion. It is important to note that exclusion can also be voluntary in the case of the political dissident. The artists discussed here represent excluded agents who have taken up the task of making the contestability of globalisation explicitly visible. They articulate the indispensable 'small voice of history' contributed by the 'uneminent' (Rothschild 2011: 229). If street art is "an irritant, an unwanted autograph or tattoo anonymously etched on the body of official urban culture", it is perceived as such because it gives visible expression to the City's shadow, to the fact that in the City, "all is *not* well" (Whybrow 2010: 197) (original emphasis). Street art is at war with modernism itself, and, more particularly, with the modes of urban existence that have been shaped by the forces of late capitalism. Lewisohn (2008: 87) accurately observes that if street art (perceived as vandalism), seems uncouth and barbaric, it is so because it reflects the barbarism of the world in which it exists. Yet far from perpetuating the barbarism of the City, street art produces, gives form to, potentially activates, the alternate reality that is, or could be, the utopia of the city, and the street.

Notes

1 In this article the capitalisation of the word 'City' indicates a specific construct, namely the notion of the city as an authoritarian utopia of control. Similarly, the capitalised form of the word 'Wall' is used to indicate a system of control rather than a tangible barricade.

2 Mumford is referring to Edward Bellamy's *Looking backward, 2000-1887*, published in 1888. In it, Bellamy envisages American urban life in the year 2000.

- 3 *Cordon sanitaire* is a French term indicating a barrier intended to prevent the spread of infectious disease (Treffry 1998: 535).
- 4 Situationist International consisted of members of the political-cultural Marxist avant-garde in Europe, and artistic influences included Dada, or anti-art. Formed in 1957, its members were addressing the problematic aspects of urbanism which were becoming clear after the War.
- 5 See <http://www.space-invaders.com/som.html>.
- 6 Harvey (2000: 157) notes that the word 'police' "derives from the Greek 'polis' which means 'city'".
- 7 Construction on the Wall began on April 14 2002, and its projected length is given as between 700 and 708 km, the latter being the projection in 2011. By 2006 51% of this estimated final length had been constructed (B'Tselem 2006) and by July 2012, approximately 62% had been completed (Barrier Monitoring Unit 2011). The Wall costs Israel an average of \$260 million in maintenance annually (Zonszein 2014).

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Ruin cities: sources of nostalgia, consolation, revenge, tectonic landscape and inspiration

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Ruin cities haunt our imagination and arouse our curiosity for a number of reasons. Those features in them that interest an artist are the characteristic of timelessness that they accrue over the years. Furthermore, they serve as inspiration for creative works. Composers like Felix Mendelssohn and Jean Sibelius, artists like Giambattista Piranesi and Giorgio De Chirico, and architects like Aldo Rossi, Alvar Alto and Giorgio Grassi come to mind. By making reference to the notion of the sublime, this paper will consider selected instances where ruin cities served as touchstones of creativity. In architecture, motifs from ruins are not simply transferred to the new design but also transmuted, where in art and music these processes occur implicitly through a change of medium. While the creative processes in art, music and architecture are analogous, it is not easy to establish common ground among them. In architecture it is less difficult to grasp these processes than other fields because we are dealing with tangible aspects like monumentality, structure, texture and fabric. Indeed, monumentality, structure and texture can equally be used in musical appraisals and architecture. In the works of architecture we explore the inventiveness that comes about as a result of architects using ruin cities as analogues. Needless to say all inventions are inventive derivations, a fact that is of relevance to the practice and pedagogy in creative fields. We hope our study will therefore shed light on the analogical procedures involved in selected creative fields.

Key words: ruin cities, transfer, transmutation, abstraction, imagining

Bouvallige stede: Bronne van Nostalgie, Troos, Wraak, Tektoniese Landskappe en Inspirasie

Bouvallige stede prikkel ons nuuskierigheid vir n aantal redes. Die onvoltooide aard van ruïnes in sulke stede stel hulle in staat om n glorieryke verlede op te roep en hartseer uit te straal. Hierdie kenmerke, naamlik tydloosheid, onvolledigheid en melankolie het juis sommige musici, kunstenaars en argitekte geïnspireer. Werke van komponiste soos Felix Mendelssohn en Jean Sibelius, kunstenaars soos Giambattista Piranesi en Giorgio De Chirico en argitekte soos Aldo Rossi, Alvar Aalto en Giorgio Grassi kom by n mens op. Dit is egter nie net die produkte van hierdie kreatiewe persoonlikhede wat van belang is nie, maar ook die proses waardeur hulle inspirasie van ruïnes in bouvallige stede verkry het. Deur te verwys na die idee van die verhewe, word gevalle waar sulke ruïnes as bronne van kreatiwiteit gedien het, hieronder ondersoek. Motiewe van ruïnes in argitektuur, word nie bloot oorgedra na nuwe ontwerpe nie, maar word oorgedra en ontwikkel of verander. Dit is anders as in die geval van musiek en kuns waar hierdie prosesse natuurlik plaasvind weens veranderende medium. Terwyl kreatiewe prosesse in musiek, kuns en argitektuur analoog is, is dit nie maklik om n gemenedeler te vind nie. Dit is in argitektuur makliker om hierdie prosesse te verstaan omdat mens met tasbare aspekte soos struktuur en tekstuur omgaan. In die argitektoniese werke wat hieronder bespreek word, ondersoek ons vindingrykheid. Dit is na alles die vindingryke afleidings wat relevant is vir die pedagogiek in enige kreatiewe veld.

Sleutelwoorde: bouvallige stede, ontleding, abstraksie, verbeelding

Landscape as a construct of the mind and not simply something objective out there is familiar (Schama, 1996). The word tectonic has two meanings. It originally comes from the Latin word *tectonicus*, meaning *building* and suggests that it is anything constructed. A different interpretation of the term *tectonic* has come into architectural terminology from theoretical works attributed to Semper (1851) who, quite simply put, saw it as framed construction. He distinguished it from load-bearing construction which he saw as *stereotomic*.

When considering cityscapes or urban landscapes, the earlier definition, namely that ‘tectonic’ is something that is constructed, is of relevance.

The phenomenon of urban landscapes affected by ruination is not new. It has in recent years however, received a great deal of attention in the arts. Indeed, the first decade of the twenty-first century has seen what appears to be a distinct flourishing – in the realm of global events, popular culture and the work of visual artists – of images of decay (Dillon, 2011: 10). Such decay has been heavily emphasized in terms of our planetary ruination, but has also taken hold, particularly as a result of the latest global economic recession, of urban and architectural materiality. Contemporary ruin cities, such the abandoned Detroit Motor City (see figure 1), have accrued a huge cache of attention in the visual arts. If we look at such ruinous landscapes through the eyes of artists, we may find new interpretations, interpretations that not merely remind us of the inevitable demise of all that is material, but interpretations that have the ability to inspire awe and veneration. In this regard, the notion of the sublime provides insight.

The sublime could be seen as something that is not opposed to beauty but is a quality of higher order than beauty (Budd, 2003). It is a quality that combines the contrasting experiences of horror and harmony (Raman & Olivier, 2009: 11). These experiences, according to Burke (1958), simultaneously overwhelm and frighten us first. The transition from the landscape of being fearsome to being beautiful is indeed a complex one. The sublime experience, according to Immanuel Kant (1951: 77), entails a conflict of the faculties of imagination and reason whereas beauty entails a harmonious state between imagination and reason. He sees the sublime to be an aesthetic encounter with an object, where the sensory impression of the encounter cannot be related to an idea of reason by imagination (Geertsema, 2006: 103-120). It is through such encounters that artists have responded to the overlapping human necessity for nostalgia, memory, consolation, and even entertainment, which ruinous landscapes provide. By making reference to modern and ancient ruin cities this paper hopes to illuminate these encounters.



Figure 1

Contemporary Ruin City Detroit, Michigan

(source: Getty Images. 2013. Detroit bankruptcy: Motor City runs out of fuel with debts of \$20billion, available at: www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/detroit-bankruptcy-motor-city-runs, accessed 23 January 2014).



Figure 2

The transition from the landscape being fearsome to beautiful is complex,
 (source: Getty Images. 2013. Detroit bankruptcy: Motor City runs out of fuel with debts of \$20billion, available at: www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/detroit-bankruptcy-motor-city-runs, accessed 23 January 2014).

The manicuring mind-set

Ruin cities are the remains of urban landscapes made by man that, as time went by, have fallen into a state of partial or complete dilapidation, due to neglect, deterioration or deliberate destruction. Their expressive qualities are to a large degree determined by the extent to which these landscapes have been subject to human intervention. We thus seek to establish why fragmentary elements and their aura of destruction arguably provide more of an inspiration than complete edifices and how they do so in selected examples of creative works in literature, art, music and more centrally, architecture. Ruins are important in their own right, not just because of what they once were. It could be argued that they should not be relentlessly cleaned up in pursuit of making them permanently monumental. Some ruins in urban landscapes become memorials; others get renovated and re-used, whereas others merely become sanctuaries for the imagination. We all find beauty in neglected ruinous landscapes, the old sites where nature has planted the surfaces with wild flowers, mosses and crawling creepers, preferring this respect for times past to the outlook of preservationists who seek to restore these treasures to their original glory, often attracting souvenir shops and other invasions. Reconstructions are often resisted for reasons of authenticity and ruins are left in their state of disrepair after a degree of structural consolidation in order to ensure public safety. These havens for poets and artists are often manicured, protected with guardrails and notices. Here, Woodward (2001) points out that the artist is inevitably at odds with the archeologist. He argues that in the latter discipline the scattered fragments of stone are parts of a jigsaw, or clues to a puzzle to which there is only one answer, as in a science laboratory; to the artist, by contrast, any answer which is imaginative is correct.

Here perhaps lies the key to understanding why ruins and ruinous landscapes provide sources for creative compositions whether in art, poetry, music or architecture. In all these fields, unlike in the supposed problem solving acts popular among the so-called design methodologists where the search is often for a singular solution, the search is for multiplicity and diversity. All the same, one should not underestimate the wish of authorities to stabilize and pass on the ruins as our heritage to the next generation in at least the same condition in which our generation found them. In other words their survival is certainly important. When an English archeologist discovered Machu Pichu, otherwise known as the Lost City of The Incas, the ruins were completely overgrown by the surrounding jungles. Since then the site has been attentively manicured and preserved to facilitate restoration and tourism. Renovations continue today. In this respect there is a school of thought, which argues the best way to ensure the survival anything is to use it with care. It is with this outlook that Giorgio Grassi, the Italian architect approached his project for the Roman theatre in Sagunto, Spain. Grassi removed what he and the administrators felt were incongruous and unwanted accretions added in a circumspect way in order that the theatre may be used for performances. Whether this approach diminishes the power of the ruin is open to debate but at least it did not attempt to return the theatre to its past glory, compromising its qualities of timelessness in the process. Of course ruins tell a story of our past and our history. Byron, Shelley, Keats and Stendhal were inspired by the Italian ruins and their writings reflected on the grandeur that was Rome. Poets and writers have since ancient times referred to Rome as the eternal city, and it could be argued, that it is the ruin landscapes of Rome that that evoke this sentiment.

Nostalgia and beyond

Nostalgia can be understood as sentimentality, affection and longing for times past. It certainly plays a part in the actions of artists and designers who find inspiration in ruin landscapes. It could be argued that our strongest expression of nostalgia is not for the ruins of famous monuments, but for those that were rarely visited, overgrown with plants that were never envisaged. And furthermore, that this nostalgia is reduced when ruins are tidied up and organized. The surge of nostalgia can be felt in many passages in the book *In Ruins* by Woodward (2001). He sums up Stendhal's account of a visit to the Colosseum, where the traveler saw an Englishman riding his horse on the floor of the arena. "I wish that could be me", remarks Woodward. Even in relation to monumental ruins such as those of Rome, our sympathy is for the raw state, un-intervened by archeologists, protectionists and ministry officials, hence our admiration for Piranesi's etchings of Rome. Piranesi could be described as the first Italian who brought glory to the architectural remains of his country and saw in them a poetic charm. In depicting these ruinous landscapes, he sought to invest his plates the same charm that the actual ruins had for him. He tried to understand the work of the architect, adding missing portions into his etchings for pictorial effects. He would add objects such as altars, tombs, vases and other accessories (Woodworth, 1902: 278). It is interesting to ask whether adding these elements in drawings is acceptable to our sensibilities, as opposed to reality. The answer may well be an affirmative, the reason being drawings do not do permanent damage to the ruin out there but inspire others to do new compositions based on what Piranesi has thoughtfully added. This may be why Piranesi's etchings evoke more than nostalgia. Indeed one can almost argue that one learns a great deal more about Roman urbanism from Piranesi's etchings than from over-preserved ruins of Rome or their reconstructions in model form. Contrary to idealized reconstruction in the form of models and drawings, urbanism in Rome, as opposed to that of the Roman colonies, was rather ad-hoc, each emperor adding his monument as a matter of expediency. A number of

Piranesi's etchings capture this. These etchings depict the disposition of Roman monuments as though a jeweler would spread his multiple collections in a glass chest with no specific spatial relation between each piece.

Revenge, memory, consolation and entertainment

It could be argued that for those roughly treated by society, ruins provide a sweet pre-emptive revenge, in reminding us of anticipating individuals' and society's eventual demise (De Botton, 2005: 240). In *Ozymandias*, Shelley illustrates this demise in a heartrending sonnet about the mighty Ramses II of Egypt. An inscription on the fallen ruin of the statue of Ramses II reads:

And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

But there is no reason, De Botton points out, for the mighty or even the humble to despair, Ramses is laying in pieces the sand. Shelly goes even further in his poem *Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills* about Venice, and anticipates its death:

Underneath Day's azure eyes
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,
A peopled labyrinth of walls,
Amphitrite's destined halls,
Which her hoary sire now paves
With his blue and beaming waves.
Lo! the sun upsprings behind,
Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined
On the level quivering line
Of the waters crystalline;
And before that chasm of light,
As within a furnace bright,
Column, tower, and dome, and spire,
Shine like obelisks of fire,
Pointing with inconstant motion
From the altar of dark ocean
To the sapphire-tinted skies;
As the flames of sacrifice
From the marble shrines did rise,
As to pierce the dome of gold
Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City, thou hast been
Ocean's child, and then his queen;
Now is come a darker day,
And thou soon must be his prey,

Germans, masters at formulating compound words for fugitive and rare states of the soul, such as *weltschmerz* and *wanderlust*, coined new terms to describe the feeling for old stones – *Ruinenemfindsamkeit*, *Ruinensehnsucht*, *Ruinenlust* (De Botton, 2005: 244). These terms are idiosyncratic to German and can therefore not be directly translated into English. They could, however be interpreted as communicating the emotions of yearning, longing and sentimentality.

From the 18th century onwards, animated by similar emotions, travelers set out to contemplate ruin cities. During this period of the picturesque aesthetic movement, numerous artists painted these cities, and landscape designers and architects incorporated reconstructed ruins as part of their composition. As a matter of fact classical ruins were so much the rage that people began building them where real ones were scarce (Mayor, 1938: 282). Many of these fake ruins still survive, such as the one at Schönbrunn, or the one at the Parc Monceau. 18th Century French painter Hubert Robert anticipated time by painting the great buildings of modern France in ruin form that he was later called Robert des Ruines. In England, Joseph Gandy did a painting of the Bank of England with its ceiling caved in. Also, the views of Piranesi, whose work has been described as pictorial propaganda for the antique, sets Horace Walpole to imagine what Saint James's Palace would look like in ruined form, two thousand years later. In the 1870's, artist Gustave Dore, did an illustration of a New Zealander, an inhabitant of a country that at the time represented the future, sitting on a broken arch of London Bridge in an imaginary 21st century London that resembles a latter day version of ancient Rome, sketching the ruinous remains of St Paul's and the then brand new Cannon Street Station – similar to how Englishmen had once gone to Athens or Rome to sketch the Acropolis or the Colosseum.

Often, metaphoric revenge gives way to an urge for preserving memory. The term memory against forgetting is often used to suggest that memory is necessary in order to ensure atrocities which create the ruins will never happen again. Interestingly a book may serve this function too and hence Rusty Bernstein's (2000) book on apartheid in South Africa is simply titled *Memory against forgetting*. More often than not, what for all intents and purposes be called stylized ruins, are built for the same purpose of preserving memory against forgetting. The Jewish History Museum, Berlin is one of them. As Jones (2007) puts it, Daniel Libeskind's building seduces the visitor into the self-delusion of somehow being there, then.

The first time I went I was devastated by its coup de grace, a tall, dark, ice-cold tower whose heavy door is closed behind you. You're supposed to feel as if you've gone to Auschwitz and - it becomes hideously vulgar as soon as you put this into words - the doors of the shower block have shut behind you. But when I went again recently, I had to admit it was sublimely pleasurable, like visiting the dungeon of a medieval castle. What had it got to do with anything, beyond its own emotional effect created by light and shadow?

Here then begins the entertainment value of ruins. More importantly, Jones (2007) argues that here history becomes something else when you turn it into memory. History is an inquiry into the past; memory is a conviction about the past. When a historical event is treasured as memory, understanding is replaced by reverence. Monuments, films and books do not help or assuage or begin to atone for what happened to the dead. The dead are not here anymore. Memorials are for us. Jones even wonders whether this way of forcing memory will ever ensure those atrocities will not happen again and all we are left with is a mild form of consolation. But at some stage even consolation does degenerate into entertainment of sorts. This of course is not a new phenomenon. On his visit to the ruins of Pompeii Goethe noted: "Many a calamity has happened in the world, but never one that has caused so much entertainment to posterity as this one" (De Botton, 2004: 244) .

From *The Aesthetics of Decay*, another seminal book on ruins by Robert Ginsberg(2004), comes a valuable philosophical contribution on the expressiveness of ruins. A full, living, and active building allows us, only with great difficulty, to understand its own full meaning and aesthetic structure. By contrast, only its depletion and decline into ruination liberates the essential in the forms and in the intentions imposed upon the building by human utilitarianism. There is in ruins, Ginsberg argues, something of the creativity of being, a certain independent utterance

of the material, and the observer gains the right and the ability to enter into an intimate contact with it. At the same time, Ginsberg continues, that form obtains an independence from function which in the fully active structure it never has. "The ruin celebrates matter, form, and function. It concentrates on the free life that each may lead. The ruin also insists on the interaction of each, the fulfilling of one by the others" (Ginsberg, 2004: 47). Even more ambitiously, the ruin teaches us the art of attending to the foundations of being that lie beneath the accepted world, "the ruin gives us practice for the pause in the midst of imperfection" (ibid).

Melancholy

De Chirico's (1888-1970) paintings have a sense of ruins. They are sad. His images are illuminated by cold flat light and cast long, dark shadows. They have a mysterious, silent, static character. De Chirico (see figure 2) was an avid reader of the pessimistic writings of Nietzsche. Nietzsche was influenced by the daring pre-Socrates philosophers, such as Heraclitus and Pythagoras, more than the fifth-century BC Athenians with their closely reasoned arguments. Far from being a systematic philosopher, Nietzsche's writing lack any unifying programme or set of principles, they are rather a compilation of self-contradicting aphorisms (Henning, 1982: 138). What interested De Chirico most in Nietzsche's writings was a strange, dark poetry, infinitely mysterious and lonely, based on the atmosphere of an afternoon in autumn when the weather is clear and the shadows are longer than they have been all summer, because the sun stands low in the sky (ibid: 140). These writings can be interpreted as a melancholic and evocative ruin.

De Chirico illustrates his resonance with these writings: "Nietzsche describes various states of the soul. He speaks of the mystery of autumn. This provides a more poetic climate than the traditional fall. It is the earth's period of convalescence. Entirely too many people see life in the spring, and that, argues De Chirico, is death. This clearly illustrates the atmosphere in which he was painting during his metaphysical period" (Mazars, 1962: 116). It could be safely assumed that De Chirico read Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* and was impressed by the philosophers Apollonian dream-inspiration for artists. Italian-Swiss poet Guillaume Apollinaire noted of Chirico's work: "The strangeness of the plastic enigmas proposed by De Chirico still escapes most people. To describe the fatal character of contemporary things, the painter used that modern recourse...surprise". He indicates how De Chirico compares the notion of surprise with that of the enigma of sudden revelation, and how, in his way of thinking and working, revelation has always played the central role: "a revelation can be born of a sudden, when one least expects it...it belongs to a class of strange sensations which I have observed in only one man: Nietzsche" (Henning, 1982: 140).

De Chirico's work had an immediate impact on architect Aldo Rossi after attending an exhibition of his work in 1970. His paintings informed both graphic work and buildings of Rossi. The loneliness and implicit silence of De Chirico's paintings, their melancholy and mystery are made concrete in Rossi's Modena cemetery (Johnson, 1982: 52). Just as nature represents infinite space, so do ruins represent infinite time. De Botton argues that ruins bid us to surrender our strivings and our images of perfection and fulfillment. "They remind us that we cannot defy time and that we are the playthings of forces of destruction which can at best be kept at bay but never vanquished" (De Botton, 2005:240). In this respect Rossi's recourse to anything resembling ruins as source for a cemetery seems entirely appropriate. De Chirico saw Nietzsche's writing as inspirational ruins and Rossi in turn read the painters works equally so. In a drawing of the cemetery, Rossi turns the humans into shadows, similar to De Chirico's portrayal of a little girl in *Mystery and Melancholy of a Street*. Shadows walk in

Rossi's shadowy cemetery, a city of the dead that approaches the surreal (Johnson, 1982: 52). Rossi wrote of De Chirico:

In my project Pilotta at Parma (1964) I sought to understand the architectural relations of the cities of Emilia through the space of the porticoes, the piazzas, the architecture of shadows... There does not exist, perhaps, a more precise and architectonic relation between study and reality than the piazzas of Italy of De Chirico' (Johnson, 1982: 50).



Figure 3
Giorgio de Chirico, Gare Montparnasse(The Melancholy of Departure), 1914, oil on canvas, 140x184.5 cm, New York (source: Jordaan 2012).

Reference to the painter's work can be found in architectural elements such as porticoes, conical towers and smokestacks in several of Rossi's projects. It is of course common in architects' work to discern multiple influences rather than a singular source for ideas. Thus Rossi's work, although it has its parallel in the paintings of De Chirico, is always implicitly governed by neo-rationalist conceptions of directness, simplicity and even severity.

Ruins as tectonic landscape

Many buildings of Alvar Aalto too combine ruins as sources of ideas together with others. The Russo-Finnish war left behind considerable ruination of many distinguished buildings in Karelia, some of which today belong to Finland and some to Russia. These ruin landscapes have always been a haven of inspiration for musicians, poets and architects. Jean Sibelius's Karelian symphony is well-known. Aalto repeatedly visited the ruins of Karelia, often with his assistants on sketching tours. He has indeed suggested that these ruins influenced his work considerably. One example is his Säynätsalo town centre and its relation to what he himself called the *tectonic landscapes* of Karelian ruins and Italian hill towns as its origin. In conceptual

terms, the building can be interpreted as ruin in a forest clearance. The programmatic issue Aalto was facing was how to symbolise the democratic ideals of small town in this project. For Aalto Mantegna's painting of Christ in the Garden depicting a town on a hill surrounded by landscape was evocative of possibilities. Hill towns in Italy consist of an ensemble of buildings consisting of the church, *palazzo comunale*, market, a loggia and so on organised around a *piazza*. These configurations could be seen to follow the Aristotelian ideals that argued the market or commercial area should be located near the *piazza* but slightly at a lower level. This ideal is met in Siena which was one of Aalto's favourite Italian cities. The Säynätsalo town centre consists of a raised courtyard connected to the surrounding landscape by the famous grassed steps surrounded by the library, council offices, caretaker's apartment and crowned by the council chamber and at a level below shops are provided. The square is a transformation of the Italian Piazza to suit Finnish conditions and to this day is a gathering space for many civic and cultural events. The other changes that Aalto makes to the original model are the church here is replaced by library; the shops are the equivalents of the market. The council chamber has its pride place and with its immense height and dramatic butterfly truss is as imposing and dignified as the one in Siena. From the interior perspective of the Säynätsalo town centre the Italian hill town manifests, whilst, from the vantage point of the mystical surrounding forest, the ruin quietly resides.

Conclusion

Throughout time, artists of various fields have transferred and transmuted motifs from ruins and ruin-like art. In painting, poetry and music these processes take place implicitly as there is a change of medium. In architecture, they are more overt as they refer to tangible qualities such as monumentality, structure, texture and fabric. Artists and architects use ruin cities as analogues that can be understood in the way these decaying landscapes evoke nostalgia, revenge, memory, consolation and entertainment. Indeed, the inventive derivations from ruined cities and ruin-like art are multiple and diverse; as we may find in awe, veneration, inspiration and possibly, utopian promise.

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The territory shaped: urban plans and urbanization policy in Portuguese America

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From the mid-18th century on, the number of images of towns and villages of the Portuguese colony in South America increased steadily and showed noticeably similar urban features. These images have been presented in current scholarship as evidence of the planned character in the urban initiatives under Dom José I (1750-1777). This article analyses how plans and drawings functioned in a number of urban settlement dynamics in the Captaincy of São Paulo between 1765 and 1775, while keeping in view a broader urbanization process in that century. The urbanizing policy is treated here as an action developed in a context of conflicts rather than as a project envisioned by metropolitan authorities or detached from the reality of the place.

Key words: urbanizing policy, urban plans, captaincy of São Paulo.

Le territoire configuré: plans urbains et politique d'urbanisation dans l'Amérique portugaise

À partir de la moitié du XVIII^e siècle, le nombre d'images des villages et de agglomérations dans la colonie portugaise de l'Amérique du sud a augmenté sensiblement, révélant de remarquables similarités dans les configurations urbaines. Ces images sont présentées dans le cadre de l'historiographie courante comme autant d'évidences du caractère planifié des initiatives urbanistiques sous le règne de José I^{er} (1750-1777). Cet article analyse le rôle joué par les plans et les dessins dans certaines dynamiques de formation de noyaux urbains dans la capitainerie de São Paulo entre 1765 et 1775, sans perdre de vue un processus d'urbanisation plus large. La politique d'urbanisation est ici traitée en tant qu'action développée dans un contexte conflictuel, plutôt que comme produit d'un projet délinéé préalablement par les autorités métropolitaines ou étranger aux réalités locales.

Mots-clés: politique d'urbanisation, plans urbains, capitainerie de São Paulo.

The idea that more precise urban guidelines or decisions might have guided the establishment of cities by the Portuguese in South America was rejected in the early interpretations on the topic. According to Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1988 [1936]: 76), in a pioneer essay on the cities founded in the colony: “No rigor, no method, and no action, all the time this significant abandon, that the word ‘negligence’ expresses...” On a turning point in the studies developed over the 1960s, Nestor Goulart Reis Filho (1968) analyzed an urbanization policy of the Portuguese Crown between 1500 and 1720, highlighting the work of military engineers; and in the first wide-ranging analysis on the towns established inland in the 18th century, Roberta Marx Delson (1997 [1979]) tried to demonstrate the extensive application of an organized model of urban layout. One of the paramount references for recent historiography is the increasingly affirmation of monarchy in the urban formation domain, along with progressive emphasis in geometric regularity of urban layouts, which ended up in the urban initiatives of Dom José I (1750-1777). Plans and drawings of urban settlements from that period are featured as evidence of the planned character of officials’ initiatives in the urbanization field. (Delson 1997, Moreira 2003, Reis Filho 2000a, 2000b, Teixeira e Valla 1999).

Significant studies have already examined means of regulation derived from the Metropolis Government for the constitution of urban settlements in the colony. However, the emphasis of placing on plans and norms the responsibility to configure villages and towns does not seem enough to understand the transformations in the territory and the creation of urban forms. A

more attentive analysis to the context where these images have appeared shows that aside from expressing urban instructions imposed by the Portuguese Crown, they also had other meanings in the process of defining urban landscape. Starting with some of these images and the written paperwork related, we try here to deal with the urbanization policy as an action carried out in a context of conflicts, rather than as a project envisioned in advance by Metropolitan officials or detached from the reality of the place. While keeping in view a broader urbanization process, we focused on the Captaincy of São Paulo between 1765 and 1775.

From backlands to territories

The first cities built under this code by direct initiative of the Portuguese Crown in its territories in South America date back from the mid-16th century. But it was only in the subsequent century that Luso-Brazilian cities started being effectively represented, at first idealized and diagrammed in maps and plans; later, in views, perspectives, and urban cross-sections according to the real observer's point of view (Marx 1996). Since the founding of the first city in 1549, Salvador, urban projects started to be prepared with more details from the third quarter of the 18th century on, even when creating urban settlements distant from the coastline (Reis Filho 2000).

From the mid-18th century on, the number of images of towns and villages of the colony increased steadily and presented noticeably similar urban features. Distant settlements were pictured with regular urban layouts, one or two rectangular central squares, straight streets with stipulated width and, in many cases, houses with gardens and in lots of standardized dimensions. Urban layouts guided by geometric regularity patterns and marked by architecture subordinated to urban planning frameworks, and squares as monumental focuses are also seen in the urban plans to reconstruct the district of Baixa in Lisbon, after the November 1755 earthquake, or to the construction of Vila Real, in Algarve, south of Portugal from 1773 on. This set of regular plans is expressive of the reformist policies promoted by Minister Sebastião Carvalho de Melo, Marquis of Pombal in 1769, under D. José I (1750-1777). In South American territories, the process of defining boundaries with the Spaniards brought considerable impulse to initiatives of urbanizing and reorganizing the territory in this period.

In the 18th century, the South American colony was the main possession of the Portuguese Empire overseas, but the occasional and irregular distribution of administrative settlements – towns and villages – provided difficulties for a more effective control. Also, the already advanced expansion of two Iberian fronts of colonization in South America had aggravated disputes for new territories. The Treaty of Madrid, signed between Portugal and Spain in 1750, established a new conception of sovereignty, whose principles were the recognition of effective occupation and the notion of territory delimited by natural boundaries. The basic tool to integrate backlands and contentious areas to the Portuguese Empire was granting town status to settlements, that is, creating official entities endowed with legal and administrative autonomy at local status. And new areas had to be defended, populated and mapped.

In the northern colony, in the vast border region of the Amazon valley, by the mid 18th century there were only four villages and two towns; between 1751 and 1782 around forty-five villages were granted town status (Araújo 1998). The presence of military engineers had been required to measure and provide information on the territory, in connection to the Treaty of Madrid, but bilateral demarcation efforts did not work as expected. Portuguese, German and Italian engineers at the service of the Crown were then commissioned to design plans of

fortresses, mapping and surveying, river and land routes, and also urban plans and views (figure 1).

In other regions, a wider range of Luso-Brazilian officials worked on the definition of urban layouts. Governors, magistrates and military officials interfered in the configuration of the villages, supervising the construction works, and imposed formal instructions through written orders and plans drawn either by themselves or their assistants. In Goiás, Governor José de Almeida Vasconcelos managed the establishment of village São José de Mossâmedes (1777), portrayed in a drawing by Sergeant Joaquim Cardoso Xavier in 1801 (figure 2) (Boaventura 1997: 193-196). In Mato Grosso, Governor Rolim de Moura was responsible for the implementation of the capital Vila Bela (1752), and, probably might have chosen the place for the Príncipe da Beira fortress in 1767 (Araújo 2000: 247, 319). José Xavier Machado Monteiro, then magistrate of Porto Seguro, in the state of Bahia, included plans he himself “sketched” of the villages of Alcobaça (1772), Prado (1764), Portoalegre (1769) and Vila Viçosa (1768, figure 3) (Flexor 2000). In Minas Gerais, a continuous effort of local authorities – civil and ecclesiastic – with or without the support of military engineers tried to enforce regularity to urban settlements in the 18th century (figura 4) (Fonseca 2000).

As the drawings for new towns suggest, some kind of basic knowledge and practices acquired during the military education would have formed a work method which was common to the agents involved in urban formation (Araújo 2000: 377). The language of geometric regularity reaffirmed design principles which had been used since the beginning of the Portuguese expansion and also expressed enlightened ideals of social order and courteous coexistence.

Plans and urban dynamics in São Paulo

The renovation of strategies posed by the Metropolis in the mid-18th century also brought changes for the territories in São Paulo located southeast of the continent, in the present states of São Paulo and Paraná. Among the steps for restructuring the administration of the territory promoted by Pombal, in 1765 São Paulo regained its status as captaincy, an autonomous administrative unit ruled by a general-captain. Its role was to work as a defensive barrier between possible Spanish advances from the South towards the mining regions and the capital city installed in Rio de Janeiro since 1763 (Bellotto 2007a: 60). The establishment of urban settlements ended up being one of the main concerns of Governor Morgado de Mateus (1765-1775) and caused changes in the lives of much of the population. Settled towns with organized street layouts were to be installed where previously were fragile hamlets – lodges situated along roads, Indian villages, rural sites and coastal communities (figure 5). Maps, drawings and travel itineraries began to be produced and to flow more frequently in the captaincy.

Among the urbanizing actions of this period, the best documented in drawings was Iguatemi fortress. According to the theory of “diversion throughout the West” defended by Governor Morgado de Mateus, the fortress was meant to cause the Spaniards to deviate part of their troops to that area, where the fort would be built in the western border, which would eventually weaken them up in the battles to the South. The Fortress was also designed as a focal point for occupying boundary areas and the basis for advances to the Paraguay River. Although a design of the stronghold is unidentified, it was acknowledged by sergeant-major Teotônio José Juzarte’s report that the captain of infantry of Rio de Janeiro, João Álvares Ferreira was sent to the Iguatemi fortress “as a kind of engineer” and “outlined” the fortress “according to the rules of the art [of creating fortresses]” (Juzarte 1769 cited in Souza and Myoko 2000: 75).

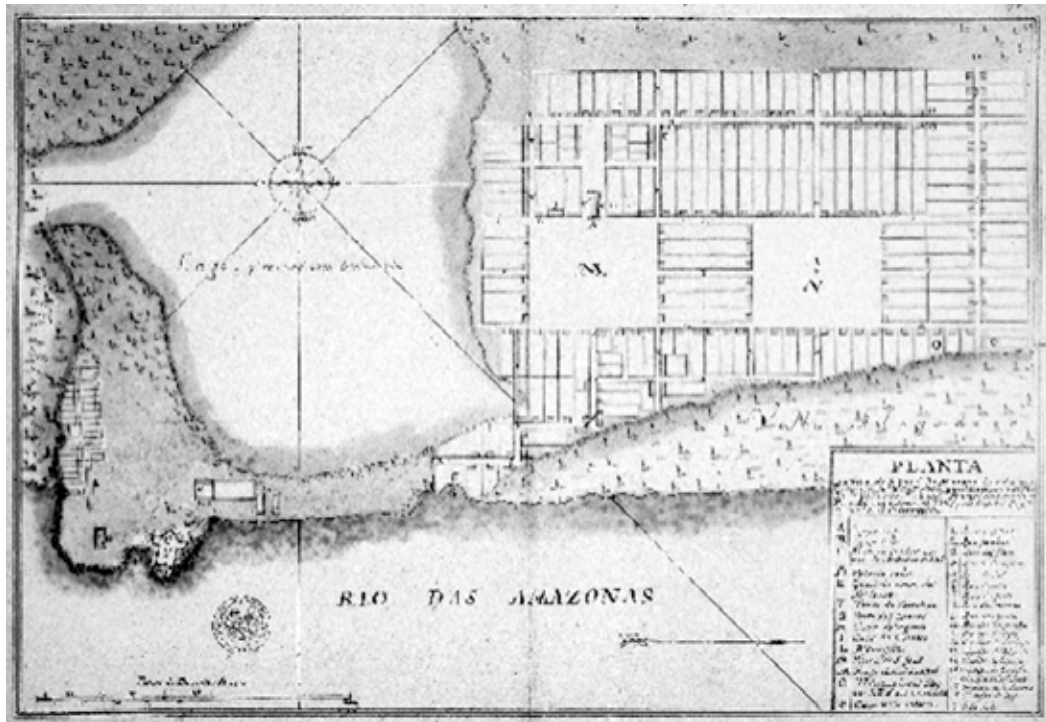


Figure 1
Gaspar João de Gronsfeld. Planta da vila de São José do Macapá tirada [...] em o ano de 1761 pelo capitão-engenheiro Gaspar João de Gronsfeld (source: Reis Filho 2000, plate 309).

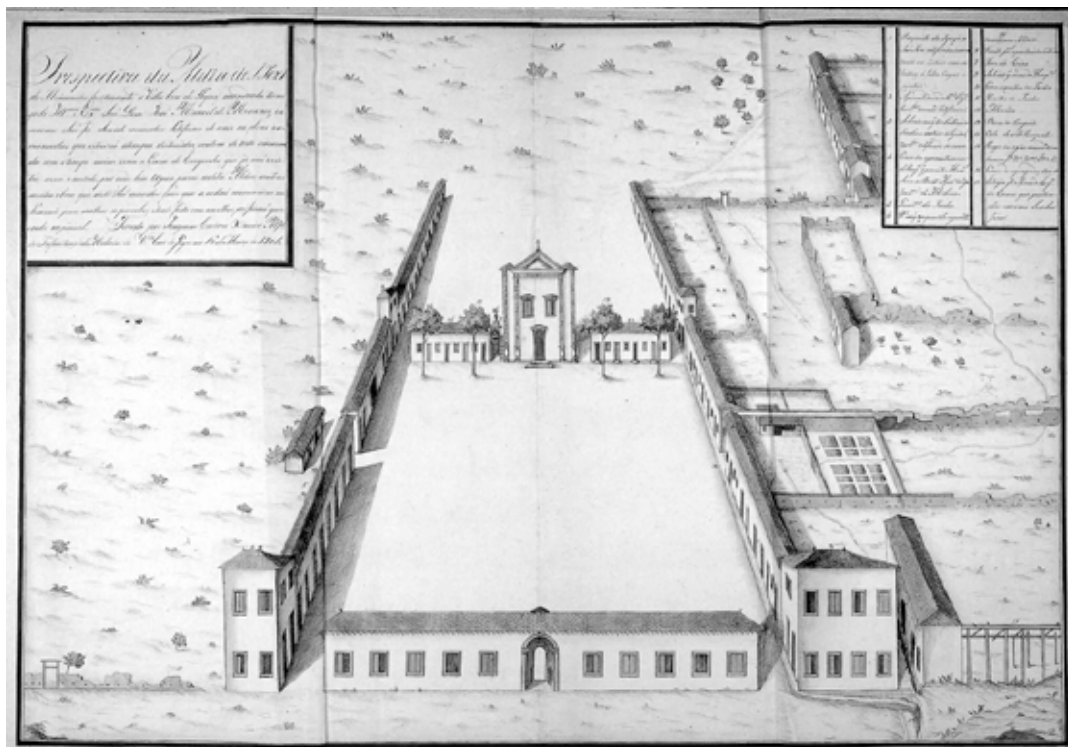


Figure 2
Joaquim Cardoso Xavier. Perspectiva da aldeia de São José de Mossâmedes...1801
(source: Reis Filho 2000, plate 263).

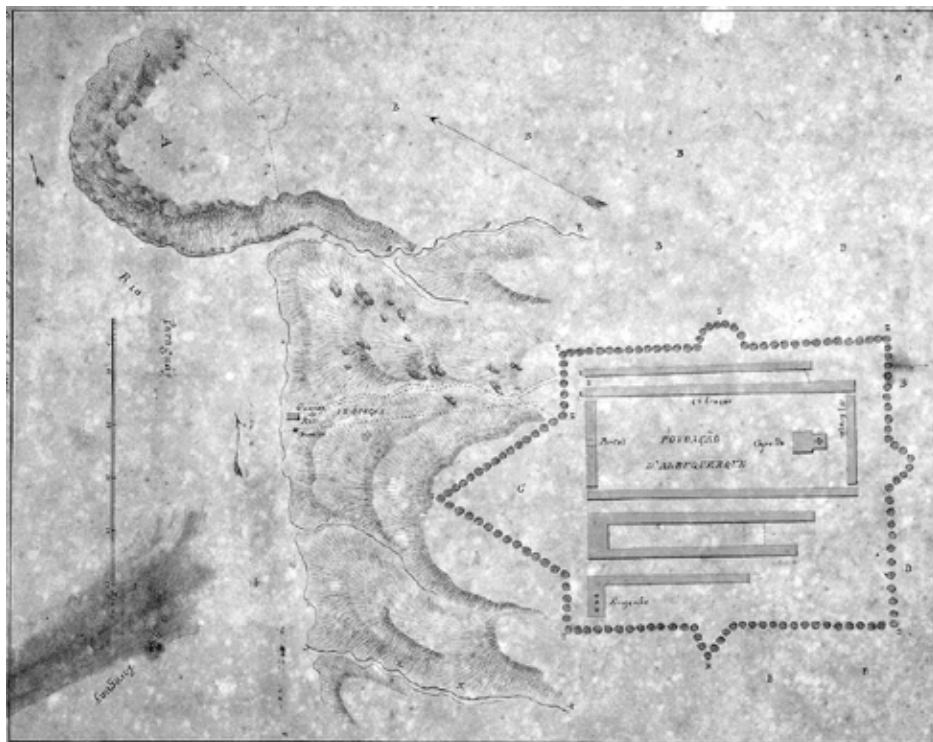


Figure 3
Vista interior da mesma povoação de Albuquerque, ca. 1797
 (source: Reis Filho 2000, plate 269).

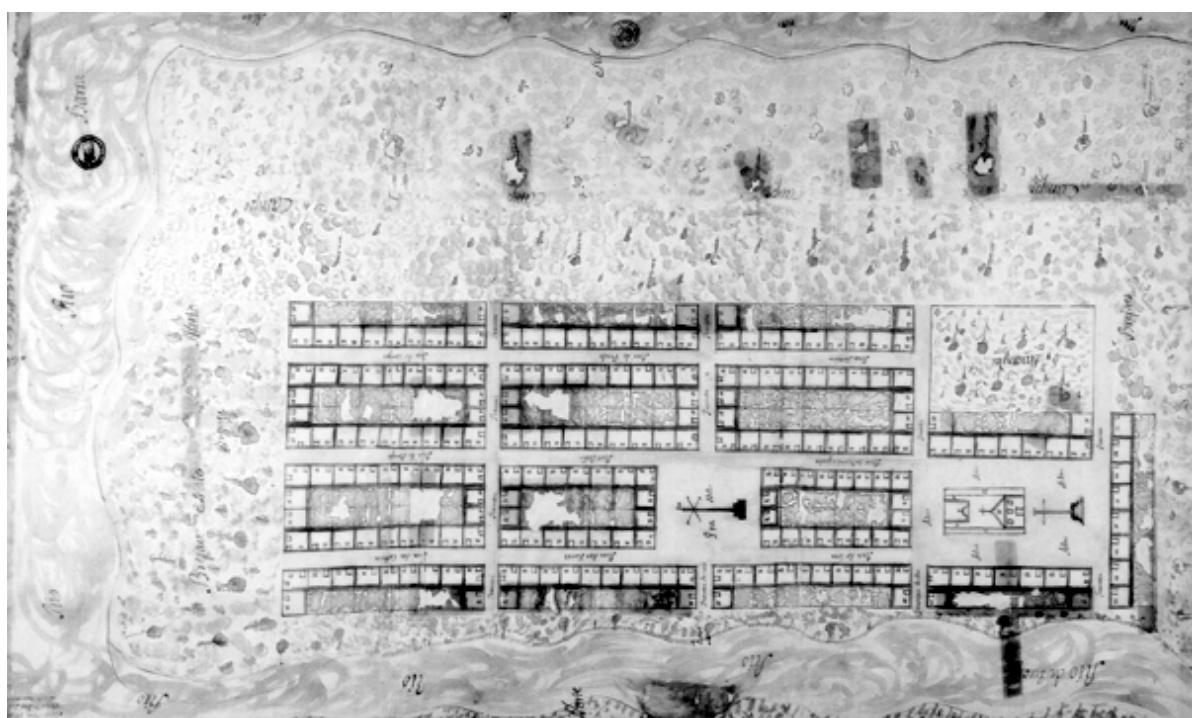


Figure 4
José Xavier Machado Monteiro. Vila Viçosa. [ca. 1760]
 (source: Reis Filho 2000, plate 40).

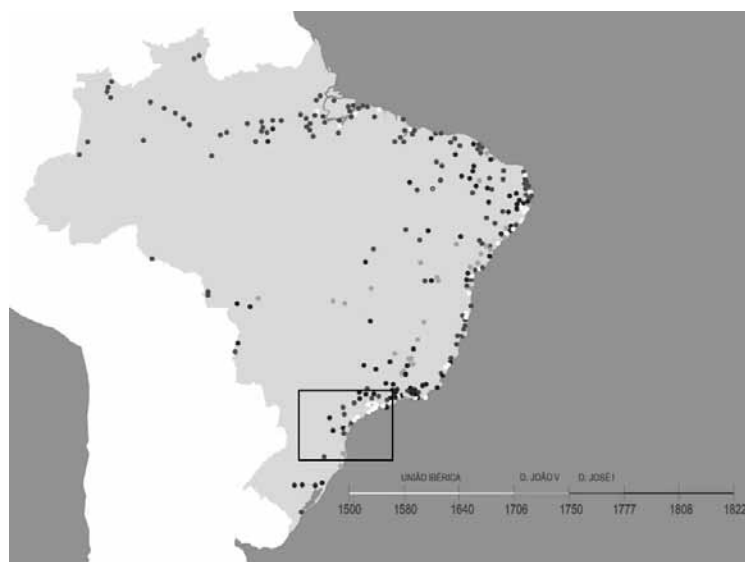


Figure 5
Towns and cities in Brazil between 1500 and 1822 and, highlighted,
approximate territories of the Captaincy of São Paulo
(source: the author).

A rare nameless drawing from the early stage of construction of the fortress was included along with letters written by the stronghold officials in the early 1768. The drawings represented the epoch of the construction of the wall foundations, and nearby land was being roughly trimmed to make way for the street grid (figure 6). Three bastions showed symmetrical and regular features, but along the Iguatemi River, the wall configuration became irregular and remained open. This drawing suggests a possible inspiration in academic schemes of fortification with bastions, but also allows assuming that some aspects of the fortress happened to be decided in the very site, without any concern to follow a more detailed and finished design.

In 1769, a year after the beginning of the construction, Sergeant-major Teotônio José Juzarte led an expedition of settlers and soldiers to the Iguatemi fortress. One of the drawings attributed to Juzarte is a plan of the Fort that shows its walls surrounded by an external landing, besides the delineation of the blocks (figure 7). However, according to Sergeant's report, the work had "just started" and people were allowed to leave or enter the fort practically "anywhere". He added that existing houses "were just a few, all built the same way with cob-walls and thatched roofs" (Juzarte 1769 cited in Souza and Myoko 2000: 76). Architecture features must have been mostly determined by techniques and skills of Indians, slaves and those "mamelucos", derived from the union of white men with the Indians, who were in charge of construction works.

In 1770, with the departure of Captain João Álvares Ferreira from Iguatemi, it was necessary to request an official engineer "to design and build the big amount that has to be done there." (Morgado de Mateus 1770a: 303-6). Other military officials in the fortress had to take responsibility for the construction works. But difficulties in getting supplies for that place, distant a two-month journey from the capital of São Paulo, the diseases among its settlers and the lack of resources rendered it difficult to manage the works. In 1770, it was considered to grant town status to Iguatemi, bearing in mind the number of inhabitants and houses "formed and placed in compliance with what has been determined" by Morgado de Mateus (Morgado de Mateus 1770b: 116-120). If this statement has not been a mere formality, then the governor also interfered in the configuration of the Fort.

In 1774, in an increasing context of discrediting of Metropolitan authorities in relation to the “diversion throughout the West” strategy, military engineer José Custódio de Sá e Faria left for Iguatemi with orders to examine the state of the fort. A plan designed by Sá e Faria between 1774 and 1775, brings the distribution of the constructions in its interior (figure 8). The main aspects of the wall are similar to what had been featured in the drawing above mentioned, but exterior landings seemed to be late compared to Juzarte’s drawing, designed a few years earlier; they also noted some differences regarding the layout of blocks. In accordance with a document written by Sá e Faria in 1775, only a flank and part of a parapet of the wall had been built (Sá e Faria 1775). The fort remained unfinished until capitulating to the Spaniards in 1777.



Figure 6

Croqui das obras do Forte Iguatemi, 1768

(source: Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, AHU_ACL_CU_023-01, Cx. 25, D. 2432).



Figure 7

[JUZARTE, Teotônio José]. Planta da Praça de N. Sra dos Prazeres do tio Iguatemi..., 1769

(source: Reis Filho 2000: plate 266).

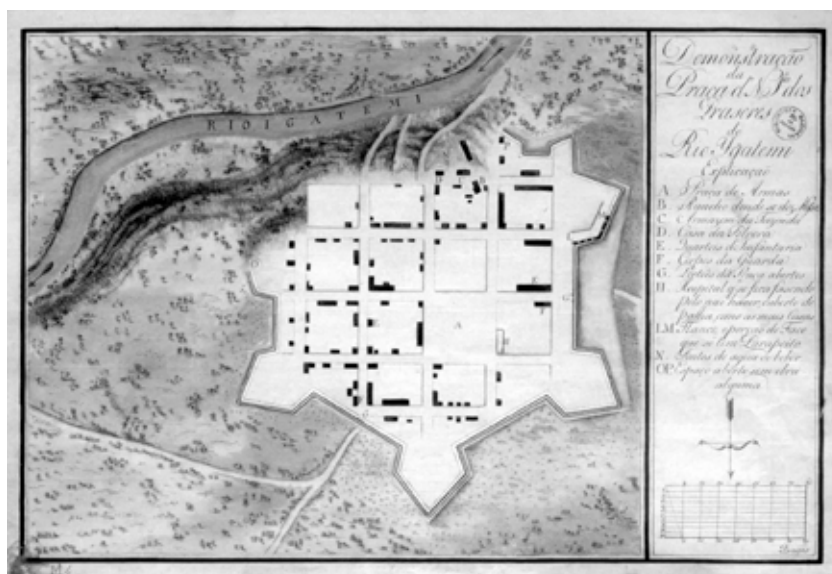


Figure 8

SÁ E FARIA, José Custódio de. *Demonstração da Praça de N. Sra. dos Prazeres do rio Iguatemi*. (source: SÁ E FARIA, José Custódio de. (Plantas da Praça de Nossa Senhora dos Prazeres), 1774-1775. Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Cart. 168420, fl. 4).

Among the remaining drawings of the settlements which were initiated during the Morgado de Mateus administration, there is also a plan of unknown authorship of the town of Lajes, dated from 1769 (figure 9). Lajes had been conceived as a strategic site on the main communication route to the South, the Viamão trail, aiming to avoid possible Spanish attacks and to build a settlement basis toward the West. Antonio Correia Pinto, farmer in the region, provided resources for the construction and paid for the initial costs, and in exchange received the rank of Captain-major. In addition to this title, he had also been promised an ennobling honor, the vestment of Knight of the Order of Christ. (Morgado de Mateus 1766: 35-39). In 1766, works for the formation of the village started, but the governor of the neighboring captaincy, Rio Grande de São Pedro, claimed that those lands were under his jurisdiction. A map sent from Rio Grande to the vice-king of the State of Brazil showed the position where Lajes was being built, and another site where the new settlement would likely to be “in a more comfortable position to appeal to the city of São Paulo”. The map also brought the proposal to build another village in the Captaincy of Rio Grande, along the route to the Uruguay missions. The establishment of settlements bordering the captaincies of São Paulo and Rio Grande suggests that both parties were trying to expand and consolidate their territories. Over the conflict, the chosen site for Lajes has changed three times.

In 1768, Capitain-Major Antônio Correia Pinto was instructed by Morgado de Mateus on how to proceed to establish the urban layout. The recommendation was then to “arrange the first houses in the angles of the blocks, so that backyards turn to the interior of the block bordering one another” (Morgado de Mateus 1768a: 211). Another condition required that the side of the blocks had to be at least 60 or 80 yards (around 65-86 meters) and streets were to be 60-span wide (13 meters). On the same day, Morgado de Mateus ordered Lajes population to make their houses in the village, in a site established by Antônio Correia Pinto, to whom the Governor “had given its plan” (Morgado de Mateus 1768b: 212).

The 1769 drawing of the village of Lajes (figure 9) featured two squares, one for the church and the other for the Town Hall. The 100-span dimension (22 meters) intended for streets is bigger than the 60 spans (13 meters) suggested by Morgado de Mateus; in turn, the side of the square – 350 spans – is in line with the recommendations – 300 to 400 spans (65 to 86 meters). The houses are interspaced at regular intervals and symmetrically distributed with respect to a central axis set by the church. The squares and main streets in Lajes would be prestigious spaces reserved for settlers of greater social distinction, largely belonging to the officer corps, as indicated by inscriptions found on the plan. Other elements were also recognized, however they were not subordinated to the same sort of arrangement with buildings around the square. At one end of the village, Captain-major Antônio Correia Pinto's ranch, a blacksmith workshop and a slave house conform another open regular space, and nearby there is a brickyard and a number of dispersed slave houses. Apparently, the 1769 plan would express a possible synthesis between expectations of inhabitants of higher social status and formal instructions imposed by Governor Morgado de Mateus. The drawing would serve to guide the urban layout, regulate the distribution of parcels and report the governor how things progressed. Morgado de Mateus sent the same plan to Lisbon to let them know about the works intended to establish the settlement.

Other recorded drawings of towns and settlements in the Captaincy of São Paulo in the period, are subsequent to the beginning of settlements undertakings. In 1776, in a critical context to initiatives by Governor Morgado de Mateus, Sá e Faria surveyed the forts at the seashore of São Paulo, which included sketches of Ararapira and Sabaúna (figures 10 e 11). These sketches did not originate final drawings, since the engineer departed to perform other tasks in Rio de Janeiro. On a survey of the seashore, carried out by military engineer João da Costa Ferreira between 1798 and 1799, for purposes of assisting in the control of coastal forests, a drawing of the village Guaratuba was included, as can be seen in detail on an illustration depicting the cove of the same name (figure 12).

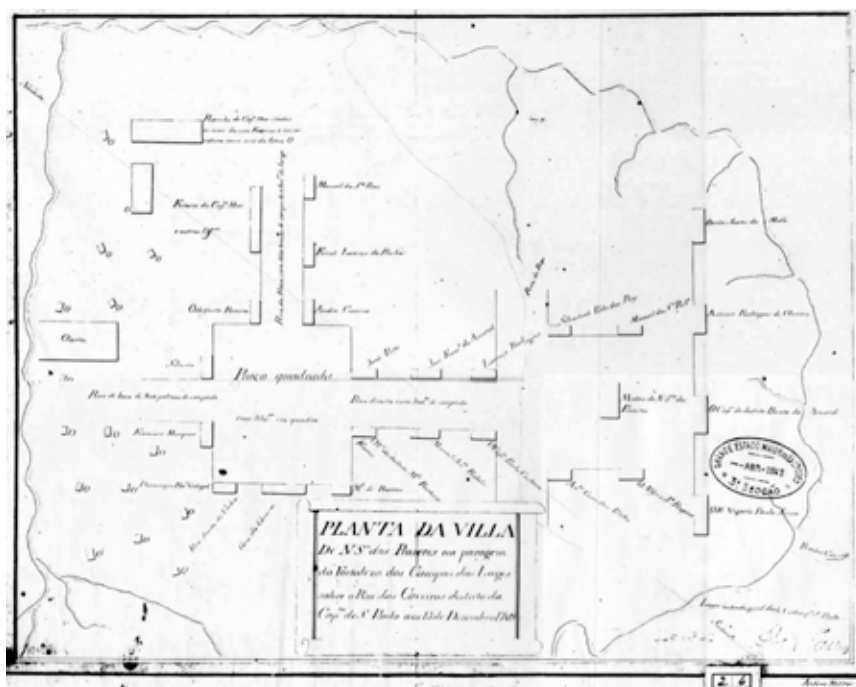


Figure 9

Planta da vila de Nossa Senhora dos Prazeres na paragem da Fortaleza dos Campos das Lajes..., 1769 (source: Museu Histórico Thiago de Castro).

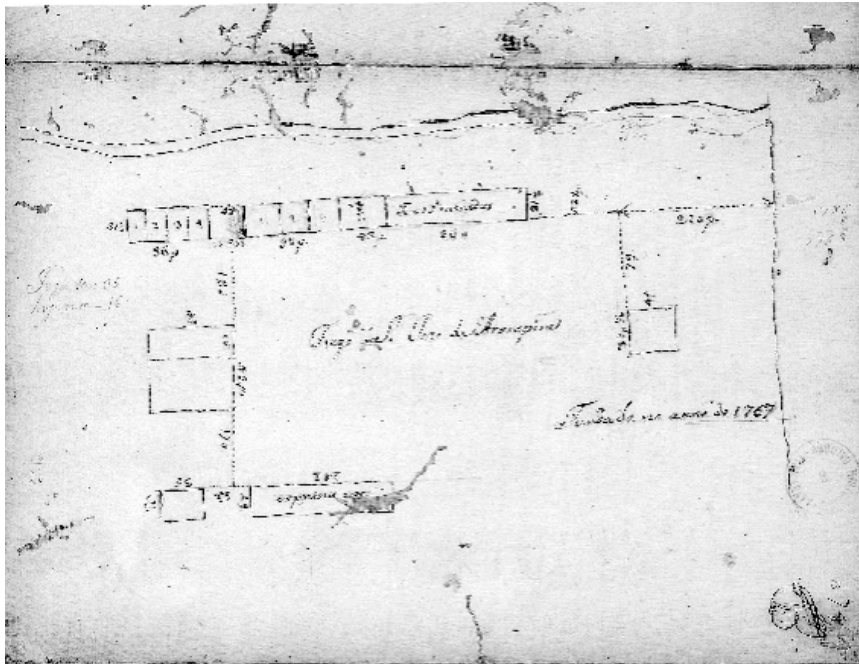


Figure 10
Sá e Faria, J. C. de. Freguesia de São José de Ararapira..., 1776
(source: Reis Filho 2000, plate 228).

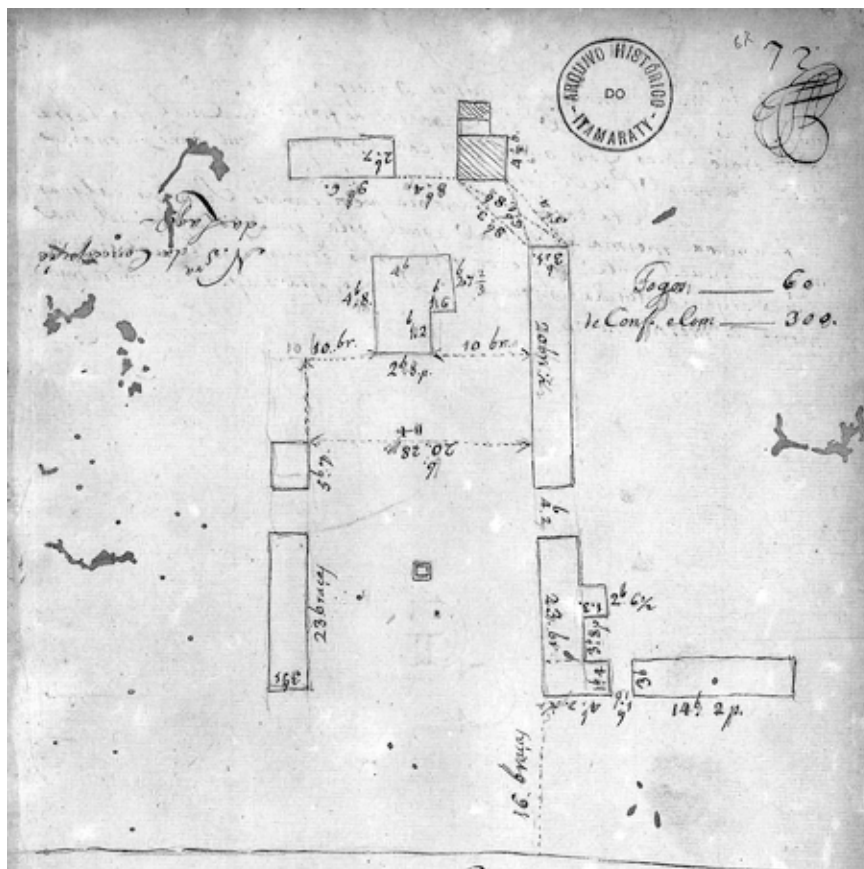


Figura 11
Sá e Faria, J. C. de. Nossa Senhora da Conceição [de Sabaúna] da Lage, 1776
(source: Reis Filho 2000, plate 229).

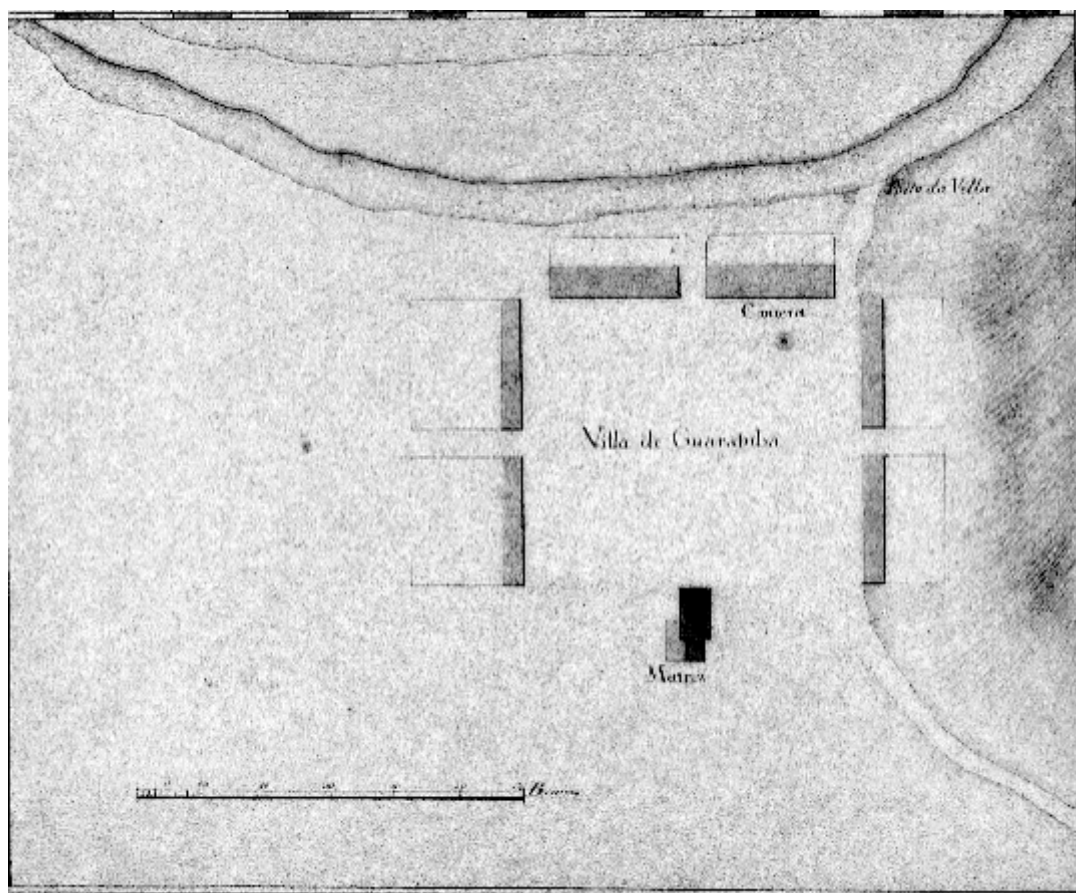


Figura12.
Ferreira, J. da C. Vila de Guaratuba
 (source: Reis Filho 2000, plate 242).

Ararapira, Guaratuba and Sabaúna can be concisely described as a rectangular square, where the church stands out, and continuous groups of houses around the free space. In these schematic plans, there is a tendency for a centripetal and cohesive urban shape, contrasting with the open unlimited spaces and the dispersion, which were ordinary traits of traditional land occupation. The effect suggested in plan caused by a unitary complex and dominated by the church would not manifest the same way in volumetric composition. For a real observer, the links of the construction in a single complex would not be perceived with the same clarity as those seen in a floor plan. Perhaps there might have been an unsuitable appropriation of scholar models of urban layout (Teixeira and Valla 1999: 263). On the other hand, one cannot rule out a possible compromise to the notion of indigenous spatiality characterized by large open spaces (Delson 2001). It was also considered the purposeful intention to value the empty space defined by groups of uniform features to emphasize the representation of monarchical power (Araújo 1998: 175). Indeed, emptiness stands out as the organizing principle of constructions.

One can also hypothesize that the emphasis on the square space would be related to the purposes of cartographic production on settlements that were created or renovated. Mapping colonial territories might serve military interests, but also had the major meaning of taking symbolic and visual possession of spaces that should be inserted within a concept of an orderly and unified empire (Craib 2000). In that sense, affirmation of cohesive and monumental aspects in urban depictions might convey an attempt to create an image associated with the incorporation of those settlements to the Portuguese Empire.

Drawings in written documents

Albeit acknowledged drawings are quite a few, written documents bring further reference on how plans and perspectives worked in the urbanization process of São Paulo Captaincy. As seen in a note in his *Diário do Governo* (Government Diary), Governor Morgado de Mateus ordered “plans to get good direction of streets and pleasant perspectives of the new settlements” (Anon., 1768?: 17). He recognized that drawings were valuable resources, as he mentioned in a letter to his wife D. Leonor de Portugal talking about his son’s education: “Do not forget to make them teach José [Antônio de Sousa] Latin and also how to draw, whose art has been more valuable to me than any other” (Morgado de Mateus, 1765 cited in Bellotto, 2007b: 214).

In 1765, Morgado de Mateus suggested that he himself had drawn a draft for the urban layout of the new settlement Guaratuba, along the southern coast: “I outlined the shape of the streets and squares; and the site where to put up constructions so that they would be healthier and get good exposure to sun rays” (Morgado de Mateus 1765: 159-160). He was also concerned with the “healthy and free-of-corruption environments”. (Morgado de Mateus 1772: 110). The intent to create a configuration to make a “healthy” city can be related with writings from other architecture writers. In Chapter 6th of the *Treatise on Architecture* by Marcus Vitruvius Pollio (2007 [ca. 25 bC]: 95-103), the arrangement of squares and streets in a fortified area was related to inhabitants’ health, considering the influence of the winds and the course of the sun. The governor might have known Vitruvius’ *Treatise*, for this was one of the books incorporated to his library in São Paulo, previously belonging to the Jesuits’ school.

However, even before the initial works for new settlements, the captaincy administration had to handle the issue of recruiting settlers, contesting the control of the land, and seek for cohorts able to contribute with construction costs. Settlers were Indians removed from the private administrators’ or the religious tutelage and they were also poor free men, who previously used to live from uncertain tasks, itinerant farming or occasional activities. The official policies wanted to conciliate repression to the so called vagrants with their active employment in the settlement. But many dwellers disbanded from the new villages. According to Afonso Botelho de Sampaio, the Governor’s right-hand man: “I’d rather you make me build twenty fortresses than settle a village, because those who are supposed to go there are posing so many difficulties...” (Sampaio 1767).

The enforcement of formal details to the urban layouts was part of an effort to discipline implantation and construction works. In instructions to Captain-major Lourenço Ribeiro de Andrade on the establishment of new settlements near vila Curitiba, Governor Morgado de Mateus has ordered:

...get the couples to found a church in a dry, pleasant and obstacle-free site, open up a quadrangle square, define the straight streets and lanes with the rope method, shaping wide blocks so that the houses have backyards; place stakes right away and demarcate the first houses on the corners of the streets, so that the land may soon be configured in its straightness to be more pleasant to the dwellings... (Morgado de Mateus 1767a: 104-106).

After assembling the families of settlers on a specific site, works should start with the construction of the church. The layout of the square and streets would precede other buildings and the rope method [*cordeação*] would assure the straight alignment.

On the same day, similar instructions were passed on regarding the seacoast settlement of Guaratuba, adding it would be sent “a prospect of the appearance of the houses, so that all of them would be made with the same floor plan and the land would be more pleasant” (Morgado de

Mateus 1767b: 107-109). Instructions stating the houses should be erected “along the alignment and with a pre-determined shape” were also given by the time of discussions to transfer the Mojiguaçu community, located to the North of the Captaincy, to a new site (Morgado de Mateus 1769: 292).

These orders suggest the intent of lending the façades some regularity, which might as well be associated with an aesthetic attribute. On the official discourse, urban layouts have been considered agents for imposing social patterns for some sort of civilized interaction. When São José dos Campos was granted town status, it was considered necessary “to arrange the streets layout with formality of civilian people, rather than the way they have lived so far with the brutality of the gentile” (Moura 1767: 407-411).

Over the process of installing new settlements, written documents and drawings emphasized some order and principles of geometric regularity, though imposition of rigid models for urban layouts does not seem to have occurred. A letter signed by Governor Morgado de Mateus addressed to his aide Afonso Botelho de Sampaio is significant as regards to how drawings should be used in urban implantation:

I send you the plan of how blocks should be shaped in new settlements; you are supposed to increase or decrease whatever you considerer more convenient, because the way I explain in the mentioned plan, territory is well shaped in its entirety, and I remain forewarned that in the future streets do not curve as they are used to doing (Morgado de Mateus, 1769b: 58-59).

This drawing is likely to indicate the way to form blocks from the building of houses on their corners, in accordance with other written instructions already mentioned. The same plan would serve as a model reference for more than one layout and, over the practical establishing of new settlements it might be expanded or reduced; in any case assuring the geometric regularity of urban structure. On a letter sent to Curitiba Council officials, over the intent of “founding or augmenting towns and settlements”, there was also mention to the dispatch of a plan that could be used to orientate the implantation of more than one settlement. (Morgado de Mateus 1767c: 137-138). These drawings seem to be quite fluid, and could be used in a variety of situations, also dependent on the action of the agent in charge of implementing them.

It can be argued that, over the 18th century, “planning was more written than drawn. (Flexor 2002); on the other hand, it has also been noted that the use of written language diminished gradually as graphic language consolidated (Bueno 2001: 270). In turn, Walter Rossa states that “regulated urbanism”, as promoted by the Portuguese Crown, used drawing not as a model, but as a concept or “pre-drawing”, founded in mathematical knowledge that linked Algebra and Geometry. (Rossa 2002: 380).

Over this brief analysis of the role of drawings in the urbanization of the Captaincy of São Paulo, it was possible to note that, along with written orders, plans and views served the purpose of imposing a certain degree of control on the development or urban shapes, both before the start and also along the construction works. Those drawings did not have closed sense and might interact with the requirements of specific circumstances of urban implantation. Thereby a planning stage was not configured as noticeably distinct from a construction phase. Many depictions of urban centers had the role of reporting the progress of works, presenting themselves as ideal images that combined elements checked out in situ with formal imposed instructions. The emphasis on the geometric regularity of the layouts would contribute to integrate the diversified reality of regional situations in a coherent and unitary urban culture.

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Leonardo da Vinci's ideal city designs contextualised and assessed

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The purpose of this article is first and foremost to contextualise Leonardo da Vinci's designs for an ideal city. The late Medieval cities that Leonardo was acquainted with, including Florence and Milan, were characterised by a surrounding defensive wall and distinctive architectural features, such as the centrally placed cathedral. These cities were generally overcrowded and subject to outbreaks of disease. Leonardo's innovative ideal city is planned on three levels, structurally separating all functional elements to relieve congestion and ensure hygiene. However, by retaining an enclosing wall for the proposed city, Leonardo echoed the unifying form of the traditional Medieval city. Its articulated internal functional structures may be interpreted as holons in a holarcy. Only in modern times are ideas such as the separation of areas for pedestrians and vehicular traffic in cities applied, albeit without being directly influenced by Leonardo's urban designs.

Key words: Leonardo da Vinci, Medieval city, ideal city, holarcy and holons

Leonardo da Vinci se ontwerp vir ideale stede gekontekstualiseer en beoordeel

Die doel met hierdie artikel is eerstens om Leonardo da Vinci se ontwerp vir 'n ideale stad te kontekstualiseer. Die laat Middeleeuse stede waarmee Leonardo vertrou was, met inbegrip van Florence en Milaan, was gekenmerk deur 'n omringende muur en uitstaande argitektoniese elemente soos die sentraal geplaasde katedraal. Hierdie stede was gewoonlik dig bewoon en onderhewig aan die uitbreek van siektes. Leonardo se innoverende ideale stad is op drie vlakke beplan waarin alle funksionele elemente struktureel geskei is ten einde verkeersdrukke te verminder en higiëne te verseker. Deur egter 'n omsluitende muur vir die beoogde stad te behou, het Leonardo die eenheidsgewende vorm van die tradisionele Middeleeuse stad ge-eggo. Die geartikuleerde interne funksionele strukture kan geïnterpreteer word as holons in 'n holon-hiërargie. Eers in modern tyd word idees soos die skeiding van ruimtes vir voetgangers en wielverkeer in stede toegepas, hoewel sonder direkte invloed van Leonardo se stadsontwerpe.

Sleutelwoorde: Leonardo da Vinci, Middeleeuse stad, ideale stad, holon-hiërargie en holons

Cities are expanded architectural artefacts constructed over generations in a landscape chosen for its potential to support human habitation. There have always been constraints on the choice of a site for a city, such as climate, its suitability for building construction, the availability of a fresh water supply and a convenient link to transportation routes. In European history the choice of an ideal site for the founding of a city was first expounded by Vitruvius (80-70 BCE - after 15 CE), a Roman engineer who wrote ten books on architecture. He emphasised the choice of a healthy site in a temperate climate and laid down rules for the alignment of streets to ensure optimal protection from the elements, while walls with watchtowers enclosing the city were necessary to safeguard the citizens from military attack.¹

Throughout the ages cities have been multifaceted, not only with respect to functional and physical requirements, such as building methods, paving techniques, transport technology, sewage and waste disposal, and energy supply. Further circumstances that influence city form include cultural values, philosophy, employment of the resident population, systems of government, architectural design techniques and artistic sensibility.

Urban form, made visible by buildings and a variety of architectural constructions that reveal the cultural development and ambition of rulers and citizens, evolves slowly over time. Such was the case with Italian cities during Leonardo da Vinci's lifetime (1452-1519). Like

most European cities, the Medieval Italian city was a physical entity circumscribed by a wall and placed within an agricultural landscape. Actually, “Cities were proud of their walls. [...] [C]ontemporary woodcuts and engravings of European cities [...], emphasized their fortifications. Cities were represented as entities that were distinctly separated from the surrounding countryside” (Cowan 2007: 103-4). From afar the skyline of Medieval and early Renaissance cities was shaped by towers, spires and roofs, while a city that built a cathedral acquired a collective symbol for the inhabitants. During the Renaissance there occurred a fascination with Classical antiquity, albeit combined with Christian values. Existing cities were transformed by new interests, especially those of the rising mercantile society, focussing attention on princely courts and spatially unified architectural compositions according to new aesthetic ideals, especially the application of perspective. In this respect an example of the continued development of a unique architectural composition is the Piazza dell’Annunziata in Florence, which started as an open space emulating a Roman forum, was embellished by the arcade of Filippo Brunelleschi’s Ospedale degli Innocenti that was commissioned in 1419, and later redeveloped by Antonio da Sangallo (1484-1546).

If it is assumed that the Italian Renaissance began in Florence in 1420, the fact also has to be acknowledged that “the Renaissance affected the form of only a few cities during its first century, and medieval city design continued for a long time...” (Crawford 2005: 10). Florence rebuilt its wall circuit for the second time in 1172. This practice was continued with a third circuit a century later. The city had a pre-plague population of 47,000, but it declined by almost half before the end of the fourteenth century. By the end of the fifteenth century the demographic expansion occurred again.² As the city’s population increased and its suburbs spread the walled area was continuously enlarged.³ Its new prosperity and expansion enabled Florence to acquire distinct Renaissance architecture, but it nevertheless retained its basic medieval walled enclosure which emphasised its unitary form, a form that included disparate natural and constructed components.

Since relatively few new towns were established during the fifteenth century the population of existing ones grew rapidly, causing cramped conditions and health hazards that led to renewed outbreaks of bubonic plague. While walled Medieval cities were arranged around central squares with a complex pattern of loosely radial streets, Renaissance urban designers preferred regular or grid street patterns which were not easy to accomplish by means of urban renewal schemes.

An innovative approach to improving life in cities during the age of humanism required new design techniques.

Enter Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo da Vinci was born in 1452 in the village of Anchiano, near the agrarian town of Vinci, where he grew up close to nature. His life in a city began at the age of fifteen he was sent to Florence as an apprentice to Andrea del Verrocchio (1435-88). Florence, the city where Leonardo spent his youth, was technically a democracy, controlled by Lorenzo de’Medici, called the Magnificent, who came to power in 1469. He was a great patron of the arts who commissioned works from Leonardo and other major artists and architects. As an independent artist Leonardo Gradually became acquainted with many other Italian cities. In 1477 he worked on a commission in Pistoia which he left unfinished to move to Milan in 1482. In the service of the city’s duke, Ludovico Sforza, he spent sixteen years in that city. With the duke’s fall from power in 1499, Leonardo left Milan, visited Mantua and spent a short time in Venice, from 1499

to 1500. It is known that he also visited various cities in Romagna: Pesaro, Rimini, Cesena, Imola (1502), Faenza, Siena (1503) as well as Urbino and Piombino. In 1500 he returned to Florence and in 1502 entered the service of Cesare Borgia, the son of Pope Alexander VI and commander of the papal armies, as a military engineer and cartographer, but returned to Florence in 1503. Leonardo once again left for Milan in 1506 where he sojourned until 1513, when, at the age of 61, he travelled to Rome. In 1515 he was called to Bologna where he met the French king, Francis I and in 1516 accepted an invitation from this monarch to reside as a guest at the French court. For the first time Leonardo travelled outside Italy and took up residence in Cloux, not far from the king's court in Ambrose.

As an acute observer of physical environment, both natural and human, Leonardo obviously noted the functioning of the Italian cities that he was familiar with, but he surely also recognised their weaknesses regarding the general quality of life of their citizens. However, he did not neglect the study of theory and was acquainted with Vitruvian town planning theory, as well as the ideas of Leon Battista Alberti who echoed Vitruvian ideals in *De re aedificatoria*, his great work on the theory of architecture, written before 1452. Alberti remained “poised between the medieval world that was passing and the new world that was to come...” (Eden 1943: 20). Leonardo however, as well as being a keen observer of all the towns and cities that he was acquainted with, experienced at first hand the demise of the Medieval world that was making way for the physical manifestation of the new which he explored in architectural designs⁴ and futuristic sketches of ideal urban settings.

The complexity of cities

The city, as Richard Shusterman (1996: 171) observes, “seems a symbolic solution to one of philosophy's most central problems – the many and the one. This problem is at once metaphysical and epistemological, as well as ethical and aesthetic [...], as unity in variety”. Planners not only design for the functioning of many civic activities, but also for a hierarchy of cultural and social values – the actual and the ideal. Consequently, an historical tradition arose, in which, according to Robert Gutman (1965-66: 54), “Architecture is one of the few fields which keeps alive the utopian tradition of social thought”. Therefore, it serves a better purpose to study architectural designs – whether built or not – aimed at improving physical and social conditions in cities than to study texts dealing with ideal cities from Plato to the present.⁵

What all urban designers realise intuitively, and was surely also understood by Leonardo, is succinctly summarised by Henri Lefebvre (1991: 190), “To change life, however, we must first change space”. Life in walled medieval cities was lived in mostly cramped and unhygienic conditions that Leonardo would have witnessed, also in Milan, even though this proud city, the personal and dynastic possession of the Visconti and the Sforza rulers, was established on “an equitable site between the mountains and the plains, rich and fertile lands, and an abundance of water well suited to [its] position in the rich crossroads of the Po valley” (Welch 1995: 33). This description echoes the Vitruvian ideal for a city location. Judged by a representation of 1493 the city walls enclosed a densely built-up urban area which by 1500 had a population of more than 60,000⁶ (figure 1).

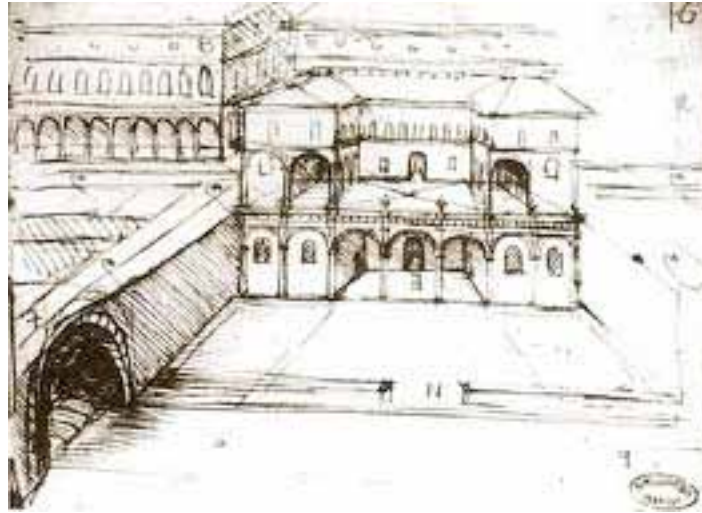


Figure 1
View of Medieval Milan, 1493
 (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_f_72r_1.png).

The context of Leonardo's town planning studies

Urban planning as the extension of architecture into the larger environment, was well understood by Leonardo. His proposed scheme for the redevelopment of the area of Florence between San Lorenzo and San Marco would have created a rectangular city space centred on the Medici palace. This scheme was later reinterpreted by Vasari for the urban renewal of the area between the Palazzo Vecchio and the Arno River in Florence that resulted in the creation of the Uffizi, the present Galleria del Uffizi.

During his first sojourn in Milan Leonardo recorded ideas, included in Ms B, Institut de France⁷ and Codex Atlanticus,⁸ for the spatial development of a city that would have changed life in Renaissance cities for the better, should it have been built.

A judgement of the quality of Leonardo's design solutions for an ideal city would require an explanation of the context that motivated his serious attention to town planning, followed by a description of the designs, and an evaluation of what is represented in the sketches regarding their functional applicability to Renaissance cities. Viewing the past from the vantage point of the present may induce a judgement of the value of Leonardo's urban visions, applied even to overcrowded modern metropolises, as discussed in the "Conclusion" below.

Medieval cities were functionally inadequate, especially because streets were suitable predominantly for pedestrian movement, not vehicular traffic. Except for the road leading from the gate into the town and the market that was wide enough to accommodate vehicles, most streets were winding and narrow. Even a city like Florence, originally a Roman camp with a central grid pattern, developed in a disorderly way. The disorder was somewhat curbed during the thirteenth century when major churches were connected by means of straight streets. The integration of new Renaissance buildings with the redesign of the street system in Florence happened optimally only during the sixteenth century.

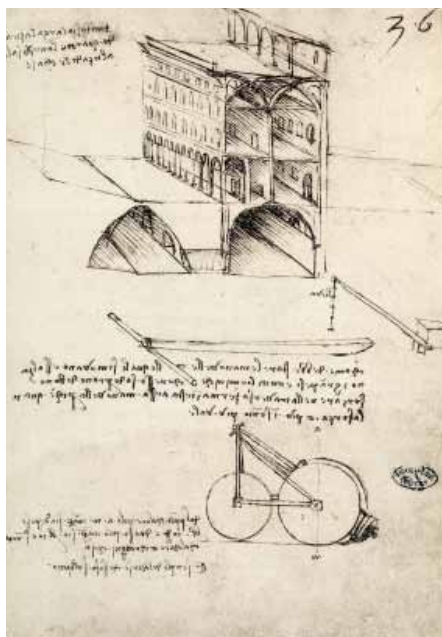
Leonardo's town planning studies, dated about 1487, are usually referred to as "sketches for planning an ideal town" (Gould 1975: 55). This reference implies that the walled cities and

towns of Leonardo's time were not ideal, a fact that became evident when a renewed outbreak of the plague ravaged Milan from 1484 to 1487, during his sojourn there.⁹ This malevolent occurrence may have motivated Leonardo to develop an interest in the effects of city life on the inhabitants and the spread of diseases. He obviously assessed the unhygienic situation in Milan as well as other cities that he was acquainted with. In a description accompanying the design in Ms B, Institut de France, his plans are for a new city close to the sea or a large river (figure 2). Therefore, he could give his fantasy free reign to design a city, not only in accord with Vitruvian principles, but presumably with a vision to the future, taking into consideration its population growth and increasing commercial activity necessary for the citizens' welfare. Welfare in Renaissance cities not only implied hygienic and healthy living, but also the unobstructed movement of people and goods.



Figure 2
Leonardo da Vinci, a design for an ideal city, circa 1487
(source: <http://www.google/search?hl=en&site=Leonardodavinci/cities>).

Further sketches show Leonardo's consideration of details (figure 3).



Figures 3a and b
Leonardo da Vinci, detailed designs for structures in an ideal city, circa 1487
(source: <http://www.google/search?hl=en&site=Leonardodavinci/cities>).

A description of Leonardo's town planning designs

Leonardo gave the following description (quoted from MacCurdy 1956: 389-90) of the planning details of his representation showing high- and low-level roads, that is areas for foot and vehicular travel, as well as a canal for access by means of boats, not all of which can be located on figure 2:

The roads [marked] *m* are six braccia higher than the roads [marked] *p s*, and each road ought to be twenty braccia wide and have a fall of half a braccio from the edges to the centre. And in this centre at every braccio there should be an opening one braccio long and the width of the finger, through which rain-water may drain off into holes made at the level of the roads *p s*. And on each side of the extremity of the width of this road there should be an arcade six braccia broad resting on columns. And know that if anyone wishes to go through the whole place by the high-level roads, he will be able to use them for this purpose, and so also if anyone wishes to go by the low-level roads.

The high-level roads are not to be used by waggons or vehicles such as these but are solely for the convenience of the gentlefolk. All carts and loads for the service and convenience of the common people should be confined to low-level roads.

One house has to turn its back on another, leaving the low-level road between them. The doors serve for the bringing in of provisions such as wood and wine and suchlike things. The privies, the stables and suchlike noisome places are emptied by underground passages situated at a distance of three hundred braccia from one arch to the next, each passage receiving its light through the openings in the streets above. And at every arch there should be a spiral staircase; it should be round because in the corners of square ones nuisances are apt to be committed. At the very first turn there should be a door of entry into the privies and public urinals, and this staircase should enable one to descend from the high-level to the low-level road.

The high-level roads begin outside the gates, and when they reach them they have attained as height of six braccia. The site should be chosen near to the sea or some large river, in order that the impurities of the city which are moved by water may be carried far away.

This town planning design (figure 2) reveals Leonardo's interest in "rational town planning" (Gould 1975: 55). It is described by Nicholl (2004: 202) as

an airy, geometric, futuristic city of piazzas and loggias and tunnels and canals ("futuristic" in that curious cul-de-sac sense: the future as it was envisaged in the past). The city could be built on two levels – the upper level for pedestrians, social, aesthetic, akin to the "pedestrian areas" in modern cities, while the lower level, giving directly on to a network of canals, would be for the movement of goods and animals, for traders and warehouses, and for the dwellings of what he calls "ordinary" people. The streets are wide, the height of the façades regulated, the chimneys tall to disperse smoke high above the roofs. He recommends spiral staircases in the public buildings, because square staircases have dark corners which people use as urinals. Improved sanitation was much on his mind, no doubt in response to the plague.¹⁰

In actual fact Leonardo's sketch shows only a limited area in the proposed planned city. A wide open square is depicted in the foreground. At ground level there is a canal and a lane for wagons, carts and vehicles that may also be used for pedestrians. At the upper level there is a broad arcade resting on columns and loggia-type buildings that have a resemblance to the market square in Milan (figure 4). The underground passages are not visible. One may assume that Leonardo intended the city to be bounded by a wall because he mentions that the high-level roads begin outside the gates.



Figure 4
Piazza Mercanti, a Medieval market square in Milan
 (source: <http://www.aviewoncities.com/milan/piazzamercanti.htm>).

Changing space: an evaluation of Leonardo's designs

To counter Medieval urban dysfunctionality, even at the loss of symbolic expression, Leonardo imagined a pragmatic way to achieve optimal flow of traffic and access to all functions. However, the norm that the planning of cities requires more than the simple aim of meeting practical needs should be applied to evaluate Leonardo's urban designs. His designs reveal his ideal city as an intellectual construct; he treated the city as an object of thought, but subject to the limits of his understanding of the context of fifteenth century Italy where cities were entities that had a unitary form.

Leonardo was certainly familiar with Classical theories regarding the compositional ideal of achieving beauty in works of art and analogously in architecture by means of the harmonious arrangement of parts into a unified whole.¹¹ One may also assume that he accepted Alberti's definition of architectural beauty as *concinnitas* as elaborated in his *De re aedificatoria*. According to Alberti *concinnitas* is a major law of nature which imparts a unified structure to all her organisms. This law should be followed by architects to achieve a whole in which the incorporated parts, even though antithetical, are independently structured to afford variety to the design. This architectural procedure is summarised by Caroline Van Eck (1995/96: 24): "Qualitative unity is based on methodical or rational procedures that are in turn based on a concept or plan of the whole. Alberti thus used *concinnitas* to refer to that unity, given by nature to her creations, which is based on purposeful unity of varying and opposing elements."

What was valid for sculpture, painting and buildings could *mutatis mutandis* also be applied to the grouping of constructions to form town planning enclaves or even the fabric of a total city. In this sense figure 1 can be evaluated as an imaginative arrangement, suggesting an inner order and general concepts of urban functionality.

In effect, Leonardo's "futuristic city" – as designated by a modern interpreter – would not, if it had been constructed, at all be baffling to contemporaries. The walled city was still the norm and the idea that pedestrians and vehicles need different spaces, and the tripartite arrangement was familiar in the design of Renaissance palazzos with their hierarchical functional levels.¹² What is astonishing in Leonardo's sanitised city is the clarity with which functional elements are designated. He did away with the jumble in the interiors of medieval cities (see figure 1). Instead, he retained the medieval enclosure of the wall which gave it a unified appearance. The city as an enclosed unity may be described as a "holarcy", a notion derived from Arthur

Koestler (1967), which he describes as a hierarchy in the domain of living organisms or social organisations, of which “each member of this hierarchy, on whatever level, is a sub-whole or “*holon*” in its own right – a stable, integrated structure, equipped with self-regulatory devices and enjoying a considerable degree of *autonomy* or self-government” (Koestler 1978: 27).¹³ Clearly the ideal city depicted and described by Leonardo is a relational structure, with its parts – the wall, gates, the canal, vehicular roads, the underground passage, loggia-type buildings and humble dwellings, etc. – belonging as quasi-autonomous sub-wholes or *holons* to the larger integrated organisation of the proposed city.

Remorantin

Leonardo spent the last three years of his life as guest of François Ier (1494-1541), King of France, who called on him to design an entire new city in Romorantin as a royal residence (figure 5). During his last years at Ambroise, France, Leonardo produced schemes for the new city and an imposing new palace at Romorantin. After Leonardo’s death the Romorantin project was abandoned. However, if it had been built according to Leonardo’s designs, it would have been what Karel Vereycken (2010: 53) calls a “first modern city”. It is, according to Carlo Pedretti (1972), Leonardo’s last dream. Its most remarkable feature is its total regularity, parallel streets, intersected at right angles by short, wide cross streets. Leonardo’s innovative plan introduced the use of urban canals as part of the city’s gridded street system. A long, straight canal bisects the city, while shorter canals, following the cross-streets, cross it at right angles, connecting the central canal to a system of ring canals that encircle the city with the purpose of serving as a defensive moat. This clearly articulated urban scheme, being both “utilitarian and salubrious” (Fricelli 1993: 509), anticipated not only the water-gardens of the Italian and French Baroque, but is also reminiscent of the street and canal system of Amsterdam, planned some 200 years later.



Figure 5
Leonardo da Vinci, sketch for the proposed city of Remorantin
(source: Pedretti 1985: 264).

One may assume that Leonardo’s designs for the new town commissioned by King Francis I was made with the understanding that it would not remain a futuristic project, but that it would

actually be built. His plans for Remorantin are not thought experiments, but actual working drawings for the royal client who, unfortunately, lost interest in the undertaking.

Conclusion: the relevance of Leonardo's urban visions for modern metropolises

The modern metropolis cannot be described as a holon. It is an open-ended and sprawling. According to Swimme and Berry (1992: 249) it is a “world of automobiles, highways, parking lots, shopping malls, power stations, nuclear-weapons plants, factory farms, chemical plants; this new world of hundred-story buildings, endless traffic, turbulent populations, mega-cities, decaying apartments, has become an affliction perhaps greater than the more natural human condition it seeks to replace”. However, all is not lost. Within the seeming disorder a new order is constantly being created by means of the ingenuity of architects, planners and engineers that in the past has lessened various natural challenges to the built environment. The twentieth century necessitated mobility in metropolitan areas, which resulted in car-centric planning. Now it has become urgent for the wellbeing of residents to invent schemes to prioritise people over cars, to create safe pedestrian zones with walkways and create sustainable sites on a human scale, especially in areas for recreation.

Of course, Leonardo's town planning ideas are not literally applicable to modern cities. Actually, they were never applied, but reinvented. Modern town-planning principles echo Leonardo's radical proposals for an ideal city. Hygiene has become a serious function with garbage removal, drainage and water-borne sewage more complicated than Leonardo could envisage because all present-day detritus cannot be pumped into a river as he had suggested in a time when all waste was organic. However, pedestrian zones became highly prized areas in cities and more streets are continuously closed to vehicular traffic (figure 6).¹⁴



Figure 6

A new pedestrian street in Moscow, 2014

(source: <http://themoscownews.com/local/20130709/191751510/A-Guide-to-Moscows-New-Pedestrian-Areas-.html>).

Leonardo's radical design concept for an ideal city on different levels – subterranean, ground and elevated – had become an accepted strategy in cities, for example in Paris. In the relatively new suburb of La Defence a pedestrian bridge crosses a four-lane thoroughfare (figure 7).¹⁵ In new towns such as Makuhari, an outlying commercial district of Tokyo, Japan, overhead walkways guarantee the safety of pedestrians who need not cross car lanes (figure 8).



Figure 7
An elevated walkway in La Defence, Paris, France
 (source: <http://parisbytrain.com/la-defence-paris-walkway-architecture/>).



Figure 8
An overhead walkway in Makuhari, Tokyo, Japan
 (source: <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e3046.html>).

Last, but not least, there is a proposal for an overhead bicycle lane in London (figure 9).¹⁶



Figure 9
A proposed overhead bicycle lane in London, United Kingdom, 2014
 (source: <http://www.aljazeera.com/video/europe2014/01/london-cyclists-dream-high-rise-track-2014>).

Notes

- 1 Later, during the Renaissance, bastions and star-shaped protrusions became essential for protection against gunpowder artillery. Harris (2012: 1) explains: “There is no certainty about where the first bastion was built or about the influences on its design [...]. Strongpoints definitely identifiable as bastions are found in Tuscany by the early 16th century”. Consequently it is assumed that Leonardo was not acquainted with actually built structures, but he was aware of the efficacy of bastions, as illustrated in Codex Atlanticus, folio 43, verso-b, and various other sketches for fortifications.
- 2 According to Cowan (2007: 102) Venice, Milan, Florence, Rome and Naples had populations of over 60,000 by 1500.
- 3 See Mumford (1961: 359).
- 4 See Maré (2012).
- 5 See Maré (1978).
- 6 See note 2.
- 7 A collection of Leonardo’s documents from circa 1487-90.
- 8 This large collection contains Leonardo’s documents from 1478-1519, sourced from the Ambrosiana Library, Milan.
- 9 Leonardo experienced a previous outbreak of the bubonic plague in Florence in 1479 which lasted only a few weeks (Nicholl 2004: 201). For an overview of the bubonic plague in Europe, see (Cohn 2007).
- 10 Nicholl (2004: 202) continues the description of Leonardo’s thoughts on hygiene: “He has some thoughts on the ideal lavatory as well [...]: ‘The seat of the latrine should be able to swivel like the turnstile in a convent and return to its initial position by the use of a counterweight. The ceiling should have many holes so that it can breathe.’”
- 11 According to Trivigno (2009: 153), “The notion of organic unity has had a long history in aesthetics and art criticism. It is a normative aesthetic ideal, which historically has been applied to several of the fine art, most prominently painting and literature. Both organic unity itself and its critical uses have their origin in Plato’s *Phaedrus*.”
- 12 Palazzo Medici Riccardi, designed by Michelozzo di Bartolomeo for Cosimo de’ Medici, built between 1444 and 1484, is an example of tripartite design with services on ground level, the *piano nobile* or principle floor containing reception and living quarters, located above, away from the dampness, odors and noise of the street level, with a low attic level at the top.
- 13 The term “holon” derives from the Greek *holos*, which means whole, and the suffix *-on*, which is its neuter form. It was introduced in systems theory discussions by Koestler (1967).
- 14 Creating more space for pedestrians have become an urban renewal ideal in the central business areas of many metropolises, for example Moscow. See O’Flynn (2014).
- 15 See Lam (2013).
- 16 See Grabar (2012).

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Piraeus as a potential Cultural Capital of Europe: the role of its industrial architecture heritage

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The city of Piraeus, or otherwise known as *Porto Leone* or *Manchester of the East*, raises a crucial bet with history and culture, claiming to become the European Capital of Culture for the year 2021, which however needs high vision and proper planning to be won. Under these conditions the city must promote, highlight and generally take advantage of all its possible cultural sources of historical significance so that they will result to be not just single nuggets of a short-lived cultural blink, but stable cultural values that will feature the largest Greek port forever. One of these sources is its *industrial architecture* which although constitutes the cradle of the collective memory of the city's modern history, it has remained, for the most part, abandoned, unused and forgotten. More specifically, the city of Piraeus was for about a century, (from the mid 19th century up until the Second World War), the cornerstone not only of the transit trade of the country, but also of its heavy industry, which is now 'faded', having left behind precious treasures of industrial architecture which are threatened with complete extinction due to the lack of meaningful incentives for their restoration. What areas should be selected and according to which criteria? How such an initiative would help in a better and more effective way the city to win the bet of the cultural capital of Europe in a few years? This research aims to answer the above questions, illuminating many unseen but undoubtedly impressive aspects of the "unknown" for many, industrial architecture heritage of the city of Piraeus.

Key words: culture capital, industrial architecture, urban plan, collective memory

Ο Πειραιάς ως εν δυνάμει Πολιτιστική πρωτεύουσα της Ευρώπης: ο ρόλος της βιομηχανικής αρχιτεκτονικής κληρονομιάς του

Η πόλη του Πειραιά, ή αλλιώς γνωστή ως Πόρτο Λεόνε ή το Μάντσεστερ της Ανατολής, θέτει ένα κρίσιμο στοίχημα με την ιστορία και τον πολιτισμό, διεκδικώντας να γίνει η Πολιτιστική Πρωτεύουσα της Ευρώπης για το έτος 2021, γεγονός το οποίο όμως χρειάζεται υψηλό όραμα και σωστό προγραμματισμό για να πραγματοποιηθεί. Υπό αυτές τις συνθήκες η πόλη πρέπει να προωθήσει και να αξιοποιήσει όλες τις πιθανές πηγές της πολιτιστικής ιστορίας της, με τρόπο τέτοιο ώστε να μη μείνουν απλά και μόνο ψήγματα μιας βραχύβιας πολιτιστικής αναβάθμισης, αλλά να αποτελέσουν σταθερές πολιτιστικές αξίες που θα ταυτιστούν με το μεγαλύτερο Ελληνικό λιμάνι για πάντα. Μία από αυτές τις πηγές είναι η βιομηχανική αρχιτεκτονική της πόλης, η οποία αποτελεί το λίκνο της συλλογικής μνήμης της σύγχρονης ιστορίας του Πειραιά, παρά το γεγονός ότι έχει παραμείνει επί πολλές δεκαετίες εγκαταλελειμμένη, αχρησιμοποίητη και ξεχασμένη. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, η πόλη του Πειραιά ήταν για περίπου έναν αιώνα, (από τα μέσα του 19ου αιώνα μέχρι και το Δεύτερο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο), ο ακρογωνιαίος λίθος όχι μόνο του διαμετακομιστικού εμπορίου, αλλά και της βαριάς βιομηχανίας της χώρας, η οποία έχει τώρα «ξεθωριάσει», αφήνοντας πίσω της πολύτιμους θησαυρούς της βιομηχανικής αρχιτεκτονικής οι οποίοι απειλούνται με πλήρη εξαφάνιση, λόγω της έλλειψης ουσιαστικών κινήτρων για την αποκατάστασή τους. Ποιες πρώην βιομηχανικές περιοχές θα πρέπει να επιλεγούν προς έρευνα και αποκατάσταση και σύμφωνα με ποια κριτήρια; Πώς μια τέτοια πρωτοβουλία θα μπορούσε να βοηθήσει την πόλη για να κερδίσει το στοίχημα της πολιτιστικής πρωτεύουσας της Ευρώπης σε λίγα χρόνια; Η έρευνα αυτή επιχειρεί να απαντήσει στα παραπάνω ερωτήματα, φωτίζοντας πολλές αθέατες, αλλά αναμφίβολα εντυπωσιακές πτυχές της «άγνωστης» για πολλούς, βιομηχανικής αρχιτεκτονικής κληρονομιάς της πόλης του Πειραιά.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: πολιτιστική πρωτεύουσα, βιομηχανική αρχιτεκτονική, αστικό σχέδιο, συλλογική μνήμη

«In 2021 we will celebrate the 2,500 years since the Battle of Salamis. It is a target on a symbolic, but basically real level that we need to aim at, to bring Piraeus back to the center of Europe because Piraeus is not only its land and history. It's mainly the people, the new generation, and the institutions of culture. We must work together to bring Piraeus where it deserves to be, so that the city and its neighborhoods open their doors to all kinds of art, so that culture can become a part of everyday life. But as André Malraux has said, culture is not inherited, it is conquered. So we, the inhabitants of Piraeus, can conquer it because we already have a long history behind us».

These were some of the points made on April 10, 2013 by the Minister of Education, Culture and Sports of Greece Konstantinos Arvanitopoulos in the framework of a bipartisan meeting on the initiative of the electronic newspaper *Portnet.gr*, while he instructed the departments of the Ministry of Culture to prepare the dossier for claiming “Piraeus 2021: Cultural Capital of Europe.” For the historical building of the Municipal Theatre, the Minister announced its immediate and seamless operation. At the same time he praised the personality of the Piraeus-born architect and professor at the National Technical University of Athens, Ioannis Lazarimos, who bequeathed to the city of Piraeus this “architectural gem”, which beyond the flagship image of dynamism that it sends out, constitutes a unique architectural symbol of the city. He also promised that the paperwork will be completed soon so as the Municipal Theatre be reopened and, together with the Municipal Art Gallery, become a center of culture for Piraeus and the surrounding area. For the historical Ralleion School he said that its completion is without doubt a very important project for the city of Piraeus, as it is a symbol of its modern education history (Papamathaiou 2013: 24). The MP of the major left opposition party SYRIZA Theodoros Dritsas admitted that even as a “twist” of history, the city is preparing to claim, in terms of infrastructure, what it did deserve but failed to win throughout the pre-Olympics, (2004) period. The Secretary in charge of the Sector of Communication of the socialist party P.A.SO.K. Dimitris Karidis argued that it is necessary to cross the traditional dividing lines and utilize the amount of about 400 million euros provided by the NSRF for the Athens Metro, the tram and the cruise terminal. Actually, he emphatically opted for abandoning the plans to create another cruise terminal in the Faliro area, something to which everyone agreed. Ioannis Kakoulides, member of the Executive Committee of another left opposition party DIMAR, focused on the development potential that the investment alone can have in Culture, citing the case of the Municipal Theatre and the regeneration of the underdeveloped area of Troumpa.

Amid all this weird “consensus” bipartisan agreement, one strand of which a few months later announced the designation of the city of Piraeus as Maritime Capital of Europe for the year 2015 (Karagiannis 2013: 36), we observe the synergy of all the speakers at very specific and predictable historical and/or cultural buildings or areas of the city center which aspire to become the iconic symbol of the cultural redevelopment of the biggest port of the country on the occasion of its emergence as European Capital of Culture 2021. But none of the previous speakers, politicians born in Piraeus made a point on the very important industrial history of the city - which, together with the equally important history of Syros and Lavrion are the cradle of the Greek industrial heritage - and therefore on its architectural masterpieces most of which are just shells of buildings that remain unused, abandoned to the prey of time and people. None of them wanted or could have imagined the perspective of these amazing buildings of historic, architectural, but also of artistic value as cultural centers suffice it to decide to effectively utilize them. But we believe that such a highly responsible and yet an essentially important intention for the city of Piraeus not only would give more chances to its candidacy, but it would also give

breaths of culture in its historical areas which are currently sinking into obscurity, depreciation and garbage.

Historical overview of the industrial heritage of Piraeus

Yet the city of Piraeus, the biggest port in Greece and one of the largest and the most powerful of the Mediterranean, has a long and illustrious history in the industry and trade. So combined with shipping, it was perhaps the only case of any Greek industrial town in the 19th century in which the industry would cover all major areas of production. As from 1846, i.e. the year in which the first steam-powered factory was set up in Greece, it being the famous silk factory of Lukas Rallis¹, earmarks the period of its industrial development which, in the last quarter of the 19th century began to overshadow the industrial splendor of the island of Syros (Ministry of Culture 1999: 70). However, the complete industrialization of the city began to happen in the decade 1860-1870 with the establishment of thirteen steam-powered factories with modern equipment. For a small town that Piraeus was at that time, thirteen factories in just ten years was a significant achievement. The industry, although its dimensions could hardly be compared with those of trade, were gradually beginning to enter the heart of the local consciousness. After just a few years the funnels began to symbolize the supremacy of Piraeus and its uniqueness throughout the eastern Mediterranean (Tsokopoulos 1984: 221). More specifically, the northern part of the harbor, particularly in the wider area of St. Dionysius, was considered as the most suitable one for the creation of this new urban - industrial area which had been the life-giving core of not only the new productive, but also socioeconomic profile of the city². Indeed, at that very period the economic development of the country's first port was impressive and this was reflected in the emergence of a new urban compact class, but also of a potential working class which had been increasing exponentially (Dorizas 2001: 283). Until 1880, the pasta factories, distilleries, the cotton industry, the ginners spinning, dyeing and weaving plants and paper mills, the steel and soap factories reached the number of 55 (Gounali 2012: 4). At that time, Piraeus experienced a period of industrial take-off, a process that on a purely imaginary level reached akin to the sublime productive power of the city-symbol of the Industrial Revolution, Manchester. So the "Greek Manchester" or else the city with the flattering agnomen "Manchestria of the East" began to penetrate the Balkan markets, while its steam mills fed with flour all over coastal Greece, including the islands of the Aegean. It was then that Piraeus imparted to the rest of Greece, the living and social standard of which was very low, the actual dimension of the term 'industry', as for most Greeks it was a vague concept, it being often liable to confusion with a general economic activity. However, during the 'black 1880s, this era of prosperity and development of production came to its decline with the sudden and strong crisis that plagued the cotton industry, which marked the definitive closure of almost half of industries, and hence the rapid increase in unemployment which reached 33 % of the workforce in the city. But Piraeus managed to survive, as after several moves of adjustment (many machine shops were turned into shipyards and so they were the precursors of the ship repair zone), but also imports and production of new objects (such as the spirits industry, especially brandy), greeted the twentieth century with an upward trend (Tsokopoulos 1995: 19).



Figure 1
A rare photo from the Piraeus ship repair zone in 1898.

Moreover, if we look at the virtual map of the industry in 1900 on a national scale, we will immediately realize its overwhelming dominance. Of course, this is relatively obvious as most Greek cities in which the original “industrial experiment” was applied, including Syros and Lavrion, experienced a huge downturn resulting in the gradual decline of their industry. After the deep crisis of the last century, most of them were left only with some small steam mills that apparently survived longer thanks rather to the nature of the market, which however was not yet consolidated on a national level, than thanks to the potential of a local accumulation (Agriantoni 1986: 342). Thus, the dawn of the new century found Piraeus with eighty six steam factories, most of which began, since 1906, to enjoy electricity as driving force. This was nothing else but the admirable result of the establishment of the new Steam Electric Station (SES) of the Public Power Corporation (PPC) in the area of Neo Faliro in 1903. This unit along with the country’s first chemical factory, i.e., the Factory of fertilizers, which was founded in 1909, as well as the cement plant founded in 1911 in Drapetsona, were a milestone in the development of the Greek industry and of its technical and technological culture in general (Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation 2013).

The First World War found Greece with expanded borders after the victorious Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and had not been an obstacle to the development of the already advanced Greek industry which then numbered in the whole 137 industrial units. The period between the wars, and more specifically the period that followed the Asia Minor disaster of 1922 and the corresponding advent of hundreds of thousands of refugees³ signaled the start of the third cycle of the industrial development for the city of Piraeus. Understandably the crowded workforce of refugees, the Law 2945/1922 “on the advance of national industry” as well as the Tariff of 1923⁴ were crucial for this third phase of Piraeus industry which has ever since been promoting the development of national industry (Ministry of Culture 1999: 70). Until 1940 around 500 small and big industrial units were set up in the wider area of the city. After the end of World War II, and the Civil War that followed (1945-1949) the city had suffered terrible disasters in terms of its infrastructure, including a large part of the local industry (Malikouti 2001: 3). But this was not the real reason why the industrial production in Piraeus began to wane. Among the main reasons were the sharp construction boom due to explosive housing needs, high civil taxes and the corresponding imposition of heavy taxes on industrial production. However, the massive de-industrialization of the city occurred only during the 1980s and 1990s, when the central port was turned from a commercial into a purely passenger port. These two factors played a decisive role in the final shaping of the current identity of the wider city area.

The importance of industrial architecture in the city

The intense industrialization that occurred in Piraeus in the 19th and 20th century stamped with its precious traces the urban character of the city. Factories, chimneys, port facilities, railway stations and their networks organized and irrevocably prescribed the urban landscape, following the path of economic development. Architecturally, most of the old industrial buildings in the city have an extensive variety of types and comparably to their function, have clearly specific morphological features. However it should be borne in mind that with the term *industrial buildings* we do not characterize only the buildings of the past two centuries which housed industries or factories. This term is broad and includes all buildings associated with the production and transport, which are built exclusively for these purposes. So speaking of industrial buildings we meant not only plants but also crafts, cisterns, warehouses, railway stations and networks, machine shops, shipyards, lighthouses, mills, etc. (Dorizas 2001: 282).

Now that Piraeus is no more an industrial city and land uses change gradually following the dictates of demand defined by the new political, economic and social conditions, many important industrial buildings, left to the unrelenting fury of time and people⁵, they need to be preserved as places of testimony of the historical memory of economy, labor and industry of our country. However it has been found that the main reason for the “obsolescence” and finally the collapse of all these “birthmarks” of wider industrial culture of the city which have historical, social, technological, architectural and scientific value, were the lack of information, of scientific and historical knowledge, of recognition and documentation but also of the economic changes that have occurred in recent decades. Certainly, in recent years this attitude changed dramatically in Greece as well, as international organizations for the conservation of the industrial heritage (TICCIH, ICOMOS, UNESCO), and the Ministry of Environment, have contributed to the recording and valuation of industrial waste with using special researches, and this is why many industrial buildings were rescued from demolition as they have been considered “historic” (www.ticcih.gr 2013: 1).

Therefore, based on all of the above historical data, the interest of both the municipality of Piraeus and the Greek state in general should, in our view, focus on specific areas that account for not just the biggest and the most important piece of industrial history of the country but, by extension, for some of the most magnificent industrial buildings, which should not only be saved from destruction, but also contribute to the cultural values of the regions that host them. There are three keynotes with these characteristics; more specifically; a) the outskirts of Pireos Avenue, b) the former industrial zone of Drapetsona and c) the Kaminia district.

The Pireos Avenue and its monumental buildings

The historical evolution of the most famous road that connects Athens with the port of Piraeus, i.e. Pireos Avenue, is almost completely identified with the development of both cities within 180 years from its conception. It is the path that was always interwoven with images and sounds that included workers, funnels, the whistling of the factories, lorries with goods, factory gates, but also the area which, because of its degrading, for the urban environment, specificity, does not leave room for postwar urban development to take root there through the phenomenon of “antiparochi”⁶. Therefore, we realize that it is a street with a purely industrial character since throughout its length, from Piraeus to Athens, there were large and small industrial plants of all

kinds of products, the architectural style of which was inhomogeneous. Numerous buildings in the Athenian part of the avenue not only escaped the destruction and abandonment, but today they are real gems of industrial architecture and therefore of the cultural development of the regions that host them. The most typical sample of all is the installations of the old gasworks, known as Gazi, the numerous buildings of which have now formed the famous “Technopolis”, a broad concept of civilization site which also hosts, apart from cultural events, the municipal radio station of Athens “Athens 9,84” (Belavilas 2002: 7). Instead, the buildings with a stunning industrial design contained in the Piraeus’ section of the said highway, remain hidden and exposed to the destructive fury of the time, since despite all relevant scientific studies and ministerial decisions, no substantial effort has been made to rescue them. Through the multitude of samples of monuments of industrial architecture in the region we will focus our attention on two, which in our opinion are the most representative ones.

The first is the building of “flagship” importance of the Steam Electric Station of Neo Faliron, which is located right next to the open riverbed of Kifissos. As we have already mentioned in a previous chapter, this is the first steam power plant in the country, a typical example of industrial architecture, which is particularly linked with the history of the trade union movement. Both its very shell and the in-plant residual mechanical equipment have been declared heritage. Also heritage have been declared two more buildings within the complex, including the main building, the construction of which began in 1869. Besides, the machinery inside it was subjected to upgrades and additions throughout its history, until 1982 that it finally stopped working. In this building the very light metal roofs with curved elements, covered with corrugated sheet were based on well-built stone walls, while in many of its aspects the decorative eclectic trend of that era was preserved with pediments and marble stairways. The Division of Real Estate of PPC has previously prepared studies on the evaluation of the property and there is since the 1990s an approved study for construction of the administrative center of the PPC on the plot of SES. Nevertheless, the whole venture has frozen on the basic rationale of the inadequate, for prospective employees, accessibility to the area, and the lack of central road network and public transportation hub.



Figure 2
A partial view (southern side) of the Steam Electric Station in
Neo Faliron, in Pireos Avenue.

The second building, also of great historical, architectural and scientific value, is the abandoned factory “Ivi,”⁷ one of the finest examples of its kind. Its construction was completed in 1884 and was originally known as the distillery facility of Efstathios Finopoulos. At the beginning of the new century, the company that it housed became known under the trade name “Finopoulos-Ivi” while after the war it was merged with “Attica Vinegar Manufacture” of a large family of industrialists in distillery (Belavilas 2007: 5, 6). This building is one of the first industrial architectural stone masonries of first generation and one of the few remaining ones not only in Piraeus, but also in the rest of Greece. From an architectural point of view, it is worth mentioning its symmetrical stepped tower, a structural feature quite common in factory premises of alcoholic beverages, but also the two aisles of warehouses, which are kept intact until today. However, the apparent stonework, the cornerstones, the cornices, the moldings of openings and round dormer at the pediment of the face are the most indicative features of the central, prominent building of this factory.



Figure 3
The abandoned but still exquisite architectonically ‘Ivi’ factory in Pireos Avenue.

The former industrial area of Drapetsona

Drapetsona region lies on the northwestern side of the port of Piraeus, opposite the island of Psittaleia. Drapetsona started becoming a town after the arrival of refugees from Asia Minor in 1922 when they were installed in thousands of wooden shacks, around the area of St. Dionysius. The arrival of these wretched people gave impetus to the industrial development of the region since from the beginning of the century the desolate shores of uninhabited Drapetsona, from St. Dionysius area down to the Hercules bay had begun being occupied by heavy industries and port facilities.

The facilities of the Port of Piraeus were slowly expanded up to the Kremmidarou bay and this is where the Piraeus Port Authority’s (PPA) dry-docks were constructed in the early 1990s. A little farther ahead in the St. Dionysius district, there were until 1920 the shipyards, which were later relocated in the suburb of Perama.

Even further west was the famous Factory of Fertilizers and the homonymous district. The plant began its operation in 1909 to a limited extent by a group of bankers and industrialists led by the chemist N. Kanellopoulos, who founded the “Greek Company of Chemicals and Fertilizers Ltd.” After 1922 the factory which produced acids, chemical fertilizers and pesticides became gigantic and one of the largest in Greece⁸. This building with multiple wings which was an ideal example of the industrial architecture of the early 20th century, is no more existent. Under the “forgotten measures” for the regeneration of the area and the initiative of the National Bank it was turned into a desolate area of hundreds of acres, which, however, is the only outlet for residents of all surrounding municipalities to the sea (Tsouparopoulos 2010: 25).



Figure 4
The Factory of Fertilizers in Drapetsona area, exterior view.



Figure 5
An interior view of the Factory of Fertilizers.

The first cove after the factory of Fertilizers is called the *Cove of Slaughterhouses*, because it used to be the slaughterhouses facilities of Piraeus. This is where the facilities of the famous Heracles Cement Factory were set up whose operation began in 1907. The installation of this plant at this point -like the majority of them in the area – was based on the grounds that industries should be located close to the port and have their own wharf, to reduce the cost of transporting raw materials⁹. Morphologically speaking, the purely modern industrial architecture of labyrinthine-

like basic building of the factory includes simple concrete shells, some silos and an impressive rotating oven (Tsadari & Kanellopoulou 2006: 48).

The greater area of Drapetsona also hosted another, completely different, type of buildings of industrial architecture that was developed together with the rail network. Of course, we mean the stations, depots, sheds and bridges for trains the architectural style of which was borrowed from Western Europe. One of the typical examples of this architecture is located in St. Dionysius area – which after decades of decline began to recover from a commercial point of view in the last fifteen years (Baniyas, N. & Panagiotopoulou, A. 1994: 98) – and this is the Athens – Thessaloniki Railway Station, built in 1904, but with a morphology which refers to the last decades of the nineteenth century (Belavilas 1995: 27).



Figure 6
The very well maintained Athens-Thessaloniki Railway Station in
St. Dionysius area.

The area of Kaminia and the “Retsina” factory

Kaminia is a district of Piraeus, which extends in a direction diametrically opposite to that of Drapetsona, being very close to the Pireos Avenue. It was identified with the lives of sailors and tobacco workers, and took its name from the existence of a large number of establishments there concerning these areas.¹⁰ Kaminia was also the place of establishment of industrial ironworks, which before the war served the needs of the shipbuilding area of Piraeus port when the plates of the ship were still being connected with double nails. This is where flourished a large part of the industrial Piraeus from the mid-19th century to the early 20th and it is no wonder that it accommodated two of the oldest industrial buildings in the city: the steam mill of P. Stamatopoulos founded in 1864 and the spinning-weaving facility of X. Stamopoulos which was founded in 1875. At about the same point in the last five years of the 19th century, there had been in operation the textile factory of Th. Retsina, the confectionery factory of C.L Economou and the roller mill of D. Kalamaki from which the bridge in that area took its name. A borough with particular territorial/social characteristics as it has always been the place of coexistence of residential, industrial / craft activities pervasive in its society, Kaminia keeps still today the image of intense environmental degradation and poor quality of life (Valerianou & Panagiotatou 2006: 32).

Although, as we have seen, there are numerous industrial buildings and complexes, one of them is, in our opinion, of particular interest in historical and architectural terms: the textile factory of Retsina brothers.



Figure 7
The Retsina Brothers ex-textiles factory, Lefka, Kaminia area.

The factory in the area of Lefka is the original and oldest establishment among the wider industrial activities of Retsina brothers. At the same time, it is the last remnant of the country's once biggest textile country. The unit is located in the heart of the historic industrial area of Piraeus, in the vicinity of Vassiliadis's machine workshop (1860), the plant – depot of Piraeus-Athens-Peloponnese Railways (PAPR) and the Greek State Railways (GSR) (1886) and Dilaveris's ceramics factory (1888). This unit, which was built by successive extensions from 1872 to the 1930s, included facilities for spinning, dyeing, weaving, a machining workshop, a boiler room, a packaging room, a warehouse and an office building. Among the last buildings erected in the Retsina plot were the spinning facilities, a ground floor building designed by the famous modernist architect George Kontoleon. This spinning mill began operating in 1935 to replace the old and severely damaged original three-storey spinning mill of the company, which had been in operation since 1872. Today, on the central side, on Retsina street, is preserved the stone floor office building, the concierge, warehouses, and the central double leaf sliding gate of the factory. In the middle of the complex survives a long section of buildings with gabled roofs and chimneys, which were the main production areas of the plant and were built in the period 1875-1935: spinning mill, weaving facility, dyeing shop, and boiler – engine room. Along the Hymettus street an array of buildings with pitched roofs is still maintained. Unfortunately the initial large three-storey spinning mill of the original installation and the workshop have

not survived. Many buildings have been severely damaged, and almost the entire mechanical equipment has been dismantled (Papastefanaki, 2010: 2).

Old and new views on the use of selected sites

As expected and as we have already noticed the thoughts, theories and studies about the use of these historic areas were numerous and interesting. However, their implementation was a non-existent parameter, because from both the viewpoint of funding and bureaucracy, the Greek government has always found ways to escape from the vision of such leading projects. The area of the Factory of fertilizers in Drapetsona, the industrial buildings of stunning architecture lying in the Piraeus part of Pireos Avenue, and the factory of Retsina brothers in Kaminia are, in our opinion, the top three axes - aims to shape the new cultural face of Piraeus. Moreover, the very city of Piraeus must defend not only the aesthetic, but especially the historical continuity of its strong industrial past. So this is the right time for authorities to draw up an ambitious and yet doable project under which Piraeus protected industrial architectural heritage shall emerge, be promoted and mainly be protected. Certainly it is clear that the use of all these properties is set as an assertive aim, if anything else, for the municipality of Piraeus itself and an object of a creative dialogue with scientists and collective bodies.

The use of two important, but obsolete industrial sites located in the path of the route from Piraeus to Neo Faliro, i.e. the industrial facilities of SES and “Ivi” is considered a paramount objective. Their industrial shells could accommodate artisanal or industrial museums, but also alternative spaces of culture, training and mild amusement. In this way it could facilitate the completion of redevelopment of Piraeus Avenue from beginning to end, and start ‘imprinting’ the industrial historic route of the city of Piraeus among the three selected areas.

Because the demolition of the facilities of the Factory fertilizers is now a fact, the predominant study for the development of the area is that of the “Organization of Athens” based on which several sites, activities and even building coefficients have already been scheduled since 2002 for the minimum coverage provided for this region. As government officials have said, the executive part of redevelopment must begin with the agreement of the owners to establish a special purpose entity, which will outsource the work and will concede it to holding individuals. However, the State misery does not allow the assumption of project funding by the State which, under the Memorandum with its creditors, is living moments of incredible austerity. It is clear, however, that it is not a business of real estate, which will further “burden” the area with new constructions. Two twin skyscrapers are the ones to be built. The rest will be green space and with low disturbance businesses (mostly restaurants) on the beach. But in order to recover the required costs, marine tourism activities have been planned, such as a marina for 1,200 yachts. Besides, the restoration of listed buildings in the area, (Heracles Cement Factory, Railway Station in the area of St. Dionysius and the old Smokestacks of factory for glass objects, known as “Sheen”) and turning them into cultural institutions, would give new impetus to this degraded region.

Regarding the famous textile factory of Retsina brothers in Lefka, Kaminia, the current situation does not seem to favor the use of it as local or wider interests are pushing for its demolition. More specifically, the plant has been declared as a green space and a listed monument since 1993. During the Olympic Games of Athens in 2004 it was declassified from green as supposedly “Olympic project” to house the University of Piraeus, which was never realized

though. Now the National Bank wants to turn the memorial into a plot to build a huge shopping center, as it did with the Factory of fertilizers in Drapetsona. In fact, it asks to demolish the historic chimney and buildings, to cut olive and eucalyptus trees to build tens of thousands of square meters of commercial uses. The answer to this utilitarian intention of the National Bank was given by a lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture of the University and President of the Greek Department of the “International Commission for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage” Nikos Belavilas through an article in the newspaper *Athens Voice*:

The demolition of the Retsina Factory is unacceptable, because it is not replaced by a better building such as a children’s hospital, for example that Piraeus lacks and desperately needs. Let’s take the example of depots and facilities of the Greek Railways Organization (GRO), also in the area of Lefka, it being also inactive. GRO intends to utilize its 120 acres for the construction of flats, while the Association of Friends of Train and the “Committee for Industrial Heritage” would rather see a museum of trains next to a small market and social services buildings. This venue is committed from the first moment of its creation for the public benefit. The Greek government has the money but does not spend it because the only asset being traded in this city is the real estate business under bubble conditions (Triantafyllou 2009:15).

This highly representative building, the largest textile factory in the Balkans, contributes uniquely to the recognition of the development of the industrial physiognomy and the urban fabric of the city of Piraeus, so it must be protected. In conjunction with the adjacent, already regenerated area of the Dilaveris park¹¹, but also by utilizing the old plant of the Hellenic Railways in the area of 120 acres in Lefka, the Retsina Factory will be an excellent benchmark of the Piraeus industrial history and aesthetics. Especially for Lefka, where a train museum can be created, the regeneration can be combined with an appropriate regeneration program at the Sakellionas Military Camp to create a large hyper-local pole of green, culture and sport in this poor region of the city, which suffocates today.

Conclusion

Through the above research conducted on the occasion of the nomination of the city of Piraeus as a cultural capital of Europe in 2021, many interesting findings regarding the value and therefore the use of the considerable industrial architectural heritage were obtained. According to these findings, many of which were already known for several years as many civic, political and scientific bodies had been offered to evaluate and reclaim on the remarkable industrial architecture of the city (Hellenic Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, National Technical University of Athens, The National Bank, several municipalities and prefectures, etc.), we believe that all the industrial areas redevelopment projects and of course the renovation and reuse projects of the industrial buildings hosted in these, mostly underdeveloped, areas should be thoroughly implemented. Therefore both the municipal authority of the city of Piraeus and the Greek State in general must take the utmost account of the prospect of upgrading these buildings and the areas they belong to, aiming at improving and developing other sectors of the city’s social fabric beyond culture. Education, tourism and of course the local economy could benefit directly from the implementation of these plans.

Consequently, the participation of Piraeus as a candidate city in the 2021 European Capital selection procedure does not constitute the only reason for realizing such an important project which may change its cultural, urban, aesthetic and perhaps social physiognomy. On the other hand though, it may be the second opportunity for the city to rescue a big part of its industrial heritage after the glamorous Athens Olympic Games in 2004, during which no significant changes occurred, in spite of many promises, and so it should not be wasted.

Notes

1. When, in 1842, some people suggested Piraeus to be the “free trade zone” of Greece, it was just a small village and its port only a large natural bay. A few years earlier, an Ionian adventurer had introduced the first locomotive in Greece for a steam mill business. The engine ended up in the hands of Luke Rallis, a trader from Chios who was also one of the first settlers of Piraeus. His first and very successful steam-6hp powered silk factory provided work to almost 100 people, most of which were young girls.
2. The construction of the railway network connecting Piraeus with Athens that began in the early 1870s, the filling of the marsh in the northern part of the city as well as the current and growing needs of entrepreneurs and ship-owners to house their businesses around the city center and the nearby coasts, led to the migration of many industrial and business facilities both on the northern side of the harbor and along the two already formed pillars: the Thivon road and the legendary Pireos avenue. The main uses of these new facilities were the industry, the handicrafts, wholesale and shipping, while the percentage of the dwelling use was particularly low.
3. The term ‘Asia Minor Disaster’ describes the last phase of the Asia Minor Expedition, i.e. the end of “Greek-Turkish war of 1918-22,” the exodus of the Greek political and military command (which was installed on the west coast of Asia Minor, at the city of Izmir) from Turkey, the almost disorderly retreat of the Greek army since the collapse of the front, as well as the most widespread expulsion of the Greek population from Asia Minor, which, however, had begun much earlier. These events resulted in the total destruction of the city of Izmir, the expulsion of any Greek element from Asia Minor and the coming of half million Greek origin refugees in Greece, most of which arrived at the port of Piraeus by boat.
4. The new tariff was published in December 1923, and according to that higher rates should be imposed on certain imported goods. Later, of course, imported machinery was relieved from duty, and this was a setting that aimed to support local industry. Specifically, the number of permits for the free of duty import of machinery increased from 144 in 1923 to 697 in 1924 and 1,621 in 1925. At the same time, from 1923 to 1926 the state facilitated, with numerous estate expropriations, the consolidation of many new production units in the secondary sector. It also granted the monopoly right to enterprises with capital of at least 100,000 pounds.
5. Today the area is home to many industrial buildings many of which survive as simply abandoned industrial shells, while others house companies or small businesses (garages, forges, carpenters, construction of fireplaces, demolition sites etc.) which are not related to the original architectural / ergonomic structure of these buildings. This also justifies the severe changes that have been in their traditional form and general structure so as to accommodate the new use. Many of these industrial architecture treasures have been demolished, while for many others the risk of demolition is clearly visible.
6. With this term we mean the contribution of land for partition is an entirely Greek phenomenon which does not apply to other parts of the world, at least to such an extent and in such a form. It is a building method used heavily in Greece during the post-war period and it is said to date back to the late 50’s.
7. The name “Eve” refers to the goddess of Greek mythology who, being the daughter of Zeus and Hera, was the personification of youth with the task of distributing the nectar to the gods of Olympus.
8. In 1947 the Fertilizer Factory passed from Mr. Kanellopoulos into the hands of another notorious businessman Mr. Prodromos Bodossaki - Athanasiadis, and thus joined the companies restructuring process funded by the U.S. Marshal plan. In the mid of 1980s the company passed to Bodossakis’s nephew, Alexander who was executed by the terrorist organization “17 November”. In 1992, the Greek company ‘Chemicals and Fertilizers’ was bought by the National Bank and became property of the subsidiary “Model Real Estate and Tourism SA”. In 1999 the factory complex finally ceased operation. The bulk of the premises was demolished in 2003 and the site was leveled.
9. According to this economic theory and by the decision of the then Minister Emmanuel Repoulis the shipyards of Piraeus moved to the Keratsinion Bay in 1911.
10. The name of the region ‘Kaminia’ stands for the English word ‘kilns’ and it was taken from the plethora of kilns that were operating there.

11. The 10-acre Dilaveris Park, has great historical significance. It owes its name to the Dilaveris family which has played a leading role in the ceramics industry since the late 19th century. In the property, which once housed the Dilaveris factory premises, the characteristic chimneys

and the enormous kilns have survived as they have been declared as listed architectural features. The property has currently been fully redeveloped and has been transformed into a green oasis for Piraeus.

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The “wall of flesh” of the Conquered Territory: farmhouses and towns established in defence of the eastern boundary of the Orange Free State, beginning 1866

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To defend the sovereignty of the Conquered Territory along the eastern frontier of the Boer Republic of the Orange Free State (OFS) and Basutoland (Lesotho), the government of the former passed the Occupation Act, 1866, which provided for the establishment of three parallel rows of farms and, during the next year, three border towns. In both cases, applicants had to covenant to militia service and building within a stipulated time. As the towns were of strategic importance, unlike the Boer tradition of church-founded towns with parishioners settling around the place of worship, the brief given the surveyors was to lay out the towns to specific allotment criteria without any spatial provision for religious practices. This article aims to show that even under these circumstances the towns came to feature the familiar diagnostic characteristics of Boer-founded towns with the repertoire of inherited townscape traditions. To bed the argument, the morphology of Boer-founded towns as developed in history is briefly investigated with the implication that the amendments made to the border towns of the OFS were culturally driven. Until now, these planned towns and urban entities have received scant attention within the family of Boer-founded towns.

Key words: planned towns, acculturated Boer town planning, border towns and farmhouses, quartered blocks

Die Verowerde Gebied se “muur van vlees”: dorpe wat sedert 1866 ter verdediging van die oosgrens van die Oranje-Vrystaat gevestig is

Die regering van die *Oranjevrijstaat* (OVS) het die *Occupatiewet* (Ordinansie 2 van 1866) aanvaar om hulle soewereiniteit oor die Verowerde Gebied langs die oosgrens met Basotholand (Lesotho) te verdedig. Die *Occupatiewet* het die vestiging van drie paralelle rye plase bepaal en ook drie grensdorpe die daaropvolgende jaar. In beide gevalle moes die aansoekers hulself verbind tot militêre diens en ook die oprig van ’n permanente struktuur binne ’n bepaalde tydperk. Die grensdorpe was van strategiese belang en daarom het die landmeters die opdrag gekry om die dorpe uit te lê volgens ’n bepaalde blok-uitleg, maar sonder enige riglyne vir die ruimtelike akkommodering van godsdienstige praktyke. Dit was bepaald anders as die boeretradisie van kerkdorpe waar ’n nedersetting rondom ’n plek van aanbidding ontstaan het. Die doelwit van hierdie artikel is om aan te toon dat selfs onder hierdie buitengewone omstandighede het die grensdorpe mettertyd die bekende tipiese karaktertrekke van boeredorpe begin vertoon met die volle repertoire van oorgeërfde dorpsbeeldtradisies. Om die argument te versterk sal die ontwikkeling van die morfologie van boeredorpe vlugtig beskou word. Die implikasie daarvan is dat die veranderinge wat aan die grensdorpe aangebring was, kultuurgedrewe was. Tot op hede het hierdie beplande dorpe en geboude eenhede min aandag gekry binne die groepering van boeredorpe.

Sleutelwoorde: beplande dorpe, ge-akultureerde boeredorpebeplanning, grensdorpe en plaashuise, kwart-gedeelde blokke

This article concerns itself with the strategy conceived for the defence of the eastern boundary of the Boer republic of the Orange Free State (OFS), a source of constant dispute between settler farmers and the covetous Basotho across the Caledon. It is a study of planned farm settlement, and urban form on pre-determined town plans, in relation to the society that came to inhabit them, and will argue that by a process of acculturation the townscapes came to reflect the values and traditions of the family of Afrikaner *dorpe* (towns).

At the outset, the settlement strategy will be placed within the context of its time, and as a basis for the argument, explain the diagnostic features of *dorpe*. The purpose of this article is to contribute a variation to the study of the South African built form in history, a little known but particular settlement morphology, and to explore the extent, if any, to which these farmsteads and towns were designed for defence and subjected to inherited cultural traditions and townscapes.

The Conquered Territory

To bring the Boers, who had left the Cape and trekked northward from 1835 onward, under the authority of Queen Victoria, British commander Sir Harry Smith proclaimed the Orange River Sovereignty (ORS) on 3 Feb 1848. This meant that the eastern, central region of South Africa between the Orange River and its largest tributary, Vaal, would henceforth be British.

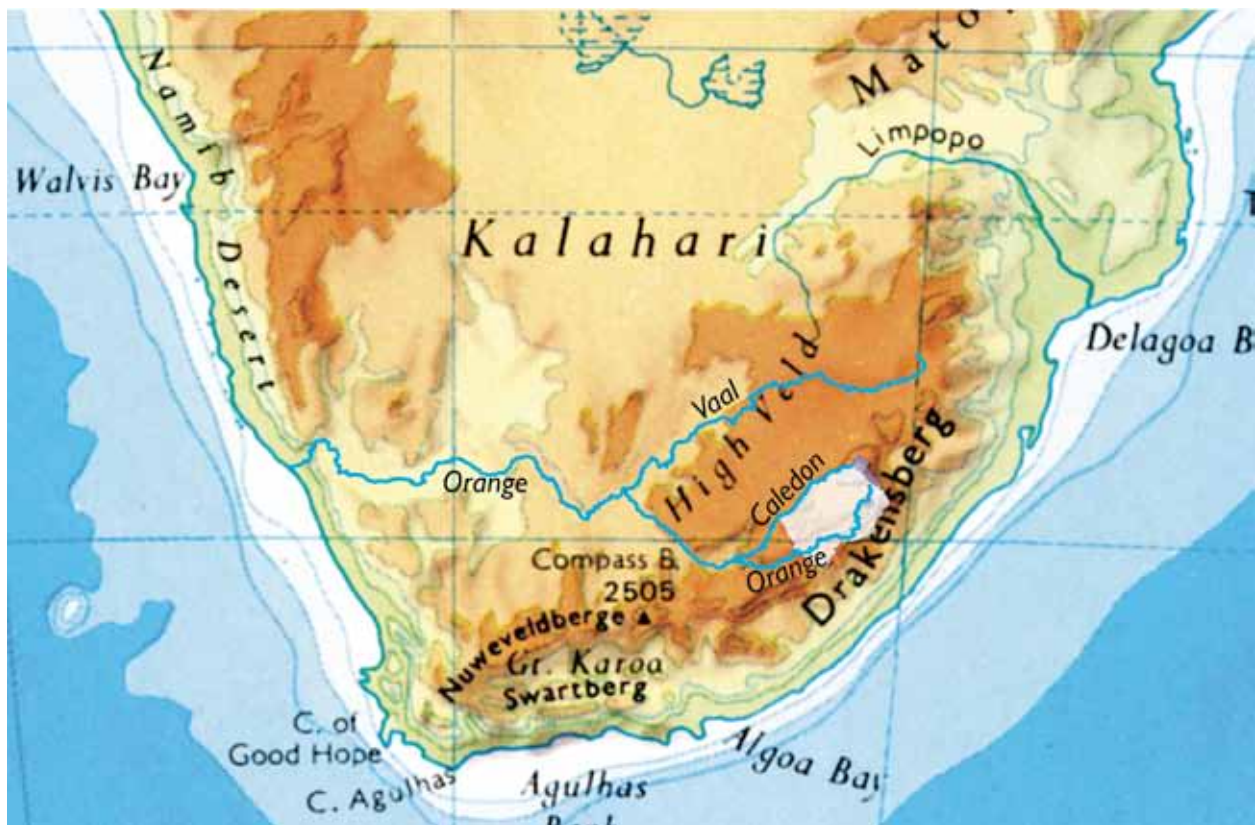


Figure 1

The eastern central region of South Africa between the Orange River and its largest tributary, Vaal, was proclaimed the Orange River Sovereignty by the Britain in 1848, but it was only in 1866 that the next largest tributary, Caledon, was declared the eastern boundary of what had become the Boer republic of the Orange Free State (source: Philip's New World Atlas, 1978).

However, the Basotho nation, indigenous to the mountainous region east of the ORS did not accept the Caledon River, the next most important tributary of the Orange, as the frontier, primarily due to its exceptionally fertile valley. In consequence, Smith instructed the appointed British Resident in the ORS, Major Warden, to seek a redefinition in consultation with Moshoeshoe,

king of Basutoland (Lesotho since 1966). This led to the proclamation of the Warden Line of 1849, but did not bring peace.

After suffering humiliating defeats to Moshoeshoe in 1851, 1852 and 1853, Britain abandoned the ORS, which, in terms of the Bloemfontein Convention of 23rd February 1854, henceforth became known as the Orange Free State (OFS). In this way the Boer republic (*Oranjevrijstaat*) received its independence unsolicited (*SESA* Vol 8, 346), but also inherited the border problem.

A protracted dispute resulted in three further wars (1858; 1865-66 and 1867-68) with the resignation of as many OFS presidents before, under President JH Brand (appointed Feb 1864), the delimitation was settled. However, the foundations had been laid during the 2nd Basotho War (May 1865-April 1866) when the northern commando under Boer Commandant-General JIJ Fick and the southern under Commandant Louw Wepener concluded successful military operations and in the process acquired considerable territory. This shifted the border eastward of the Warden Line to the Caledon River with a tangential extension in the vicinity of the future town of Wepener, south-eastward to the Orange. This arable stretch of land, which became known as the Conquered Territory, was ceded by Moshoeshoe in terms of the treaty of Thaba Bosiu on 3 April 1866 and was annexed by the OFS. The 3rd Basotho War (1867-68) resulted from the refusal of the vanquished to vacate the area.

The Occupation Act (*Occupatiewet*) of 1866

A prerequisite for peace and order was the settlement of the Conquered Territory. The proposals of a commission of the OFS *Volksraad* (legislative assembly) were adopted and the *Occupatiewet* (Occupation Act) passed into law in 1866. In terms of this ordinance three parallel rows of farms, each of 1500 morgen (approx. 1300 ha), stretching the entire border were to be surveyed. Farms would first be granted to citizens in active commando service during the 2nd Basotho War (1865-6) and the remainder would be sold by public auction.

The object of the occupation scheme was to form a bulwark of farmers to safeguard OFS territory against Basotho raids. Each farmer would be required to erect a house of at least 20x10 ft (6.1x3.05m) within six months of occupation; live in it; at all times be in possession of “one horse, saddle, bridle, rifle, 200 bullets, 5 lbs [2.27kg] of gunpowder and 500 percussion caps or flints” and be prepared to perform whatever civil or commando duty was considered necessary by a field cornet. In its turn, the government undertook to set aside a site for each field-cornetcy within which to build a fort (Eloff, 1979: 20).

However, the OFS government delayed implementation and the Basotho continued with border raids. Surveying had to contend with violent opposition and no troops were assigned to facilitate progress; under such circumstances farmers were unwilling to settle in the troubled region. Nevertheless, surveying of 605 farms was complete by 1869 (Eloff, 1979: 35) and the building of farmhouses could begin.

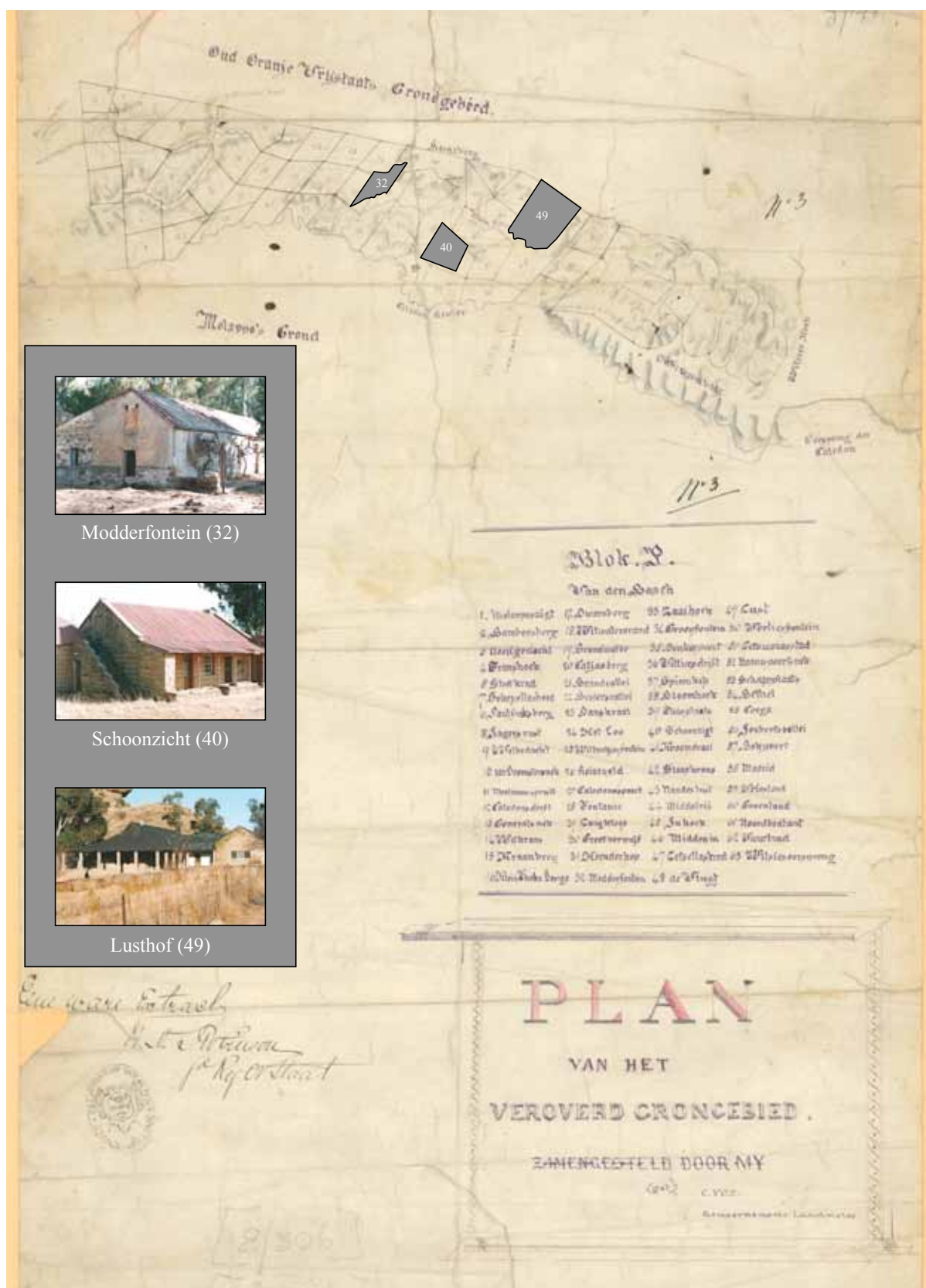


Figure 2
Plan of a part of the Conquered Territory showing three parallel rows of farms up against the Caledon River surveyed by C Vos, n.d.
 (source: Free State Archives in Eloff: 1979, 28; edited by authors).

Characteristics of the farmhouses of the Conquered Territory

The earliest Boer settlers used sandstone as building material, but also followed the precedents set by the indigenous peoples and used either sod or wattle-and-daub techniques, of which vestiges remain in the earliest parts of Lusthof and the 'Big House' at Killarney. With the ongoing border skirmishes there was little incentive to commit to more permanent structures.

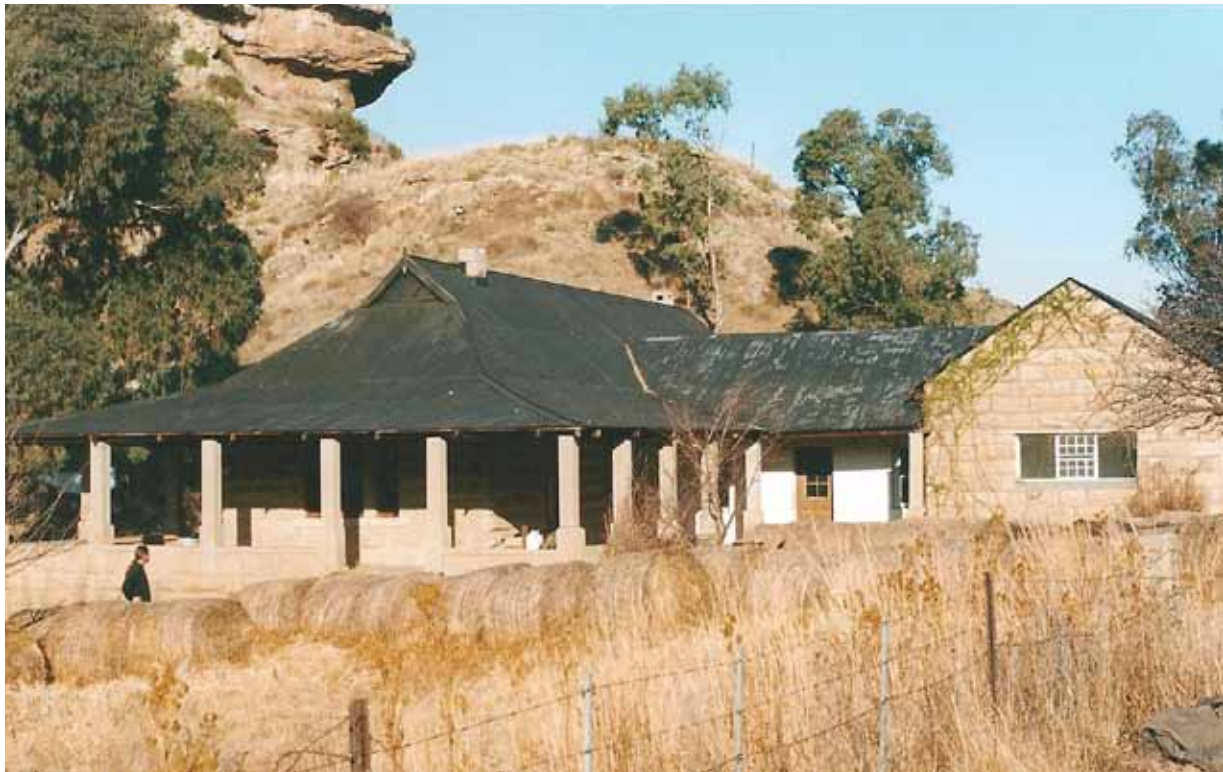


Figure 3
The original cottage of Lusthof of 1875 lies wedged between the veranda house at left
and the extension at right
(source: Du Preez, 2012).

Of the houses built by 1885, the habitable areas ranged from 37 to 119 sqm, well above the stipulated minimum 18.6 sqm. The original cottage on Lusthof had an area of 55 sq m while that by Venter on Modderfontein commenced with 52 sq. m. The last is interesting because of the three rooms of which one served as a horse stable replete with manger, perhaps a direct expression of the condition for settlement.

With the incorporation of the Occupied Territory into the OFS, and the simultaneous discovery of diamonds at Kimberley, a period of prosperity set in. Farmers now looked to the building materials readily available and engaged travelling contractors to quarry and erect houses of sandstone masonry, which became the distinguishing material for the exterior of the buildings, used as rubble or ashlar.

Yellowwood came to be employed for the ceilings, doors and window-frames and an elevated stoep gradually replaced the low paved entrance. An example hereof is extant at Tierhoek, built in 1876 by an itinerant Scottish stonemason. The second house at Schoonzicht (1883) was also built by a travelling stonemason.

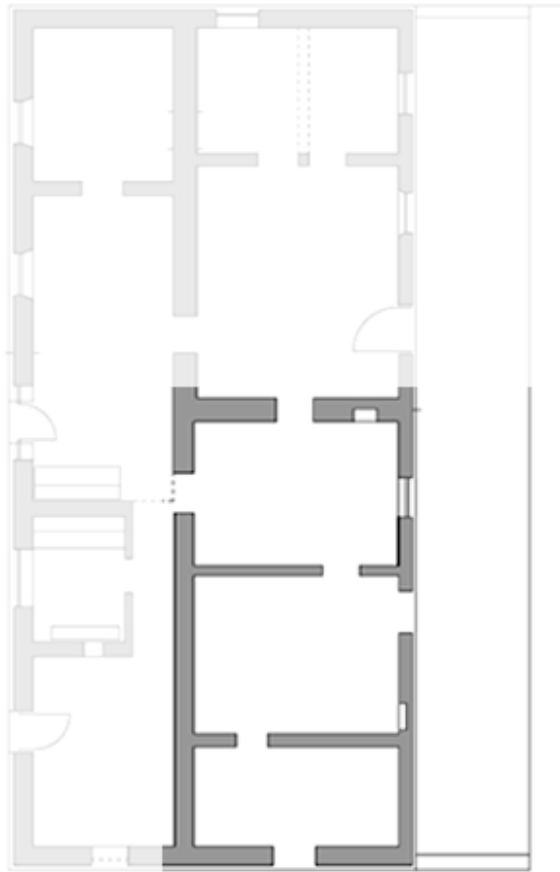


Figure 4a
Plan of House Venter on Modderfontein farm with the original building distinguished from the final development. The stable is the southern-most room.



Figure 4b
House Venter from south-east, with stable door visible in gable towards the south and stoep on the eastern side (source: Du Preez, 2012).



Figure 5
Sandstone masonry of Schoongezicht, 1883, replete with external staircase to the attic
(source: Du Preez, 2012).

The latter is also the first example of a double banked plan, distinguished by the quality of its stonework and the external staircase giving access to the loft, for which storage purpose the ceilings had to be sturdy. Internal walls were built of sun-dried mud-blocks smeared with different mixtures of earth and additives as can still be seen at Modderfontein, or lime-washed plaster. All of the early houses had steeply-pitched thatched roofs and end-gables, but were without fireplaces or chimneys, a surprising discovery in the cold climate.

Once it became available, corrugated iron was used as the roofing material enabling a lower pitch while facilitating the development of covered *stoeps* as verandas. It was also then that *stoepkamers* and *rondawels* made their appearances.

The establishment of three towns

The OFS government realised that occupied farms would not, on their own, ensure an effective buffer against Basotho incursions. Thus the *Volksraad* session of the following year approved the establishment of three towns (Notulen: 1867, 140-142) on the eastern border of the Occupied Territory on farms previously undeveloped. Wepener near the junction of the tangential boundary line and the Caledon was the southern-most town some 6 km east of the river; Ladybrand in the centre of the Conquered Territory lies some 16 km west; and Ficksburg in the north occupies the western bank. All three sites were located at the foot of a mountain, well watered by streams.

Due to the haste, land surveyors were invited to tender for the survey and layouts of the towns by way of an advertisement placed in the *Gouvernements Courant* (government gazette) of 27 June 1867, and the same issue also contained an advertisement for applicants to occupy the towns. As with the farms, concessionaires in the towns would be required to keep a rifle and adequate

ammunition at all times, were obliged to enclose their assigned property with sods, stones or other appropriate fencing material within three months, and build a house thereon within six. Unlike the farmhouses, no minimum size was prescribed.

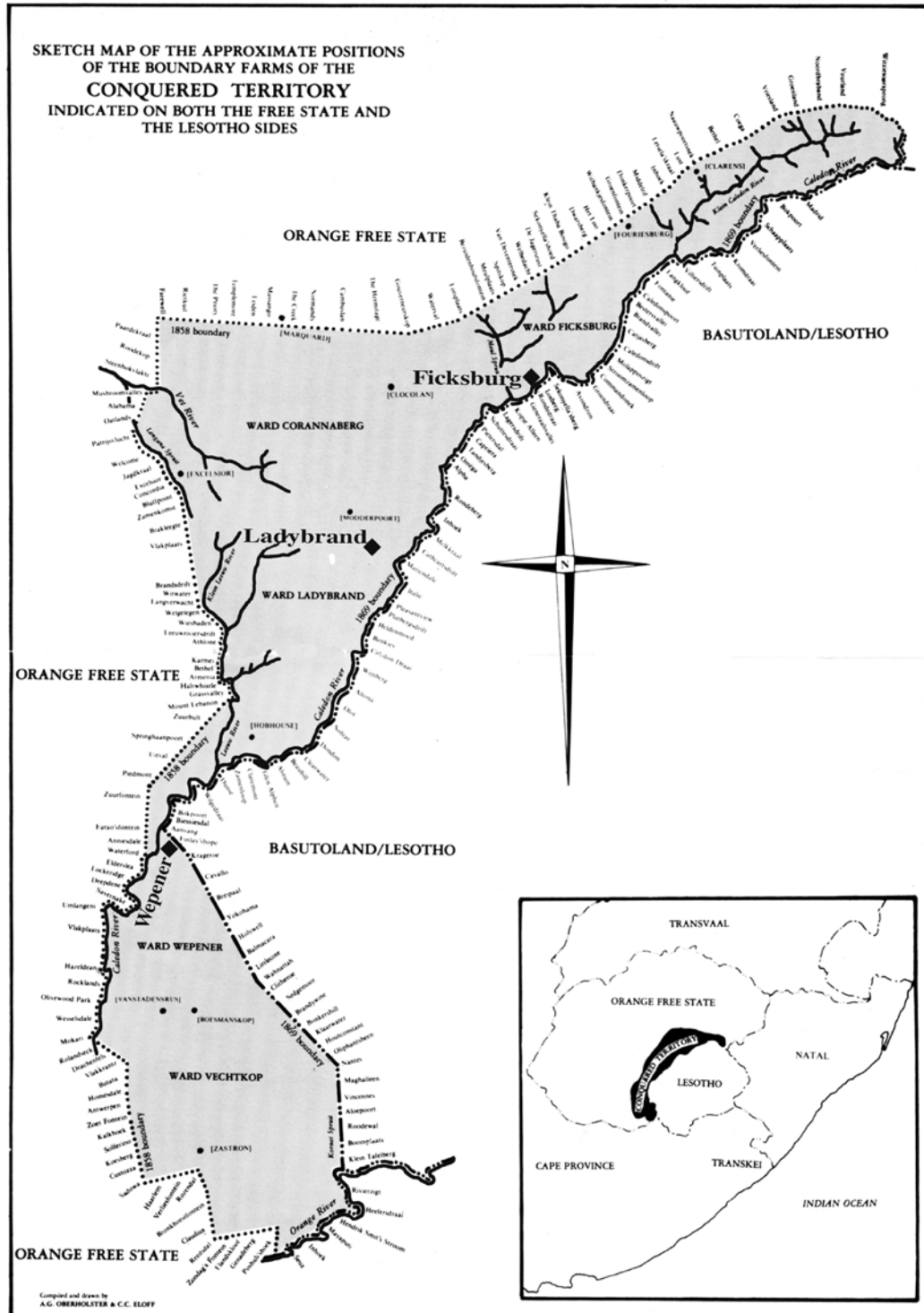


Figure 6

The three planned towns of Wepener, Ladybrand and Ficksburg within the Conquered Territory. On the upper part of the map the Caledon River forms the eastern boundary; on the lower the western boundary (source: Eloff, 1979: 22-23; edited by authors).

The conditions prevailing by mid-1867 were not conducive to the founding and settlement of towns (Eloff, 1979: 27) and their strategic positions scared off prospective residents. In fact, the outbreak of the 3rd Basotho war in July 1867 postponed both survey and allotment allocation. However, when the tide turned against the Basotho, Moshoeshoe reiterated his earlier request to have the kingdom declared a British protectorate, which was so proclaimed in March 1868. This ended the war and established the present boundaries (of Free State province), which, in terms of the delimitation arrangements of February 1869, saw the OFS cede a part of the Conquered Territory, east of the Caledon in a compromise.

The survey of the three towns could now begin with land surveyors G van der Bijl Aling, GAGP van den Bosch and KJ de Kok assigned Wepener, Ladybrand and Ficksburg respectively (Eloff, 1979: 26). The resolution for Ladybrand published in the *Notulen* of the *Volksraad* of 12 June 1867 served as the common brief for each surveyor, namely allotments of 300x150 feet (94.4574m x 47.2287m = 4461sqm) in blocks of four.

The survey of Ladybrand was completed in March 1868, although the first occupants arrived much later; Wepener by mid-1868, but only 35 of the 400 stands were occupied at the beginning of 1869 when with relative peace, settlement of the Conquered Territory could actually begin. During the *Volksraad* session of May 1870, barely one-and-a-half years later, President Brand announced that 60 houses had been erected in Wepener, an amazing influx, about 15 in Ladybrand, while in Ficksburg ten stands had been fenced off, six houses were complete and four under construction (Eloff, 1979: 35).

The character of Boer-founded towns

According to Haswell (1979:687), many Boer-founded towns grew around places of worship established by the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* (NGK, Dutch Reformed Church) because parishioners, widely dispersed on farms, needed to converge every quarter to attend the *nagmaal* (communion/eucharist) service over several days. The church building was often located on a *bult* (knoll) and placed on a large square for farmers to encamp and trade during the *nagmaal* weekend. In due course, those who could, acquired properties in close proximity to the church and built *tuishuise* (farmers' town-houses, cottages actually) for accommodation over the *nagmaal* weekend. The embryonic church towns consisted of a single street, lined on both sides by cottages, built like their Dutch precedents on the street boundaries in a continuous wall of development, leaving maximum space for a back garden. When the grid extensions were added to the plan, church and square retained their focal positions within the street system while cemeteries were placed on the edges of towns with graves aligned east-west.

Typically, Boer-founded towns were gridded and laid out on a spur site in such a way that the long streets could take best advantage of the slope for the irrigation of the rectangular *erven* (allotments), which usually stretched from street to street. Water was obtained from a river or spring, and was lead through the settlement by means of *leivore* (furrows or water leads) resulting in 'water' or 'wet' *erven*, as opposed to 'dry' *erven* unconnected to the system. Dry *erven* would be suitable for *tuishuise* or commercial use, but, points out Floyd, shops and businesses did not play an important part as the distant farmers were served by travelling pedlars (1960: 11); wet *erven* were specifically for the cultivation of vegetables and fruit. Haswell concludes that it is the agricultural rather than urban nature, which distinguished the *dorp* from a village or town (1979, 687).



Figure 7
Piketberg, Western Cape, rendering by J Poortermans, 1857
(source: Lewcock, 1963: 397).

Pietermaritzburg, the capital of KwaZulu-Natal, was founded by Voortrekkers in 1838. It too had a system of water leads which channelled water from Dorp Spruit (stream), a tributary of the Msunduze, to the *erven*, each sized 50x150 paces (150ft x 450ft or 45.7m x 137.2m=6270sqm), arranged in series and stretching from street to street. Development was controlled by six regulations passed by the *Volksraad* of the Boer republic of Natalia, of which articles 4 and 5 were the most important from the *dorpsgesig* (townscape) point of view: that *erven* be planted within two months of purchase; enclosed with a side wall or wooden palisade; and that houses be built on the street boundary and in one continuous line. As a result, the fledgling *dorp* represented the “picture of regularity and orderliness”, according to Haswell, a prime characteristic of Boer towns (1984: 19).



Figure 8
Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, 1851. Buildings line the street boundaries on enclosed allotments which stretch from street to street
(source: Haswell, 1984: 23).

The establishment of towns in the Orange Free State

Almost all settlements of the first decade of the OFS republic were established by either a church or a mission, without the approval of the *Volksraad* (Moll, 1977: 23-28), and located demographically in the centre of larger farming communities, with water availability and firewood as important considerations. This resulted in a distribution of towns about “12 uren te paard afstands” (12 hours distant) (Moll, 1977:23) or 60km apart (Van Zyl, 1993: 83), while freehold ownership was offered from inception (Floyd, 1960: 37).

Town plans were of a grid-iron pattern with the blocks sub-divided into allotments backing onto each other, different from the rectangular ones stretching from street to street as Haswell identified in his diagnostic summary of the *dorp*. A common feature was the large church and market square, but some had only one of these squares. Whenever possible, town plans were so designed that the church became the dominant building and feature in the town. In fact, everything defers from the towering church building, usually the NGK, but sometimes one of the reformed ‘sister’ churches (Gereformeerde kerk or Hervormde kerk), often of later generations, that the marked contrast between houses and church can be termed medieval. Wherever possible, water leads were in place and trees would line the streets.

In keeping with the small population of English settlers, the buildings of Anglican, Methodist or Presbyterian churches are diminutive in size, typically Gothic and often of stone. While the reformed churches had associated parsonages, significantly positioned and of stature, invariably other faith communities resorted to itinerant clergy serving a flock dispersed over a few towns. Where warranted, a school building would follow with state funds for teachers’ salaries, the administration of the magistrate’s court, justices of the peace and public works etc; which brought with them the residences of the officials.

The character of the border towns of the Conquered Territory

As the border towns were founded by the government and not by a church, the obvious distinction on the plans of Wepener and Ladybrand is the omission of any dedicated site for a church building let alone a church square. This is the British approach to town planning in South Africa (see Haswell: 1979 and 1984), and to be consistent, the market too was without a dedicated square. The gridiron plans of all three towns have uniform blocks quartered as corner allotments, an unusual division, and are without any larger block or square; only in Ficksburg were squares created within this geometry for the church and market.

Quartered blocks are to be found at Boshof (1854), Bethlehem (1860) and Reddersburg (1859) (see Smit, 1987), but one may ask what generated this geometry. Reddersburg was established for the settlement of a congregation of the Gereformeerde kerk as a “Kerkplaats...ten behoeve van de gemeente” (a church place for the purposes of its congregation) (Moll, 1977:25). Here the quartered allotments are almost square (27.5m x 30m = 825sqm), which at about 20% of those in the border towns is rather small, but may have been all a *tuishuis* needed, and is almost two-and-a-half times larger than the additional ‘dry erven’ at Wepener (18.89m x 18.89m = 356.89qm). While no justification could be established for the quartering, the purpose of the large allotments prescribed for the border towns (94.4574m x 47.2287m = 4461sqm), can be deduced from the qualification given by the contemporary newspaper, *The Friend*, on the lots of Ladybrand “...this will furnish a good opportunity to poor people for getting a permanent residence, with the prospect of their being able to cultivate the greater part of their provender for

themselves” (13 March 1868; cited in Bosch, 1967:45). In other words, the distinction in size was determined by the use, with the larger allotments appropriate for self-supporting families in growing their own produce.

Though sited to benefit from mountain streams, each of the border towns had to grapple with challenges of water management. It is difficult to believe that a town characterised by marshy ground, lying almost at the Caledon and beneath the Jammerberg might have water supply problems, but that was the case at Wepener. Fortunately the site was also well endowed with natural springs and wells, which with the doubling of the population could be tapped not only for potable water, but also for a furrow to lead water across town with residents given their turns at diverting water to their respective properties (Oberholster: 1969, 47-49). But, it should be noted that the Sandspruit stream which transverses the town diagonally and could be deemed beneficent, subsequently ravaged and divided the town as experienced today.

Ladybrand built furrows for the leading of water which the *dorpsbestuur* (village management board), established in 1871, had to maintain, although a petition submitted in 1886 eventually provided for the proper levying of rates for meeting with this and other responsibilities (Bosch: 1967, 45 & 47). Ficksburg had no water leads, the surveyor simply labelled properties astride the streams as ‘wet erven’, a situation which led to considerable dissatisfaction as some were ‘dry’ or seasonal at best (Van Rhijn & Klopper, 1967: 29-32).

Unlike Pietermaritzburg, there was no prescription on the positioning of houses. In fact, houses would probably be at their securest if placed away from street boundaries in the centre of the allotment. While this freedom could significantly change the townscape, interestingly, historical photographs show many buildings opting to mark the street boundaries, not just for the exposure commercial buildings covet.

Wepener

Named after Louw Wepener (1802-1965), Boer Commandant killed while storming Thaba Bosiu, and surveyed in 1867, the gridded plan of Wepener was laid out south of the Jammerberg mountain and west of a plateau, on a gently sloping site dissected by the Sandspruit (stream), a tributary of the Caledon. The long streets run down the site from east to west and all streets are 60 Cape feet wide (18.89m) without distinction. Due to the marshy ground, the first houses were built on the higher-lying land on the east.

The congregation was established in 1870 and consecrated its first church building only a year later. It was located on the highest part of town, yet interestingly, outside of the plan, in such a way that the church terminates the vista of what became named Church Street. Another 88 dry lots (18.89m x 18.89m = 356.89sq m), were added, wedged between the eastern end of town and the foot of the plateau, in a plan prepared by government surveyor C Vos, dated March 1875, eight years later. From their position relative to the church, the small sizes, and the fact that these were dry lots, one can only conclude that this addition was designated for *tuishuise*. This adds a familiarity with the way Boers built towns replete with a towering church, erected 1884, among the cottages.



Figure 9
Wepener, 1945. The towering NGK church of 1882 to which all townhouses defer.
Sketch by P van Emmenis
(source: Eloff, 1980: 45).

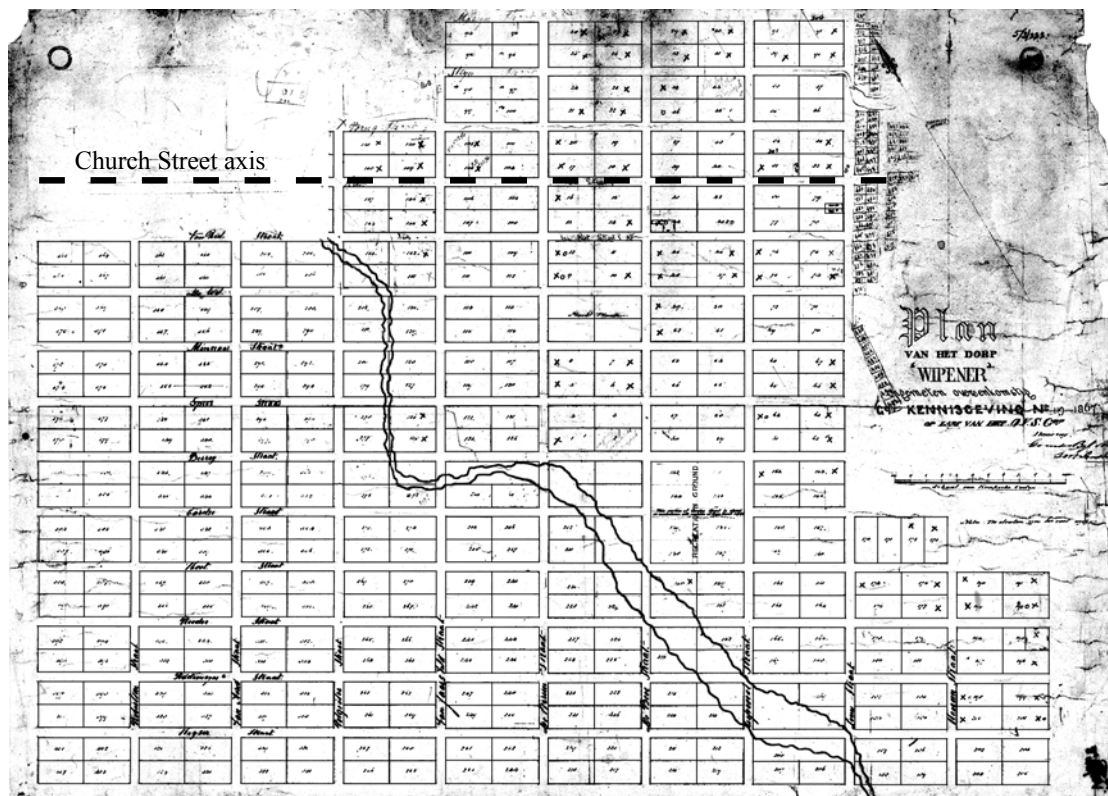


Figure 10
Wepener. The original town plan of 1867 consisting of quartered blocks to a gridded plan
(source: Free State Archives; edited by authors).

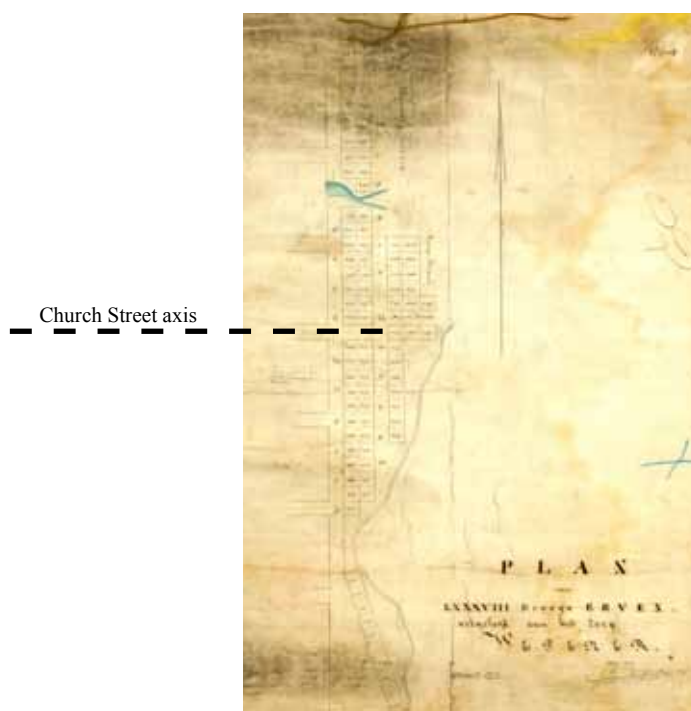


Figure 11
Wepener. Extension of 88 dry lots at the eastern or upper end of town.
Plan by land surveyor C .Vos dated March 1875
(source: Free State Archives; edited by the authors).

A centrally positioned block tangential to the north-south aligned commercial street became designated as the market square and probably sprouted a market hall like neighbouring towns did, before being subsumed for the town hall built 1928. The Anglican church of diminutive scale and style, occupies no landmark site but is situated along Church Street. While cemeteries were generally positioned on the edges of towns, and usually on lower lying land, in Wepener the cemetery is on the plateau east of town, a location no doubt also prompted to avoid the marshy ground. The street names of Wepener remain unchanged

Ladybrand

Established in 1867, Ladybrand is located at the foot of Platberg, 16 km west of the Caledon, and allegedly named after Catharina Brand, the mother of the fourth OFS President who resolved the border issue.

Land surveyor KJ de Kok carried out the task of laying out the initial 200 blocks of quartered *erven* during February and March of 1868, under the protection of 150 men. An apt description of the development was carried in *The Friend*: “The town of Lady-Brand will be situated on a little rise running from S.S.W. to N.N.E. The main street will go along the top of the rise, and on both sides of it the *erven* will be laid out. Two strong fountains, coming out of the Platberg...will supply the town with water. These fountains issue from both sides of the rise, and will supply the *erven* on either side... The town and its commonage are sheltered by the Platberg on the S.E. through W. to N. and the country is open from N. through to E. and S.W...” (13 March 1868; cited in Bosch, 1967: 44).

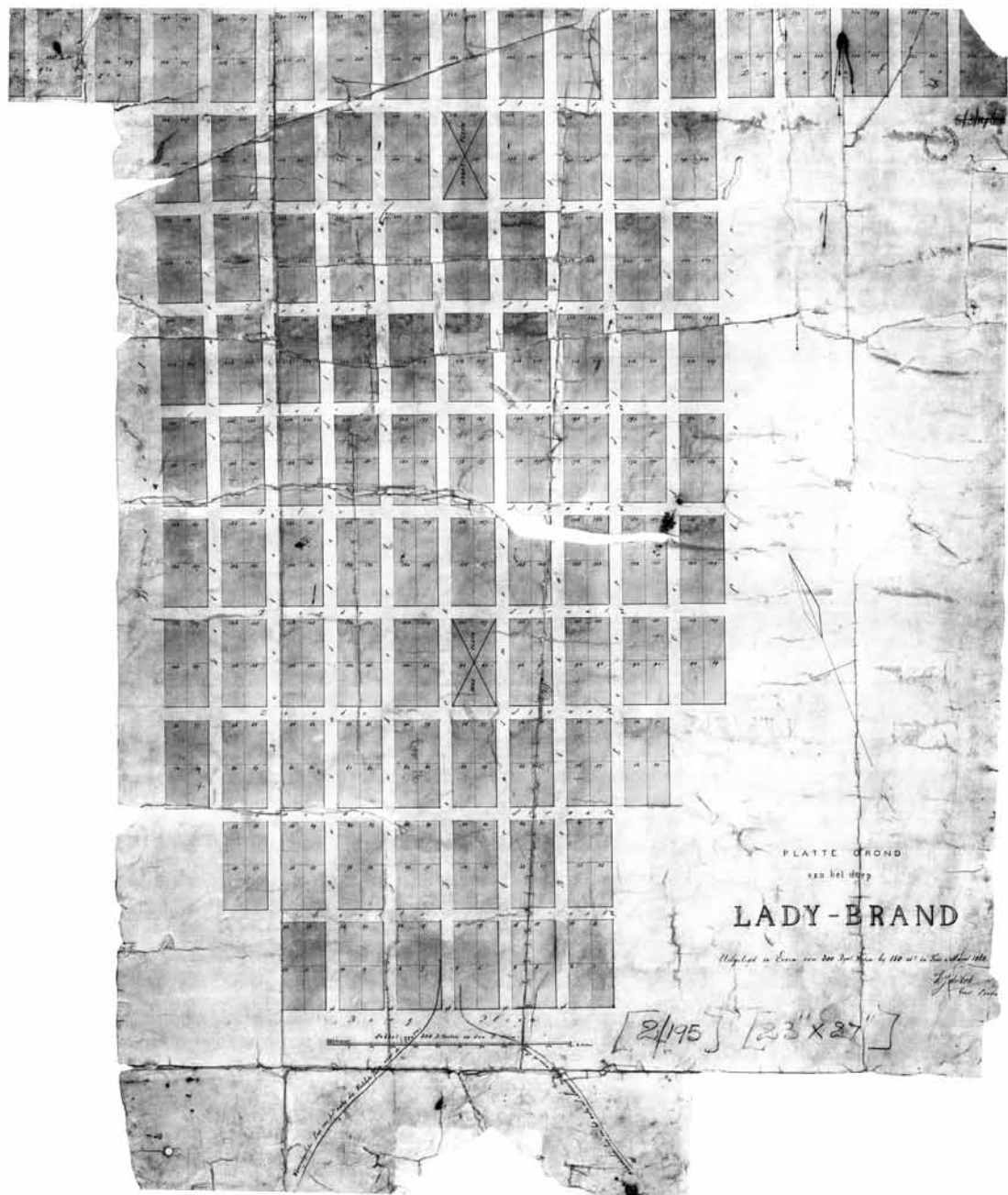


Figure 12
Ladybrand, 1868. A gridded plan of quartered blocks along long streets running in a north-easterly direction down the gentle slope at the foot of the Plathberg mountain from whence the two fountains originate (source: Free State Archives).

This is the description of an almost ideal spur site, perfectly orientated, protected from the elements and generously watered. The nine inclined long streets were given the names of pioneering families except for Church Street which marks the ridge of the spur, while the nine cross-streets are simply numbered 1-9. The flow of the streams could be contained in furrows as can be seen on the historical photograph of c.1870. This photograph also shows the enclosures of the quartered allotments and the positioning of many cottages, not in the centre of their sites, but on or near the street boundaries, as is the legacy of the Dutch town-making tradition.



Figure 13

Ladybrand, c1871. Various positioned on their enclosed allotments for defensive purposes, a good number of buildings still coincide with the street boundary as per tradition. Water is lead from the fountain in the centre foreground down the streets in furrows to irrigate the allotments (source: Eloff, 1980: 35).

The original NGK church building was a cottage until in 1890 the permanent sandstone church was consecrated in the position it still occupies today, in the centre of a block consolidated as late as 1957 (Smit, 1987:139). Here the church effectively commands Church Square, the most important characteristic feature of Boer town planning. The cemetery lies on the east of town.

The police station, a fine work of OFS Republican sandstone architecture, is located on the block south-west and also diagonally opposite Church Square where it adds architectural definition to the Square. In due course the block on the north-west and diagonally opposite Church Square became assigned as market square. Following the precedent of many other OFS towns, in 1931 the town hall came to occupy this public space. The permanent school of 1904 was built at the top of town.



Figure 14

Ladybrand, 1890. The consecration of the permanent NGK church on the centre of its block with the original church at right (source: Bosch, 1967: 126).

Following the re-enactment of the Great Trek in 1938, the main street entrance from the east, *Derde Straat*, which marks the southern boundary of Church Square, was renamed *Piet Retief*, while *Tweede Straat* was renamed *Voortrekker*, and *Vierde Straat*, marking the northern boundary was later renamed *Dan Pienaar*, in acknowledgment of the WW2 hero born in Ladybrand (1893-1942).

Ficksburg

Named after the Commandant-General, the south-east to north-west aligned grid-iron plan of Ficksburg is laid out between the western banks of the Caledon and the foot of the majestic Imperani, with expansive views eastward to the Maluti mountains of Lesotho, often snow-capped. *The Friend* labelled Ficksburg the “best situated in the Conquered Territory” (10 March 1870; cited in Bosch, 1967: 30), a conclusion perhaps reached in ignorance of the severe cold experienced in winter.

Although the survey was commenced by Bosch in December 1867, progress was slow and he had to be protected by a large commando as “pegs were pulled out by the Basotho and used as firewood” (Bosch, 1967: 29-30), but the laying out of the 260 lots of both dry and wet *erven* along eleven long and nine cross-streets was completed in March 1868. Consistent with the other two towns, concessionaries were required to surround their allotments with walls of sod or stone to serve as a barricade against attack, and remains of such walls were reportedly still on existence a century later (*SESA*, Vol 4: 485).

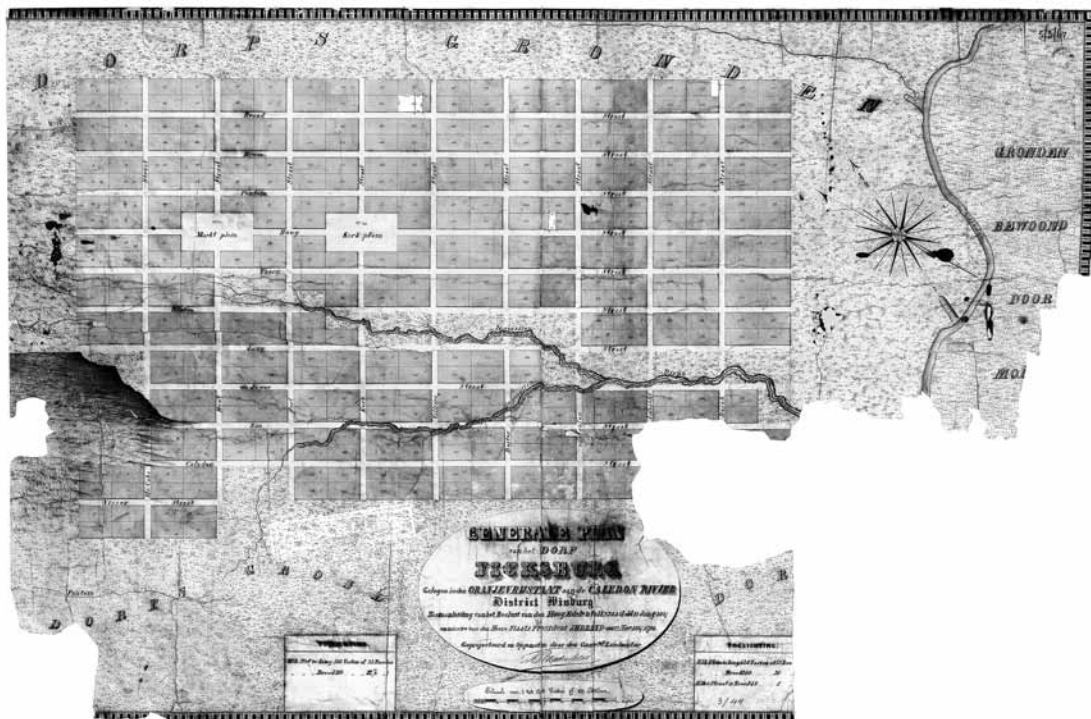


Figure 15

Ficksburg, 1867. The gridded plan runs downhill from the foot of the Imperani mountain (left) to the Caledon River (right). All blocks are quartered but for those truncated to create a square each for the market and NGK church, aligned with the watershed.

(source: Free State Archives).



Figure 16
Ficksburg, late 19c. The large allotments enclosed as prescribed, with few buildings placed centrally while most follow the Cape and Dutch tradition of lining the streets (source: Sorour collection).

Bosch made an exception by including in the gridded plan a dedicated square each for the church and market, shaped by notching an allotment from each of the four surrounding blocks, which rendered the squares 660x360 *voeten* (large), as noted on the town plan. Precedent for notching or truncating and resorting to fractional blocks exists at the Church Square in Graaff-Reinet, founded 1830, and also at nearby Harrismith.

The squares lie in tandem, but, interestingly, not on the ridge of the site and, somewhat unusual, Market Square occupies the more elevated position. Also interesting, the linking long street is named Hoog (High) Street, which is the name sometimes given the main street of English-founded towns in South Africa e.g. Grahamstown. Market Square intercepts the cross-street named Hout Straat, and Church Square, somewhat obviously, Church Street, and the two squares are separated by Fort Street. The cemetery was accommodated outside of the historic town plan, on the northern end of town, higher up and free of streams, at the end of Hout Straat.

While Market Square functioned as designated, the ‘morning market’, which had to wait until 1924 to be roofed, was restricted to the south-western side of the square, for the town fathers must have had in mind a more formal development. To give credence to this belief, the first building erected thereon was the magistrate’s court (1892), which was located in the centre of the square and its northern front visually closes the vista of Hout Street, a conscious design decision. A few years later the town hall (1897) was built on the northern end of the square, aligned on the axis of Hoog Street, and a decade later the post office followed on the southern end (1907), separated from the courthouse by a service road. In time civic and governmental buildings filled the entire square and displaced the market.

The current NGK church building (1905-07) replaced the original of 1872. Interestingly, the later building occupies the north-western or upper half of the square as Church Street was allowed to cut across the square leaving the church uncomplemented by the usually generous spatial setting. Nevertheless, the NGK is the major landmark of Ficksburg, dominating the town

like a minor cathedral. It is distinguished by the asymmetrical western front which consists of a tower with clock and spire, and another truncated with domical roof and lantern. Integrated into a coherent architectural ensemble, the developments on Market and Church squares are the sole pieces of urban design in the three towns.



Figure 17

Market Square, Ficksburg, c1930. From right to left: Town Hall, Magistrate's Court with turret (1892, architect JE Vixseboxe), and Post office, NGK church on Church Square (1905-07, architect Walter Donaldson) and Commercial Hotel (source: Sorour collection).

As with the other two towns, in time the large allotments in especially the central and upper parts of Ficksburg were sub-divided, with more buildings built up to, very close to, or marking the street boundaries and directing their gables either parallel or towards the tree-lined streets. But, the free placing of houses in irregular positions within the large allotments and front gardens is an English townscape tradition (see Haswell 1979), as is the relatively small square given the NGK church and the scattering of diminutive church buildings for the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian faith communities, and to crown the argument, the gentlemen's club. Ficksburg is a townscape hybrid of the Boer and English traditions.

In the wake of the re-enactment of the Great Trek in 1938, Hoog Straat, a veritable *decumanus* of a Roman town, was renamed Voortrekker, while the cross-street, Hout Straat, like a *cardo*, was renamed Piet Retief after the trekker leader.

Conclusions: the “wall of flesh”

While located on or near the border, none of the towns was fortified. There never were any encircling walls, towers or gates, let alone ramparts or bastions, and neither a garrison nor the fort proposed for each field-cornetcy ever materialised.

A study of 17 historical farmhouses in the Brandwater Basin, of which ten lie in the Conquered Territory (Du Preez 2012), revealed little in their designs and placing which could be ascribed to security or defence. From their settings, only three houses were found to have commanded the access roads and all three lie in secluded areas with a single, natural entrance. But 11 of the 17 enjoyed a distant view, from which vantage point inhabitants could have had the benefit of time

in preparing for anyone oncoming. The 'Big House' on Killarney is an exception but enjoys a commanding view from the stoep on the opposite side, over the border and into Lesotho. Almost without exception, the *stoep* became an integral component of the farmhouse, usually with the long side facing the view. This means that with only two exceptions, all the houses utilised the prospect of their specific situations, which one can conclude played a more important role in the placing of the farmhouses than surveillance or orientation.

The settlement strategy for the Conquered Territory was initiated to hold the tract of country taken from the Basotho and to provide a concentration of settlers to prevent incursions including cattle rustling and raids. The essentially agricultural communities were not organised for resistance, but if integrated with the towns in cahoots with garrisons and forts, authority could be consolidated across the frontier, a strategy inaugural OFS President Hoffman appropriately termed "the wall of flesh" (cited in Eloff, 1979: 21). Fortunately this line of defence was never put to the test, and the development seems to have been a more theoretical or symbolic front of authority, than one with true power, not that the right to settlement in the exceptionally fertile valley was not without its own appeal.

What remains at issue is Boer acculturation of planned towns, as opposed to those which developed naturally around the nucleus of a church. Wepener, Ladybrand and Ficksburg were land built from scratch. A common design brief with allotment size, quantity and block configuration; the challenge facing each land surveyor was the adaptation of the ensuing rectilinear plan to take best advantage of the slope of the given site for the facilitation of irrigation. It was then up to the concessionaires to pick up where the surveyors left off, enclose their allotments and build their houses as covenanted, and complete the urban entity as they wished.

Wepener residents were first off the mark and saw no alternative but to place their church outside the grid where it could assume its customary position of prominence, on a square at the head of the street they named Church Street. Then the extension with smaller lots for the building of *tuishuise* materialised in the shadow of the church, in substantiation of Boer cultural traditions. Ladybrand ensured that a complete block was reserved for the church, while Ficksburg commenced with a provisional church and left the designated square fallow until affording the permanent church. Where *tuishuise* for the last two towns were accommodated could not be established, but densifying allotments would have been an obvious choice.

Like Boer *dorpe* generally, these border towns too were actually conceived as "nucleated agricultural settlements" (Haswell: 1983, 17). The quartered blocks are of a configuration different from most, but were designed for the settlement of people who would use their allotments for agrarian purposes, even if 70% the size of those in Pietermaritzburg. While the oblong allotments and the free positioning of houses thereon brought about a break with the inherited paradigm of recreating Dutch townscapes, the placing of ecclesiastical architecture in distinguishing positions with spires dominating the skyline, and the identification of a square each for the church and the market are primary diagnostic features of Boer townscapes. Early photographs reveal a density of development beginning to line the principal through streets, and market forces saw to the quartered blocks being variously sub-divided with houses built up to or very close to the street edges, which became tree-lined, another distinguishing feature of Boer-founded towns. But, what gives these three towns a special place in the family of Boer-founded towns is their setting in a spectacular landscape of sandstone hills, which material was used for the construction of the buildings to provide a rooted built environment, and the relative softness of which the principal buildings exploited with carved embellishments.

Towns which have their *raison d'être* as components of a pattern of military defence can suffer obsolescence when the threat is over, unless a new basis for their continued existence can be found in an economic pattern of regional or local commercial or industrial activity, but these towns had good cause to grow. At a time when many South African villages and *dorpe* are facing an uncertain future, these three border towns are thriving, largely due to their location as transit and trading centres. While the condition and custodianship of their sandstone heritage leaves something to be desired, the towns have sound foundations to build upon, and their townscape character has thus far proved reasonably resilient to assimilation.

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