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Introduction

What is Populism?

Salomon Frausto and Léa-Catherine Szacka, editors

This number, the twentieth-ninth, of *Footprint* explores architecture's intersection with media, politics, and aesthetics through the lens of populism. In recent years, the link between architecture and populism has resurfaced in the form of heated polemics. In 2017, the UK Independence Party (UKIP) stoked fury when releasing a three-minute video in which images of grand neoclassical buildings were interwoven with shots of modernist towers spectacularly collapsing into dust.[1] A year later, the reconstruction of Frankfurt's old town provoked an outburst in German architectural circles when architectural theorist Stephan Trüby associated the project with right-wing extremism.[2] And in the Netherlands in 2019, Forum for Democracy leader Thierry Baudet, in his general elections victory speech, denied climate change and attacked energy transition by proclaiming his disdain for modern aesthetics, particularly the use of architectural devices such as wind turbines and solar panels.[3] More recently, Donald Trump's plea for 'Making Federal Buildings Beautiful Again' provoked a forceful response from the Society of Architectural Historians who, in an opposition letter, stated: 'We nonetheless remain convinced that the dictation of style – any style – is not the path to excellence in civic architecture.'[4]

The concept of populism remains evasive insofar as it is used to define political and economic phenomena reaching from far right to far left. In that sense, it is, to use the words of political philosopher and historian Jan-Warner Müller, 'obviously a politically contested concept' that may be said to put into question the traditional binary division between left and right altogether.[5] And if the term populism is often used as a synonym for 'anti-establishment', being critical of the elite may not be the ultimate criterion of populism. Indeed, populism also implies forms of conflict and polarisation, and other attitudes that can easily translate into particular spatial and aesthetical features.[6]

With this issue of *Footprint*, we are committed to explore new interpretations of the architectural ramifications of populism, understood as a political approach and strategy that strives to appeal to 'common' men or women who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elites and intellectuals. On the one hand, we aim to explore how right-wing populism contributes to reshaping architecture's elite aspirations, cementing the distinction between high and low cultures, while at the same time also using highly communicative and seductive images. On the other hand, we are interested in investigating other forms of populism, such as commercial populism – here Las Vegas can be seen as the paradigmatic example of an architecture commissioned by rich and powerful clients to appeal to 'the people' – and welfare-state populism, or examples referring to spatial and architectural articulations of anti-austerity and anti-establishment initiatives. Ultimately, we are hoping to downplay the traditional opposition between left- and right-wing populism, to reframe and reconceptualise the architecture of populism. From the start, there was a desire to explore the relation between architecture and populism as a triangulation of three poles: media, politics and aesthetics.

This exploration into the architecture of populism ties in with the work published in *Footprint* 8: *Defying the Avant-Garde Logic: Architecture, Populism and Mass Culture*.[7] *Footprint* 29, however, proposes a different approach to populism, opening the topic to a wider conceptual and temporal framework. As a point of departure, we asked the following questions: What are the possible links between architecture and populism, given that both are abstractions emerging from and referring to different historical, social, and geographic contexts? What are the spatial and material realities of right- and left-wing populism in politics and architecture, in both a historical and contemporary perspective? What are the mechanisms of stylistic appropriation – such as po(pu)larisation – and how are forms of architecture populism mediated? How has architecture been instrumentalised for the sake of populist agendas and, in turn, how has populism been used and articulated within architectural projects? Is populism (mis)used in order to obtain important commissions, to position the client in an architectural field driven by the globalised forces of finance? Not only does this issue seek to examine the context relating to architecture and populism, but it also looks at how architects change their design language in relation to changing social, economic, and political determinants.

As expected, given our editorial desire to expand the notion of populism to other vantage points, the response to our call for contributions went in many directions. The variant definitions of media, politics, and aesthetics have drawn expansive lines, and case studies from past and present, offering many perspectives from which to think about what an architecture of populism is today.

On Media

Today, it is impossible to separate forms of populism from their representation in media, be it traditional mass media or new social media. As our democracies are defined more and more as 'media democracies' or 'audience democracies', the circulation of a large quantity of words and images – both real and imaginary – plays a crucial role in the constant dialogue with 'common' men and women.[8] Analysing the market imbalance between supply of and demand for housing through popular aesthetics, Jesse Honsa, in his research article 'Call and Response: Popular Media and Architecture in London's Historic Housing Crises', considers the operative nature of the term 'housing crisis', along with related terms, through architectural publications and popular media from the nineteenth century to the present. Drawing from this two-hundred-year arc, he provides a context for the shift of London's housing question from quality to quantity. Rachel Julia Engler, in her essay 'End Times and Architectural Style on the Christian Campus', examines the futuristic and neo-vernacular idioms found, repeatedly, in the design of building projects by American television evangelists Pat Robertson and Oral Roberts. In particular, she sets up a theoretical framework for thinking about building through the notions of permanence and durability.

In 'Trump's Aesthetic, Spatial and Architectural Dramalities', Sophie Suma examines both media and politics and argues that Donald Trump's dramatisation participates in a populist architectural strategy. Suma explains how, starting with the real estate mogul's appearance on the reality TV show *The Apprentice,* Trump use the media of television to convey a new form of 'dramality'.

On Politics

Undoubtedly, media, politics and aesthetics are, more than not, intertwined with various populist strategies and actions. In 'Cedric Price's Pop-Up Parliament: A Role Model for Media Architecture and Data Politics', Dennis Pohl touches upon both media and politics to describe how Cedric Price's Pop-up Parliament of 1965 dealt with the media-technical condition of politics, while proposing that architecture was an integral part of the media network of governing. Price's project is paradigmatic

of the 1960s, a period when the media operations of information compression, prediction, and audience targeting became more decisive for politics than the content of debate. This analysis allows us, on the one hand, to problematise conventional definitions of populism towards a media-based concept, and on the other, to further our understanding of architecture as a political medium operating directly with media such as documents, television, and computers. Pohl argues that the advent of digital media calls for a different architectural history of populism, one that engages with the operativity of media and cultural techniques, rather than relying upon the symbolic representation of ideology in architecture.

Moving from symbolism to facts on the ground, Gabriel Cuéllar and Athar Mufreh, in their essay entitled 'Virtues of Proximity: The Coordinated Spatial Action of Community Land Trusts', examine the phenomena of property scattering and spatial patterns of community land trusts (CLTs) – one of the foremost models of resident-led development whereby land is claimed and used by a community without a landlord – to reveal the politics of a popular architecture. Owen Hopkins complements this essay in his contribution 'There and Back Again: Council Housing, Right to Buy and the Politics of Architectural Pluralism', where he looks at the role played by British council housing in populist politics from the postwar to the present, looking more particularly at Margaret Thatcher's Right to Buy scheme. Hopkins shows that the polarised and asymmetrical nature of this debate conflates questions of aesthetics, typology and planning, and tenure type, all typical of a populist politics. Finally, these articles are complemented by Nina Frolova and Elena Markus's visual essay 'Cult of War: The Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces', which puts on display the recently completed, Dmitry Smirnov-designed cathedral dedicated to the resurrection of Christ, an exemplar of post-Soviet populist ideology today.

On Aesthetics

Populism can hardly be detached from certain recurrent aesthetic strategies. In the last decades of the twentieth century, it was strongly associated with certain forms of postmodern architecture that freely and shamelessly mixed popular references with historical and often classical language. In '"New Classical" Contemporary Architecture: Retrotopic Trends and Phantasms of Tradition', Pierre Chabard looks at the genealogy of ideas within the new classical movement of Anglo-Saxon architects. He explores how this architectural doctrine emerged in the 1980s at the height of the debates around postmodernism, and with the support of some important political allies – notably in the United Kingdom, Prince Charles – alongside institutional frameworks and specific commissions, all of which helped develop this movement outside the mainstream of the contemporary architecture scene. Chabard places this movement beyond its style, arguing that its protagonists' desired return to traditional building techniques and craftsmanship is a desire for a 'retrotopia', borrowing a word from philosopher Zygmunt Bauman.

In her visual essay titled 'Architectural Antiquisation', Mari Lending comments on Norwegian artist Espen Gleditsch's powerful photographic series *Who's Afraid of the Neo-Neo-Classical?*, shot in Skopje and shown in Oslo in the spring of 2019. What she calls antiquisation ('antikvizacija') is, as she describes it, 'the fabulist nostalgia of nationalistic identity politics … architecturally expressed in the covering up of the facades of brutalist buildings with columns, porticos, tympanums, and cupolas in polyurethane and plaster.'

Finally, as a way to close the issue, we have asked architectural historian and theorist Mary McLeod to revisit, through a conversation with us, her seminal 1989 *Assemblage* article 'Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism'. This text is an incontestable reference for anyone who wants to study the relationship between architecture and politics. We

were curious not only to go back to that text, and her reflections more than thirty years later, but also to discuss her thoughts given the current state of emerging populisms – left and right – worldwide and how contemporary media, politics, and aesthetics are changing the architecture of populism.

Together, these contributions do not aim to simply provide a clear definition of populism, but rather to shed more light on a debated concept, showing its multi-facetted aspects in relation to space and aesthetics. If we may say that we are now living in 'an age of populism' dominated by a continuous critique of the elite, what does that mean for the future of the disciplinary and professional boundaries of architecture?

Notes

1. *ArchitectureMMXII*, UKIP campaign video, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0EklahdooM&t=4s.
2. See, for example, Rowan Moore's article 'Is Far-Right Ideology Twisting the Concept of "Heritage" in German Architecture?', *The Observer,* 6 October 2018.
3. On this, see Bart-Jan Polman, 'A Masochistic Heresy', *The Avery Review* 40 (May 2019), https://averyreview.com/issues/40/masochistic-heresy.
4. Andrew Ferguson, 'Trump's Beautiful Proposal for Federal Architecture', *The Atlantic*, 20 February 2020, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/02/the-case-for-making-federal-buildings-beautiful-again/606829/. The document, 'Making Federal Buildings Beautiful Again', was a draft for the subsequent Executive Order on Promoting Beautiful Federal Civic Architecture passed on Monday 21 December 2020, just one month before President-elect Biden took office. The order stated that new US government buildings must be 'beautiful'.
5. Jan-Werner Müller, *What is Populism?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 9.
6. Ibid., 4.
7. See Dirk van den Heuvel, Tahl Kaminer, 'Defying the Avant-Garde Logic: Architecture, Populism, and Mass Culture', *Footprint: Delft Architecture Theory Journal*, issue 8, Defying the Avant-Garde Logic: Architecture, Populism, and Mass Culture, Spring 2011, 1-6.
8. Ibid., 43.

Biography

Salomon Frausto directs the Berlage Center for Advanced Studies in Architecture and Urban Design, formerly Berlage Institute, at TU Delft. Originally trained as an architect at Columbia University, Frausto has been contributing to the public discourse on architecture through education, publications and public programmes for two decades. Reflecting his long-term scholarly interests in cross-disciplinarity, institutional architecture, and graphic representation, he is currently completing a book-length study on the divergent career of the South African-born British architect and designer Theo Crosby.

Léa–Catherine Szacka is Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Architectural Studies at the University of Manchester and, since 2018, visiting tutor at the Berlage. Over the past decade, Szacka has published and lectured extensively on the entanglement of postmodern architecture and media. Among others, she authored *Exhibiting the Postmodern: The 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale* (Marsilio, 2016) and co-edited *Mediated Messages: Periodicals, Exhibitions and the Shaping of Postmodern Architecture* (Bloomsbury, 2018). With Silvia Micheli, she is currently completing the manuscript of *Paolo Portoghesi: Architecture Between Media, History and Politics* (Bloomsbury, forthcoming).

Negative Anthropology: An International Comparison of Various Types of Right-Wing Spaces

Stephan Trüby

Translation: Simon Cowper

Is there an architectural and urban planning agenda at work behind the politics of contemporary (neo-) fascists and populist, radical and extremist right-wing forces? The Right-Wing Spaces research project, which has been running since 2018 at the Institute for Principles of Modern Architecture (Design and Theory) (IGmA) at the University of Stuttgart, suggests that the answer to this question is fairly unequivocal, at least in the German context: 'architecture … seems to have become a key tool of an authoritarian, populist right with a revisionist take on history.'[1] The interim findings of the project were presented in 'Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise' (Right-wing spaces: report on a journey through Europe), *ARCH+ 235* (2019), an issue that was guest-curated by IGmA, as well as in my 2020 essay collection *Rechte Räume: Politische Essays und Gespräche* (Right-wing spaces: political essays and conversations).

Within the scope of this research, a four-part typology of right-wing spaces has been produced for the German context. This was meant to link right-wing strategies with the appropriation of space in both the city and the country and to render these spaces legible through a kind of 'negative anthropology'.[2] A number of specific factors should be mentioned here: 1) the role played by secluded houses out in the countryside in creating a bridgehead; 2) the construction or purchase of – again rural – settlements to protect against the 'dying out of the people' (*Volkstod*); 3) the appropriation of sites – once again out in the country – with a rich history, such as castles, stately homes and manors, to serve right-wing concepts of tradition or provide an experience of ethno-nationalist community; and, last but not least, 4) 'corrections' to architectural history in the form of reconstructions – preferably in the urban setting.[3] This list can now be extended to include a fifth type of right-wing space that manifests mainly through social media. Although the typology focuses on Germany, I will also assess its usefulness outside of this context.

Let us start with three prefatory observations. The first relates to anthropology, and to negative anthropology in particular: what kind of contemporary relevance can be accorded to a theory of humanity that once promulgated the idea of the 'Untermensch'?[4] For Theodor W. Adorno, the answer was plainly 'none at all', as is evident in his *Negative Dialectics* (1966), a book in which he sought to lay to rest the anthropologies of philosophers like Max Scheler, Helmuth Plessner and Arnold Gehlen, inhuming them with the following words: 'That we cannot tell what man is does not establish a peculiarly majestic anthropology; it vetoes any anthropology.'[5] A few years later, another proponent of Critical Theory presented a major philosophical work with a similar thrust: in 1969, Ulrich Sonnemann published his book Negative Anthropologie: Vorstudien zur Sabotage des Schicksals (Negative anthropology: preliminary studies on the sabotage of fate). In it, he took a similar line to that of Adorno, sharply repudiating the option of positive anthropology in the sense of a human imaging method. The work concludes by saying that 'people cannot, with the best will in the

world, conceive of what they are, because they are becoming what they think.'[6] Despite the anti-anthropological agenda espoused by the Frankfurt School, anthropology finds itself in rude health: witness the plethora of books that have been published in recent years with a 'hyphenated form' of anthropology – such as Bild-Anthropologie (image-anthropology) or Medien-Anthropologie (media-anthropology) – in their titles.[7]

Recently, there has also been increasing talk of an 'architectural' or 'design anthropology'. It was the Zurich historian Jakob Tanner whose book *Historische Anthropologie zur Einführung* (Historical anthropology: an introduction, 2008) elucidated the fact that, in the eighteenth century, 'historiography and anthropology emerged as scientific disciplines more or less simultaneously'.[8] The science of humanity found a solid footing at about the same time as the idea of '"history" as a collective singular concept (*Kollektivsingular*) and a category of consciousness'.[9] An anthropology conceived of as separate from history would always, in Tanner's view, remain scientifically bound to the reckless irresponsibility of a figure like Christoph Meiners, who in 1785 published his *Grundriß der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Outline of the history of mankind), the first world history in which the author adopts a 'polarising racist stance'.[10] In doing so, Tanner says, he 'helped promulgate a universal historical plot based on an opposition between the "beautiful light-skinned" race and its "ugly dark-skinned" counterpart'.[11] This had terrible consequences: 'With Meiners, "racial conflict" and "racial purity" became occidental obsessions.'[12] Tanner thus seeks to respond to anthropology's birth defect – the tendency to regard the field as a history-free zone – by incorporating it into historiography, an approach that is also adopted below. The patterning processes inherent in human (territorial) behaviour – which can sometimes take concrete form as right-wing spaces – need to be analysed with the help of anthropological approaches. That is on the one hand. On the other, such analytical approaches should always work against the processes of consolidation; they should not accept the concomitant situation as natural but rather critique it. Anthropology is not 'negative' per se; it only becomes negative if it grants stability, if it seeks to perpetuate and if it is not labelled as negative in the sense of being undesirable.

A second observation is important here. As the author has already made clear in other writings, there is not just 'one' right – instead, it is better to speak of a 'dual right' inasmuch as there are the anarcho-capitalist, free-market ultras (the 'libertarian right') and the anti-capitalist protectionists (the populist, 'national socialist' right).[13] In contrast to the latter group, which I will focus on below, the former only rarely acts in ways that are openly racist and anti-Semitic.

Finally, I come to the third observation: the argument that follows is concerned with the complex relationship between flesh and stone, between human and structure, between action and building, between ideology and artefact.[14] It should be emphasised that there is no quasi-natural connection between ideology and artefact in the sense of 'fascist' or 'democratic' architecture – yet the two are not completely divorced from one another either. Just about every building emerges in a particular political and economic context, which can be endorsed or reshaped by relevant human actions. There is no such thing as 'right-wing architecture', but there are 'right-wing spaces' – relational spaces or action settings of various complexions that routinely materialise as container spaces (but can also be modified or repurposed as necessary).[15] The comments that follow should make this clearer.

Secluded country houses as bridgeheads

The country estate of Botho Strauß (b. 1944) has been suggested as the prime example of this typology in the German context. Located in the Uckermark in the little village of Grünheide, about 80 kilometres north-east of Berlin, it was here that the German poet retreated as indignation

spilled across the features sections of the newspapers following the publication of his essay 'Anschwellender Bocksgesang' (The rising tide of tragedy or, more literally, The swelling song of the he-goat) in *Der Spiegel* in 1993. Criticism was heaped on him for writing such sentences as 'That a people seeks to assert its moral law over others and is ready to make blood sacrifices for it is something we no longer understand and, in our liberal libertarian self-centredness, consider wrong and reprehensible.' But the building in Grünheide was not the final destination in a process of retreat, but rather the start of a land grab of sorts – the house, as it were, in which the eponymous 'he-goat' could sing his song. This had become clear by 1997 at the latest, when Strauß published his screed *Die Fehler des Kopisten* (The copyist's errors), an essayistic stream of consciousness disgorged while taking his son on a stroll through the countryside around his home. Adopting the tone of a member of the far-right NPD party, he wrote: 'The Germans got high on their sense of the collective for five or six years. As punishment, they must spend a millennium examining how this could have happened.'[16] Admittedly, Grünheides – that is, right-wing strongholds in the depths of the country – are not confined to Germany. Take Switzerland, for example, where in the remote reaches of Riederalp in Valais, German writer Thor Kunkel (b. 1963) mobilises his Kunkelbakker advertising agency in support of AfD election campaigns. Or the UK, where writer, musician and political activist Troy Southgate (b. 1965) used the cover of his book *National-Anarchism: Theory and Practice* (2012) to create a striking domestic image of the rural 'exit strategy' facilitating the creation of ethnically homogeneous peoples.

In the context of rural properties that are part of a land grab, it is worth mentioning the Feistritz estate owned by Austrian right-wing populist Jörg Haider from 1986 until his death in 2008. Located in the Rosental Valley in southern Carinthia, the forest estate with its large tracts of woodland had been appropriated from its owner – Mathilde Roifer, a Jewish woman with Italian citizenship – in 1939, as part of a 'dejewification programme', as it was referred to in official records. Josef Webhofer, Haider's great-great-uncle on his mother's side, became the new owner. The forced sale was intended to bolster German culture in a traditionally Slovenian-speaking area. As Andreas Rumpfhuber has shown, Webhofer made a symbolic reparation payment in 1954 in an attempt to authenticate the contract, which was no longer legally watertight after the Second World War, but the ownership position remained unresolved.[17] The situation was only put on a secure legal footing in 1986 when Webhofer's son, Wilhelm, donated the property to Haider – the newly elected chairman of the FPÖ (Austria's right-wing Freedom Party), whose support was shored up by the party's German nationalist wing – in exchange for a life annuity: proceedings could now no longer be brought against the Webhofers to have them surrender the property and Haider was able, according to Rumpfhuber, to 'liberate' at least a portion of Carinthia, the expression he used in 1984 in a nod to the Kärntner Abwehrkampf (the 'Carinthian defensive struggle') and the 1920 plebiscite to determine whether Carinthia should remain part of Austria: 'We shall not content ourselves with Carinthia remaining free and undivided. This state will only be free when it becomes a German state.'[18] An attempt by Roifer's heirs to reopen the case in 2000 was unsuccessful.

The motif of homestead secession focused on nationalist integrity is most flamboyantly exemplified in the domestic situation of the Italian writer Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863–1938). Between 1919 and 1920, as a rebel leader in Fiume, D'Annunzio became a source of inspiration for Benito Mussolini's brand of fascism. Later, in 1921, shortly after the failure of the Italian Regency of Carnaro, he moved into a villa on Lake Garda that he had converted, together with the architect Giancarlo Maroni, into an estate whose eccentric grandeur was matched only by its militaristic flair. [Fig. 1] Not only did the extensive 9-hectare grounds contain garden sculptures in the

shape of rifle cartridges, they were also boosted in the mid-1920s by the addition of the battleship *Puglia*, which D'Annunzio received as a gift from the Italian navy in 1923. [Fig. 2] Other features include an Ansaldo SVA.10 airplane that he had flown during the First World War and an SIAI S.16 flying-boat. In 1939, a year after D'Annunzio's death, Maroni submitted plans for a mausoleum to enshrine him, which was then indeed built in 1955 on a hill on the estate. Inspired by Etruscan Roman burial sites, the mausoleum took up motifs from Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, as can be seen in its three annular stone platforms: the Victory of the Humble, the Artificers and the Heroes. D'Annunzio's mortal remains lie in a towering sarcophagus supported by four monumental pillars, surrounded by ten more sarcophagi dedicated to the 'Heroes of Fiume'. During his lifetime, the poet had actually styled his park – which was funded by the Italian state – *Il Vittoriale degli italiani* (The Italian monument to victory), a literary distortion of the fact that the site actually owed its existence to a military defeat. The name was subsequently used to denote the entire complex.

Settlements and territories as bastions

As with the first type of rightist space, international parallels can also be found with the second type, rural settlements defying the imagined dying out of the people. Although minimal ideological differences can be noted – in Germany, for instance, some of the more recent ethno-nationalist settlements (such as in Koppelow in Mecklenburg) should be seen in terms of a specifically German 'neo-Artaman movement' – settlers with a nationalist disposition can also be found in other Western countries joining forces to form bottom-up collectives with a discriminatory agenda.[19] In France, for example, Les Brigandes – the all-female identitarian band with xenophobic views who always appear in Zorro masks – have been singing about 'France notre Terre' (France, our country) or 'Le Grand Replacement' (The great replacement) in angelic voices since 2015. As 'hippies from the right', the band members and their relatives live in a communal family of about thirty people in La Salvetat-sur-Agout in the Hérault department of Occitanie. There have been similar communities in existence in the US for quite some time – in Oklahoma, for example, where right-wing extremist Robert G. Millar (1925–2001), a leading figure in the Christian Identity movement, established Elohim City in 1973, a DIY settlement that seems both quasi-archaic and retro-futuristic: since Millar's death, the community has been run by his son John in his role as pastor.[20] The US is also home to the Northwestern Territorial Imperative, an extreme-right separatist project that is probably the most territorially ambitious settlement of its kind to date. Founded by American neo-Nazi Harold Covington (1953–2018), the 'ethnostate', covering a huge region in the US Northwest – the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and parts of Montana – was to be declared an 'Aryan homeland'.

The right-wing esoteric Anastasia movement makes its demands in public with a far greater sense of reality – and a political programme that is not always evident at a quick glance. It is inspired by *Anastasia: The Ringing Cedars of Russia*, a series of novels in ten volumes published by Russian writer and entrepreneur Vladimir Megre (b. 1950) between 1996 and 2010 (and appearing in German between 1999 and 2011). Numerous rural communes have since sprung up whose residents followed the ideals of the allegedly real Anastasia – living on a 'family estate in the country' in notional 'harmony with nature' – first in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, and later in Australia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the US and Germany. Megre's books give clear recommendations on how to design this mode of living. The recipe includes the following: 1) a country residence with a hectare of land, three-quarters of which should be wooded, the whole to be ringed by a wall or a living fence, such as a hedge; 2) a vegetable garden complete with a pond, a fiftieth of a hectare in size, which should be laid out in the unwooded open space – this vegetable

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 1: *Il Vittoriale degli italiani* (The Italian monument to victory): The eccentric grandeur of Gabriele D'Annunzio's garden and villa on Lake Garda is matched only by its militaristic flair. Photo: Wikipedia.
Fig. 2: The battleship *Puglia* was added to *Il Vittoriale degli italiani* in the mid-1920s, when Gabriele D'Annunzio received it a gift from the Italian navy in 1923. Photo: Wikipedia.

garden should in turn be enclosed by a hedge to keep out animals such as chickens or goats; 3) a total of more than three hundred edible and beneficial plant species, which are to be cultivated on the estate, including apples, sweet or sour cherries, flowers, strawberries, cucumbers, raspberries, currants, gooseberries and tomatoes – a sunflower should also be considered, as well as a 'family tree'. This all serves as staffage for the ideology of a purportedly natural gender order, based on a patriarchal, heteronormative, anti-Semitic set of beliefs, in which Jews themselves are to blame for their persecution over the centuries.[21] The official register of Anastasia settlements currently lists over 213 of them with internet addresses and more than 230 in Russia alone.

In the former Yugoslavia we can find two particularly striking examples of settlements that are laying the ground for a society with an identitarian profile, thus striving to avoid an imagined dying out of the people. The Serbian French filmmaker and musician Emir Kusturica has built two planned 'towns' there since the start of the new millennium: the wooden mountain village of Drvengrad (timber town), sometimes also referred to, somewhat absurdly, as *Küstendorf* (coastal village); and its stone counterpart, Andrićgrad, a newly built quarter of Višegrad in Bosnia and Herzegovina just 25 kilometres from Drvengrad.[22] [Figs. 3, 4]. Both 'towns' were built as part of film projects: Drvengrad for *Life Is a Miracle* (2014) and Andrićgrad for the planned screen adaptation of Ivo Andrić's novel *The Bridge on the Drina* (1945). The bridge in the title is within sight of Andrićgrad. While Drvengrad is still infused with a Third Position amalgam of left and right – with streets named after popular leftist heroes such as Che Guevara, Yuri Gagarin and Joe Strummer, on which hawkers peddle souvenirs bearing the image of war criminal and former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžic – the situation in Andrićgrad, as Gal Kirn explains, has clearly tipped over into right-wing nationalist historical revisionism:

> While in *The Bridge on the Drina* Andrić attempts to cover a period of four centuries, describing the coexistence in the region of the various ethnic groups and religions, including Islam, together with all the conflicts that have taken place, Kusturica only has an Orthodox church built in Andrićgrad – there is no sign of a mosque. When the press pointed this out to Kusturica, he stated that a mosque had no place in Višegrad. He said there had never been a mosque there, nor a Catholic church. And for that reason, neither of them would be built there.[23]

Old castles and manor houses; new churches

The third type of rightist space involves the appropriation of rural castles, stately homes and manors with a rich historical tradition as vessels for ingrained right-wing attitudes and ethno-nationalist community experiences. This type has been elucidated elsewhere in the German-speaking context, using the examples of the three manor houses of Almoshof, Ermreuth and Kohren-Sahlis in Bavaria and Saxony used by the Hoffmann paramilitary sports club, Götz Kubitschek and Ellen Kositza's Schnellroda manor and André Poggenburg's Nöbeditz manor, both located in Saxony-Anhalt.[24] Here, too, it is possible to make international parallels: in Switzerland, for example, where in 1972 August von Finck senior (1898–1980), an admirer of Hitler and 'Aryanisation profiteer', bought and renovated the medieval castle of Weinfelden in the Swiss canton of Thurgau. [Fig. 5] Today the castle is inhabited by August von Finck junior (b. 1930), the AfD financier, who is worth billions. The third type can be found in France, where writer Renaud Camus – whose Great Replacement conspiracy ideology prepared the soil for the far-right attacks in Christchurch and Halle in 2019 – has lived since 1992 in the Château de Plieux in the Gers department, built between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.[25] Camus even claimed that the château inspired his idea of the Great Replacement. In the French context we might also mention Montretout, a small manor house, set in 5 000 square metres

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 3: A Third Position amalgam of left and right: Emir Kusturica's Drvengrad (timber town) – sometimes also referred to *Küstendorf* (coastal village) – built in Serbia for the production of the film for *Life Is a Miracle* (2014). Photo: Wikipedia.
Fig. 4: Tipped over into right-wing nationalist historical revisionism: Emir Kusturica's Andrićgrad – a newly built quarter of Višegrad in Bosnia and Herzegovina just 25 kilometres from Drvengrad –, built for the planned screen adaptation of Ivo Andrić's novel *The Bridge on the Drina* (1945). Photo: Wikipedia.

of parkland in the affluent Parisian suburb of St. Cloud, with several outbuildings and a view of the Eiffel Tower. Built in the 1830s, Montretout was a gift from Napoleon III, Emperor of France from 1852 to 1870, to his chief of cabinet. Since 1976, it has been the property of the right-wing extremist, Holocaust denier and founder of the Front National party, Jean-Marie Le Pen (b. 1928), who inherited it from Hubert Lambert (1934–1976), an heirless cement entrepreneur and one of the first Front National sympathisers. The estate not only became the Le Pen family residence, but also served as the party headquarters. One of Le Pen's daughters, Yann, still lives at Montretout today.

Outside the German and French context – in post-socialist countries in particular – it is evident that traditional right-wing attitudes and ethno-nationalist community experiences in rural areas are connected, not only with old buildings from the feudal period, but also, primarily, with new sacred buildings. A more specific definition of the typology of rightist spaces is needed here – and this will also allow a better understanding of the situation in Poland, for example.[26] A more specific definition of the typology of rightist spaces is needed here – and this will also allow a better understanding of the situation in Poland, for example, where any such spaces are associated with the work of the Catholic media entrepreneur and anti-Semitic priest Tadeusz Rydzyk (b. 1945). In 1991 Rydzyk founded Radio Maryja in Toruń, a national clerical radio station with close ties to the right-wing populist Law and Justice (PiS) party. Between 2012 and 2016, he instigated the construction of the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of the New Evangelisation and of St. John Paul II in Toruń, an eclectic central-plan building with a canopy roof, golden crown and ring of colonnades surrounding it.[27] The rear of the building is furnished with large kitschy wall sculptures with heroic depictions of important battles in Polish history, and on the back wall behind the altar, above an image of Jesus crowned with rays of light, there is a golden inscription bearing the words 'WASZE RADIO'(your radio) in large lettering, a barely coded conflation of the 'radiant' Christ with Rydzyk's Radio Maryja. One other project for a new sacred building in Poland would have been almost inconceivable without Rydzyk's propaganda: the statue of Christ the King in Świebodzin (2010) – the largest statue of Christ in the world. The work was initiated by the parish priest Sylwester Zawadzki (1932–2014) – a 'great friend of Radio Maryja'.[28] Zawadzki's heart was interred at the feet of the statue of Christ as specified in his will. This was an infringement of Polish law (which only sanctions burials in cemeteries, with special permission otherwise required) and resulted in criminal proceedings being brought not only against the priest who carried out the rite, but also the two doctors who had removed his heart.

New religious buildings put to the service of populist or nationalist community experiences are also having a major influence in the former Yugoslavia, helping to characterise the territory there, as Zoran Terzić has shown.[29] His book Kunst des Nationalismus (The art of nationalism) shows the spectrum of possibilities between inward and outward proselytising, using a telling series of images, including a cross standing as high as a house that was erected by Bosnian Croats near Mostar in the late 1990s. For Terzić this cross represents the 'visual climax of a renaissance of cultural-religious self-aggrandisement', of the kind that is 'typical of the years during and after the war that followed the break-up of Yugoslavia'.[30] Another picture shows the Orthodox 'variant' erected in Macedonia in 2002 on the mountain near Skopje, in pursuit of the same goal: 'the demonstrative display of religious suzerainty over the respective (Bosnian or Albanian) Muslim minority.'[31] The images also include two examples from Bosnia and Herzegovina, one of which shows a modern mosque in Sarajevo built with funding from Indonesia that serves as the base of Bosnia's Islamic community.

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Fig. 5: Inhabited by an AfD financier: The medieval castle of Weinfelden in the Swiss canton of Thurgau, owned by August von Finck junior (b. 1930) – who inherited it from his father August von Finck senior (1898–1980), an admirer of Hitler and 'Aryanisation profiteer'. Photo: Wikipedia.

Fig. 6: More than just a squat: CasaPound is not only an occupied Mussolini-era building in Via Napoleone III near Rome's central railway station district, but also the nerve centre of a parallel neo-fascist world existing in the heart of central Rome, which includes fashion boutiques, tattoo parlours, osterias, bars, clubs etc. Photo: Stephan Trüby.

As Terzić writes, 'it symbolises the outward proselytisation encouraged by countries like Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Kuwait as part of the process of post-war reconstruction.'[32] Finally, on the right, the Turhan Emin Beg Mosque in Ustikolina, the oldest mosque in Bosnia, which was destroyed during the war and subsequently rebuilt and enlarged.[33] The federal government decided, however, that the mosque with the tallest minaret in Europe was to be destroyed again in 2004, in order to make way for a lower mosque more in line with the original.[34] This did not happen though. The Christian counterpart to this can be found in Mostar, where a Catholic church has likewise risen to almost twice its previous height after restoration – 'which is perhaps also indicative of a kind of ersatz satisfaction of the masculine impulses that are now no longer involved in the war'.[35]

Monuments and reconstruction projects in the cause of a sanitised history

The fourth type of rightist space, one that is decidedly urban, is particularly prevalent in Germany.[36] We can, however, also find comparable tendencies in Hungary, where they are accompanied by a revisionist policy with regard to monuments of a kind that has so far only been propagated in Germany in AfD papers and via statements associated with this position ('a 180-degree pivot in the politics of commemoration').[37] For example, Victor Orbán's national conservative, right-wing populist government has, since 2014, been pursuing a controversial project to restore Buda Castle in Budapest's Castle Quarter.[38] Using EU funding, the area is to be developed into a 'symbolic site of Hungarian identity', which implies, first and foremost, a reconstruction of the way it was in the early twentieth century. The reconstruction of the Royal Riding Hall was recently completed, and further reconstruction work is to follow.[39] Such construction projects are accompanied by a policy of commemoration that is relocating numerous Hungarian monuments from the socialist era to the outskirts of the city, while erecting new monuments that conceal the country's history of collaboration with Nazi Germany. One such monument can be found on Liberty Square (Szabadság tér) in Budapest. At the same time this policy also condones the raising of a bronze bust of Miklós Horthy in Budapest's public space, at the entrance to the Temple of Return (Hazatérés Temploma) of the Hungarian Reformed Church – an event that took place in 2013. Under Horthy's authoritarian regime, anti-Jewish, pro-Nazi policies had been pursued in Hungary between 1920 and 1944. The Horthy cult, which was reinstituted in the late twentieth century – by 1998, at the latest, when Orbán was elected prime minister – found its most prominent advocate in Hungarian architectural circles in Imre Makovecz (1935–2011). The right-wing architect with national, romantic leanings, who is also known to have expressed anti-Semitic sentiments, worked with sculptor László Péterfy to create an anti-communist monument in Budapest, which was erected illegally on Dózsa György Square in 1996, before being subsequently authorised.[40] Bearing the slogan '1944–1990: In memory of those who did not die, but whose lives were ruined', the memorial represents a one-sided reinterpretation of the liberation from fascism as an unmitigated calamity that provided the initial impetus that drove the society in the direction of socialism.

Italy is the global paradigm of this kind of nostalgic view of fascism: it is the only country in Europe in which a decidedly urban form of neo-fascism succeeded in establishing itself at a very early stage. CasaPound is a prime example of this. In 2003 a group of neo-fascist sympathisers occupied a six-storey Mussolini-era building in Via Napoleone III near Rome's central railway station district, which they then referred to as CasaPound. Named after the American poet Ezra Pound, an anti-Semitic Mussolini supporter, the building is still occupied, with an unknown number of fascists living in it, 'tolerated by the city administration and condoned by Rome's police, who act as their protectors'.[41] [Fig. 6] CasaPound is more than just a squat:

between 2012 and 2019, it was also the headquarters of the political party of the same name and to this day it is the nerve centre of a parallel neofascist world existing in the heart of central Rome, which includes fashion boutiques, tattoo parlours, osterias, bars, clubs and the bookshop La Testa die Ferro in the immediate vicinity of the Colosseum.[42] This bookshop was named after the newspaper of Gabriele d'Annunzio's irregulars.[43] The glorification of Mussolini by CasaPound and other groups can flourish in Italy because the country's brand of fascism is downplayed by large sections of society. This may also explain why the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana – with its quotation from Mussolini's declaration of war on Ethiopia inscribed in large lettering on each of its four façades – has not only served as the headquarters of the Italian fashion house Fendi since 2015, but also appears, without drawing the slightest criticism, as a stylish setting in advertising videos, with Karl Lagerfeld, for example.[44] [Fig. 7] In 2013, a full two years before it was taken over by Fendi, the Palazzo featured on a CasaPound election poster.[45]

Though this phenomenon is not confined to the West, the modern history of Western sculpture depicting monarchs and generals is permeated by selective memories that conceal, or even glorify, racism, colonialism and slavery. It is only recently that a broader movement has been stirred into action to protest this – most notably in the US, particularly after the brutal murder of Black American George Floyd by white police. The anti-racist organisation Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has counted more than 1,700 so-called Confederate monuments in the US, that is, sculptures that seek to cherish the memory of the generals of the Confederate States of America (1861–1865) who fought, in an ultimately losing struggle, to maintain the slave economy in the southern states. A Confederate monument policy steeped in the ideology of white supremacism established itself in the aftermath of the War of Secession, enjoying a heyday in the early twentieth century.[46] Countless equestrian statues of Confederate generals like Robert E. Lee were put up across the country, and in 1909 work began on a giant relief of three Confederate figures that was carved into Stone Mountain near Atlanta: covering an expanse of rock the size of a football field, the artwork, which was not completed until 1972, immortalised Lee along with Confederate President Jefferson Davis and General Thomas 'Stonewall' Jackson. One of the sources of funding for the project was the Ku Klux Klan. The equestrian statue of Lee in Charlottesville, Virginia, which was erected in 1924, has recently been a regular focus of public debate. When the city decided to remove the statue in 2017, a massive protest was organised by conservative and far-right groups. Shortly afterwards, American right-wing extremist Richard E. Spencer and his acolytes organised torchlight processions during which they chanted slogans like 'Jews will not replace us'. Spencer helped organise the Unite the Right rally, which saw a right-wing extremist drive his car into a group of anti-racist counter-protesters on 12 August 2017, killing thirty-two-year-old civil rights activist Heather Heyer. After being shrouded for a short period, the Robert E. Lee memorial is now once again a prominent feature in the urban space, just as it always has been.

Rightist spaces in the media

The four types of 'real' rightist spaces presented here should be augmented – if we are to gain a better understanding of the specific characteristics of the present we live in – so as to include a fifth, more recent category: media spaces. To be more precise, this category covers spaces of transmission that go out via media and social media in particular. This trend is allied with a general disenchantment with the promise that the cyber-utopianism of the early 2010s – which was linked to phenomena like the Occupy movement, Anonymous, WikiLeaks, the mass protests in Spain and the Middle East – would inevitably contribute to an improvement in democratic conditions.[47] According to cultural theorist Angela Nagle, the wish expressed by people like

Manuel Castells and the computer magazine *Wired* for 'the swarm, the hive mind, citizen journalism and user-generated content' has been fulfilled – 'but it's not quite the utopian vision they were hoping for'.[48] In her 2017 book *Kill All Normies* Nagle writes,

> just a few years ago the left-cyberutopians claimed that 'the disgust had become a network' and that establishment media could no longer control politics, that the new public sphere was going to be based on leaderless user-generated social media. This network has indeed arrived, but it has helped to take the right, not the left, to power.[49]

The author cites a specific year as the end of an epoch, a sea change in history:

> The year 2016 may be remembered as the year the media mainstream's hold over formal politics died. A thousand Trump Pepe memes bloomed and a strongman larger-than-life Twitter troll who showed open hostility to the mainstream media and to both party establishments took The White House without them.[50]

And by 2016 at the latest, it had become clear too that the virtue of transgression, which had once had a leftist flair, now exhibited rightist tendencies: the online right, says Nagle, is 'the full coming to fruition of the transgressive anti-moral style, its final detachment from any egalitarian philosophy of the left or Christian morality of the right'.[51]

It is obvious that transgressive elements can become stable features in the landscape, especially in places where the limiting density is low – that is, in rural areas. These are precisely the places, then, where rightist spaces are commonly found – 'packaged', as it were, in social media – celebrating in camera-friendly fashion, at a safe distance from any antifa activists, their disengagement from an urban culture that is perceived as (left-wing) liberal. In Germany, for example, we should mention here the secluded property in Lübtheen in Mecklenburg of neo-Nazi and NPD politician Udo Pastörs – an estate built in a landscape conservation area that the NPD YouTube channel DS-TV (Deutsche Stimme) used as the backdrop for a 'summer interview' in 2016 with the seigneurial-looking owner; or the manor in Schnellroda, which has, since 2002, not only been the home of neo-fascist Götz Kubitschek and his family, but also the base for his Institut für Staatspolitik (ifs), his YouTube channel *kanal schnellroda* and his publishing house Antaios.[52] It is also where the aptly named magazine *Sezession* is published. A similar sense of (trans) mission can also be found in other countries – for example, in the Anastasia movement, mentioned above, which rightist spaces have used to hack into an enterprising blockbuster structure that can be summarised as follows: a series of novels preaches a reactionary way of life in the rural family residence; such settings then manifest in reality in multiple places, achieving relative self-sufficiency in economic terms on the back of agricultural products like cedar oil or tea; these products are then marketed via centralised websites.[53] One of these sites also has a dating platform for like-minded heterosexuals, designed to ensure the ideology's transgenerational transmission.

In urban settings, architecture can also be part of a right-wing media strategy. However, unlike in rural areas, in cities it is hardly ever a matter of appropriating land in the sense of making concrete territorial gains. Instead, it is all about political gesturing. In right-wing propaganda, cathedrals have been tasked with representing the 'European values' that are seen as being under threat. This was made particularly clear when French writer and right-wing extremist Dominique Venner committed suicide on 21 May 2013, shooting himself in the mouth at the altar of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. His motives for this were set out in his final blog entry – titled 'Le manif du 26 mai et Heidegger' (The 26 May demo and Heidegger) – in which he once again opposed, as he had in many of his previous books, the 'Great Replacement' and 'North African

Fig. 7: Inscribed by a quotation from Mussolini's declaration of war on Ethiopia: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, completed in 1940 in the EUR district in Rome, serves as the headquarters of the Italian fashion house Fendi since 2015 and appears as a stylish setting in advertising videos. Photo: Stephan Trüby.

and Arab immigration' as well as the introduction of same-sex marriage in France.[54] Attitudes of this kind had a major impact that spread far and wide when, on 15 April 2019, Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris was ravaged by a fire that had caught light in the course of renovation work on the roof. The fire was still burning when the right-wing architecture blog *Architectural Revival* started fuelling anti-Muslim conspiracy theories by announcing that 'dozens of Catholic churches all across France have been attacked since the start of the year'.[55] Accordingly, the comment columns featured statements like 'Coincidence? I think not' or 'Reports make a connection with the renovation work? Maybe the work of turning it into a mosque.'[56] It is entirely consistent with these utterances that two years earlier, in 2017, *Architectural Revival* made the following comment about the visualisation presented in Staab Architekten's winning design for the redevelopment of the area around the southern entrance to the cathedral in the centre of Cologne: 'Modern architecture is demoralising. A concrete-box design for Cologne. The eradication of German identity paves the way for the German volk to be replaced.'[57]

The rightist spaces in the media that open up in *Architectural Revival* and on other platforms find their central motif in the cathedral. The image of the (burning) cathedral is a bundling together of people's most paranoid fears about seeing what is 'theirs' disappear. At the same time – in a particularly bizarre sleight of hand in recent intellectual history – a derogatory discourse about 'the Cathedral' as an all-encompassing system created by a Western liberal continuum of universities and the press has become established in the context of the 'Dark Enlightenment', an idea promulgated by neoreactionary (NRx) thinkers like Nick Land and Curtis Yarvin, aka Mencius Moldbug.[58] There is thus much to be said for seeing 'the Cathedral' –oscillating between threat and threatened – as the central vanishing point of the typology of rightist spaces developed here as part of a negative anthropology.

Notes

1. Stephan Trüby, *Rechte Räume: Politische Essays und Gespräche* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2020), 138. The Right-Wing Spaces research project is headed by Philipp Krüpe (IGmA) and myself, https://www.igma.uni-stuttgart.de/en/research/research-projects/page_0002_0001/.
2. The term 'negative anthropology', which was heavily influenced by Ulrich Sonnemann's book of the same name, implies, in the best Adornian tradition, a negation of anthropology in general – notwithstanding the subtitle (Preliminary studies on the sabotage of fate), whose suggestive power needs to be tested here to establish its real substance. See Ulrich Sonnemann, *Negative Anthropologie: Vorstudien zur Sabotage des Schicksals* (1969; Frankfurt am Main: Syndikat, 1981).
3. Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 113.
4. The following passage follows up, to a large extent, on remarks I published in an article titled 'Die Aktualität der (Architektur-)Anthropologie' in 'Think Global, Build Social!', *ARCH+* 211/212 (Summer 2013), reprinted in Stephan Trüby, *Absolute Architekturbeginner: Schriften 2004–2014* (Munich: Fink, 2018), 207.
5. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 2007), 124.
6. Sonnemann, *Negative Anthropologie*, 324.
7. Hans Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie: Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft* (Munich: Fink, 2001); Matthias Uhl, *Medien, Gehirn, Evolution: Mensch und Medienkultur verstehen; Eine transdisziplinäre Medienanthropologie* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009).
8. Jakob Tanner, *Historische Anthropologie zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 2004), 28.
9. Ibid., 38.
10. Ibid., 48.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 37.
14. Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York: Norton, 1994).
15. On the distinction between relational and container spaces, see Markus Schroer, *Räume, Orte, Grenzen: Auf dem Weg zu einer Soziologie des Raums* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006).

16. Botho Strauß, *Die Fehler des Kopisten* (Munich: Hanser, 1997), 107.
17. Andreas Rumpfhuber, 'Unbehagliche Räume: Die Darstellung und Strukturierung von Raum durch Österreichs Rechtspopulisten', in 'Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise', *ARCH+* 235 (May 2019): 140.
18. Jörg Haider, quoted in ibid., 147.
19. On the 'neo-Artaman movement', see Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 120.
20. Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 210.
21. See Carl Kinsky and Sebastian Hell, 'Ökologie, Rassenlehre und Antisemitismus: Die "Anastasia-Bewegung" in Hessen', *Lotta* 77, 12 February 2020, http://www.lotta-magazin.de/ausgabe/78/kologie-rassenlehre-und-antisemitismus.
22. Work on Drvengrad began in 2000. Andrićgrad was completed in 2014.
23. Gal Kirn, quoted in 'Nationale Mythen im ehemaligen Jugoslawien: Gal Kirn im Gespräch mit c/o now', in 'Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise', *ARCH+* 235 (May 2019): 107.
24. Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 123.
25. On the Great Replacement conspiracy, see Renaud Camus, *Le Grand Remplacement* (Paris: Reinharc, 2011).
26. Wojciech Czaja, 'Polen und Politik: Das Land des Lex Dyktator', in 'Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise', *ARCH+* 235 (May 2019): 174.
27. 28 Ibid., 180.
28. 'Radio Maryja', Sanktuarium, updated 2021, https://sanktuariumswiebodzin.pl/radio-maryja.
29. Zoran Terzić, *Kunst des Nationalismus: Kultur – Konflikt – (jugoslawischer) Zerfall* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2007), 59.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. In Germany the phantom pains connected with severe wartime destruction coupled with the particularly conservative disposition to be found in many of the country's architects as compared with fellow professionals in other countries, and the determination among broad sections of the population to rid the cityscape of prestigious GDR architecture with its socialist legacies have combined to form a misalliance that has led to reconstruction projects like the Garrison Church in Potsdam and Frankfurt's new Old Town. It is no coincidence that both projects were initiated by right-wing radicals. On the conservative disposition of many architects in Germany, see Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 151. On the political origins of the reconstruction projects for Garrison Church in Potsdam and Frankfurt's new Old Town, see ibid., 137.
37. This was called for by AfD politician Björn Höcke in a speech he delivered in Dresden in 2017. seeMatthias Kamann, "Was Höcke mit der „Denkmal der Schande"-Rede bezweckt", Welt, 18 January 2017, https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article161286915/Was-Hoecke-mit-der-Denkmal-der-Schande-Rede-bezweckt.html
38. Zsuzsanna Stánitz, 'Neuschreibung der Geschichte: Das Beispiel Ungarn', in 'Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise', *ARCH+* 235 (May 2019), 150.
39. This includes the Stöckl Staircase, the Széchényi Library and the Main Guard building. Ibid., 155.
40. For Makovecz's anti-Semitism, see Eva S. Balogh, 'An interview with Imre Makowecz, a favorite of Viktor Orbán', *Hungarian Spectrum: Reflections On Politics, Economics, and Culture*, 15 May 2011, https://hungarianspectrum.org/2011/05/15/an-interview-with-imre-makowecz-a-favorite-of-viktor-orban/.
41. Volker Weiß, 'Neofaschismus in Italien: Popkulturell anschlussfähig', in *Frankfurter Rundschau* 257, 4 November 2010, 34–35, http://oireszene.blogsport.de/2010/11/07/neofaschismus-in-italien-popkulturell-anschlussfaehig/.
42. Heiko Koch, *Casa Pound Italia: Mussolinis Erben* (Münster: Unrast, 2013), 18.
43. Julian Bruns, Kathrin Glösel and Natascha Strobl, *Die Identitären: Handbuch zur Jugendbewegung der Neuen Rechten in Europa* (Münster: Unrast-Verlag, 2016), 118.

44. The Palazzo was built by Ernesto Lapadula, Giovanni Guerrini and Mario Romana in Rome's EUR district between 1938 and 1943. The lettering, 'Un popolo di poeti di artisti di eroi di santi di pensatori di scienziati di navigatori di trasmigratori' (A nation of poets, of artists, of heroes, of saints, of thinkers, of scientists, of navigators, of migrants), is a quotation from Mussolini's speech declaring war on Ethiopia on 2 October 1935. The Lagerfeld ad can bee seen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD_TdBmZqMo.
45. Koch, *Casa Pound Italia*, 99.
46. Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 201.
47. See Angela Nagle, *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right* (Winchester: Zero, 2017), 10.
48. Ibid., 3.
49. Ibid., 27.
50. Ibid., 3.
51. Ibid., 39.
52. For the 2016 interview with Udo Pastörs, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7FBkhQYREM.
53. These sites include https://www.ringingcedarsofrussia.org and https://ringingcedars.international.
54. Dominique Venner, 'Le manif du 26 mai et Heidegger', 21 May 2013, https://www.dominiquevenner.fr/2013/05/la-manif-du-26-mai-et-heidegger/.
55. Quoted in Philipp Krüpe, 'Reaktionäre Architektur-Memes in den sozialen Medien: Von Paul Schultze-Naumburg zu 4chan', in 'Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise', *ARCH+* 235 (May 2019): 39.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. See Nagle, *Kill All Normies*, 12.

Biography

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Virtues of Proximity: The Coordinated Spatial Action of Community Land Trusts

Gabriel Cuéllar and Athar Mufreh

Walking through a typical residential neighbourhood in the US, you pass dozens of single-family houses, each resembling the other. This urban regularity is repeated, invisibly, in the financial and political uniformity of the underlying land plots. However, a couple of unremarkable houses on the block are part of a community land trust (CLT), a local entity that permanently retains the interest to the ground. Despite their modest appearance, these two houses are spatially coordinated in an urban-scale constellation: their relative position, proximity, and terms of use work to inconspicuously advance social justice. Indeed, to appreciate the potential of the CLT model, one must observe the way that the trust's land is distributed spatially in a city.

Community land trusts have recently garnered attention as a tool against the commodification of real property, a basic infrastructure that societies rely upon. However, the CLT model is only the most recent tool in a contested, centuries-long struggle concerned with defining the proper ordering of property. In the US, where the CLT model was developed, property's cultural meaning and spatial formation are rooted in the demands of populist movements. Indeed, historically, property developed there as a populist imperative: the making, settling, and 'owning' of land are markers of a democratic order in which smallholders assert power in a society based on land productivity.[1] As such, the prevailing ideology holds that the more land resides in the hands of 'the people', the more democratic the society becomes. To 'own' land is integral to the nation's core political identity, regardless of party affiliation. The CLT model is thus situated in a socio-spatial context in which the notion of collective self-determination is already defined.

Within this well-established system of landholding, CLTs aim to redefine both 'the people' and the political role of property. It is especially due to its spatial characteristics, rather than its financial structure, in fact, that the CLT model is successful in doing so. CLTs put aspects of the US land system into question by deploying patterns of strategic urban dispersal, referred to here as property scattering. If the society's colonial populism pitched squatters against speculators, the contemporary populism, which CLTs are a part of, is a contest of commercial real estate developers and resident-led land development. Accordingly, in the best of the cases that will be discussed here, the CLT model is a form of anti-establishment populism rooted in a society where land is a populist imperative.

Retracing the emergence, historical context, and present state of CLTs in the US, we demonstrate how their distinctive spatial qualities transcend singular sites to acquire agency in a broader urban field. Drawing from discourses in sociology and legal theory, we propose that CLTs benefit from what we call 'virtues of proximity', unlike commercial real estate development which generally exploits economies of scale. This involves studying the impact of the spatial distribution of community land trust properties on the organisation's ability to meet its goals, which are often tied to the advancement of social justice. Presenting the spatial strategies of CLTs in various cities, including Atlanta, Minneapolis,

Tampa, and New York City, we propose an architectural design approach that puts property scattering to good use. Articulating this proposition, we ask, what consequences do scattered patterns produce in the urban field? To what extent can trusts proactively coordinate the pattern of their landholdings? How can the spatial ordering of CLTs become part of designers' spatial practice?

For the purposes of this article, populism refers to a political movement in which the identification of 'the people' and their goals is defined through and against a broader structure of power. The history and current workings of real property in the US demonstrate how populist politics have often been tied to land and the definition of its proper use. In this context, populism has produced and contended with particular spatial consequences, and these remain relevant for contemporary urban practice, especially that of civil society organisations like CLTs.

Landholding as populist imperative

The CLT model fits within a lineage of land ideologies and policies that developed through colonial settlement in what became the US. The role of land there emerged as a key concern since the early seventeenth century. In this society, land acquisition and the terms of its distribution were central issues that settlers and their colonial, and later imperial, government aimed to resolve. Two policies for granting land at virtually no cost to settlers, headrights and homesteads, fed the appetite of a society which ultimately entrenched itself in an ideology of landholding. These policies spatialised the colony's notion of democracy, and in the process real property emerged as a central tenet of US populism, which CLTs address today.

Prior to the establishment of the US as an independent state, the British colonies employed the headright system to manage land. Under this policy, every head of household who settled in the colonies had the right to a certain allotment of government-granted real property. Individually-held plots of land of up to 16 000 hectares were dispensed to any 'planter' who made the voyage from Britain.[2] Arriving by the hundreds in the early 1600s, colonists and their headright allotments quickly compounded the colonisation and dispossession of Indigenous nations.[3] Despite such liberal land grants, however, planters quickly grew tired of taxation and their status in service of wealthy investors in London. Settlers' desire to acquire the Crown's Indian Land Reserve on the colonial frontier contributed to the Revolutionary War, in which colonists ceded from Great Britain and established the United States proper.

Carrying forward the conflicts of the colonial era, the period from the late eighteenth to late nineteenth century was characterised by a struggle between agrarian squatters and land speculators. Accustomed to the provision of free land during the colonial period, settlers pressed their elected representatives to make more land available in the newly-established US republic. Although the system initially favoured speculators, the federal government instituted increasingly populist land policies throughout the 1800s, particularly under the administration of Thomas Jefferson.[4] This culminated in the development of the 'homestead', a settler land grant programme in the *ager publicum*, or public domain. In its role as the 'trustee for society', the US government appropriated further territories for the public domain and quickly transferred them into the hands of individual settlers in the form of homesteads.[5] What made the policy particularly populist was its emphasis on the figure of the settler-squatter, whose plantation on the frontier was subsidised with a host of federal relief and credit measures. Ultimately over 240 million hectares were granted, reinforcing the status and national image of the landholder.

This liquidation of the public domain had particular spatial consequences, namely the creation of a myriad of equally-sized, equally-positioned smallholding plots. This spatialisation of US landholding populism is observed in both Jefferson's

Public Lands Survey System (PLSS) – a method to subdivide territories newly dispossessed – and the frontier townsite, a template for establishing new cities. The two grid-shaped structures mirror each other, one designed for rural property and the other for urban property. Reflecting the prevailing politics, each of the small property increments traced by the PLSS and townsite geometries is designed for one settler to use the land. In contrast to the large estates of non-resident land speculators from New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, the smallholding landscape was sized to individual farmers.

Configured in this way, land is the common denominator which equalises the people; every citizen starts on the same footing, 'owning' a cell of land equivalent to all others. Guided by this ideology, thousands of townsites across the US were designed as isometric property fabrics formed for the footprint of the homesteader. [Fig. 1] Indeed, the centres and respective hinterlands of Chicago, Denver, San Francisco, Las Vegas, Houston, Salt Lake City, and more were all formed in this way. The fine-grained subdivision of the US property fabric thereby materialised the imperative that an equal interval of land should be made available to all of the people. And, accordingly, the holding of land came to correspond with citizenship.

By the turn of the twentieth century, however, the troubling definition of 'the people' and the predominance of the real estate market soon led to renewed calls and action for land reform. The very term 'populism' was taken up by a US political party, a central platform of which was to challenge the land system in two important ways.[6] Firstly, they sought to dismantle the syndicates of corporate land speculators which, since the late 1800s, had essentially undone the territorialisation of smallholding by consolidating large swaths of land for industrial economies of scale.[7] Secondly, as a party established in part by Black farmers, they sought to reconstruct the national image of 'the people.' As the beneficiaries of the homestead grants were largely single, armed, Euro-American men, Black farmers and farmers of colour had gained little from the prevailing slant of land populism.[8] While the People's Party proved unpopular with the white male electorate at the time, it reiterated the conviction for smallholding against corporate consolidation and challenged white supremacist construct of the citizen.

Popular settlement on public lands reached a critical point in the 1930s, which marked a drastic shift in federal land policies that continues to the present. The public domain, which had served as a bank of free land for settlers since the late 1700s, was put into a conservation programme in 1935.[9] This territorial withdrawal coincided with a demographic shift. For the first time, there were more people in cities than in rural areas, largely as a result of African-Americans fleeing oppression in the US South. The nation's fixation with land needed to find a new expression within this altered context. Accordingly, the distribution of real property – historically an agrarian issue under direct purview of the federal government – gradually became a matter of housing in cities. Cooperating with real estate speculators, the federal government devised a system of urban homesteading, which subsidised market actors in the provision of popular housing. In this new arrangement, the government assigns the private sector with the task of creating and distributing real property to the masses.

The spatial implications here are significant: there are no further lands to subdivide or new towns to found. Instead, the populist imperative for landholding must negotiate existing cities and legal geographies already in place. [Fig. 2] Therefore, the CLT, building on the People Party's activist legacy to support smallholding and expand the construct of 'the people', today confronts a spatial context markedly different from that of the early twentieth century. With its aim to bring land into community control and buffer it from the market, CLTs must contend with the myriad of economic and political forces in cities and the private sector which continues the government's charge to develop land. In this way, the CLT plays a part in a contemporary replay of the historical land populism.

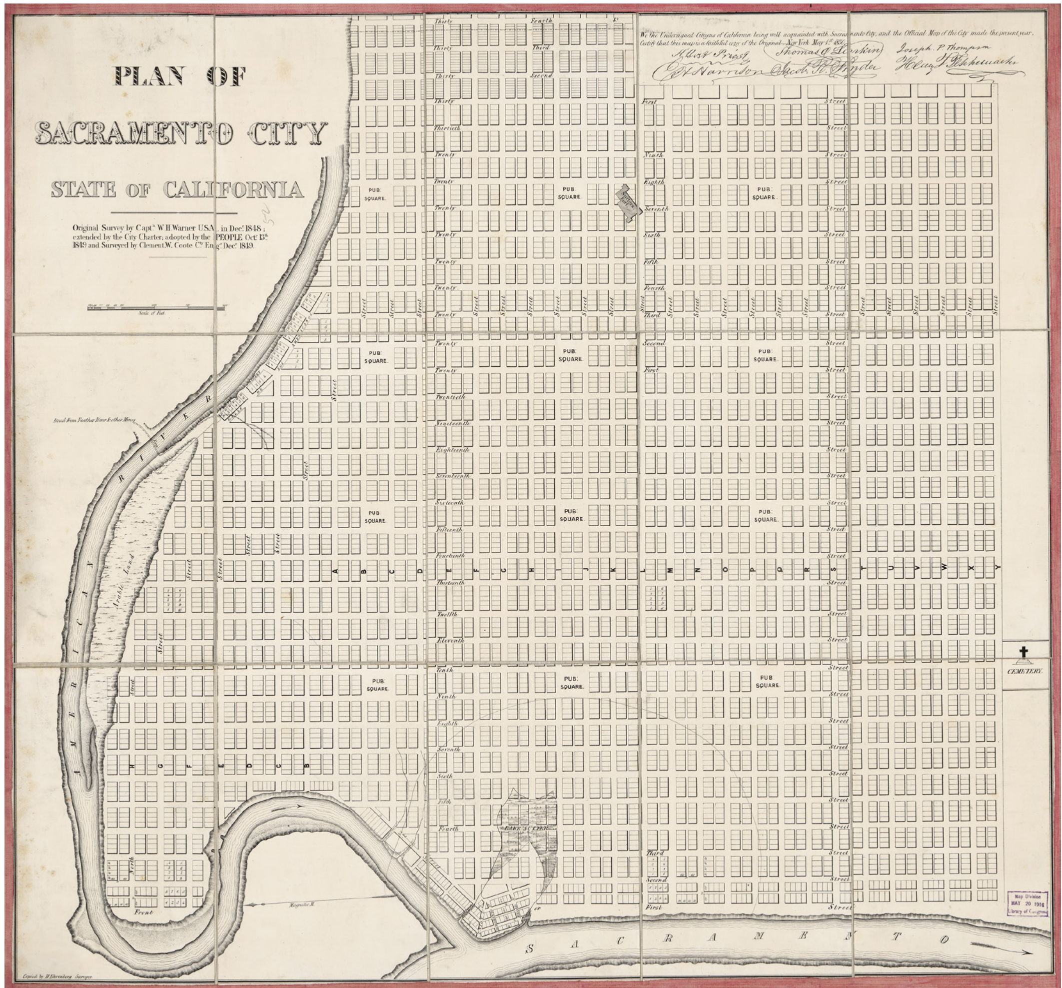

Fig. 1: Frontier townsite property fabric of Sacramento City. Source: Warner, William Horace, Millard Fillmore, W. Endicott & Co. *Plan of Sacramento City, State of California* (New York: W. Endicott & Co, 1848), https://www.loc.gov/item/2018588053/.

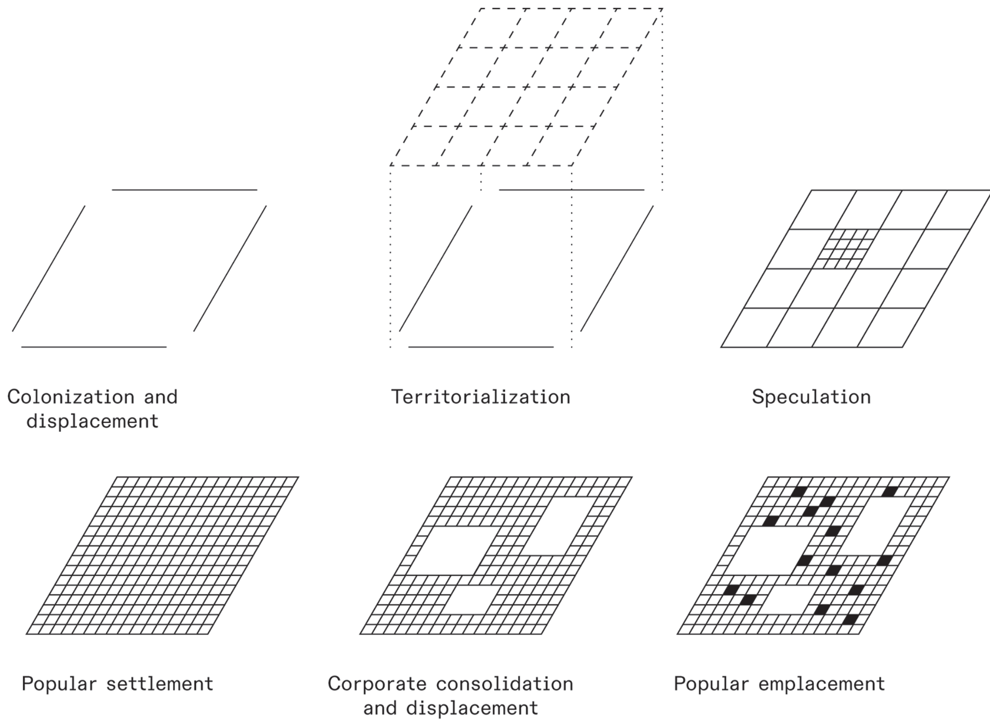

Fig. 2

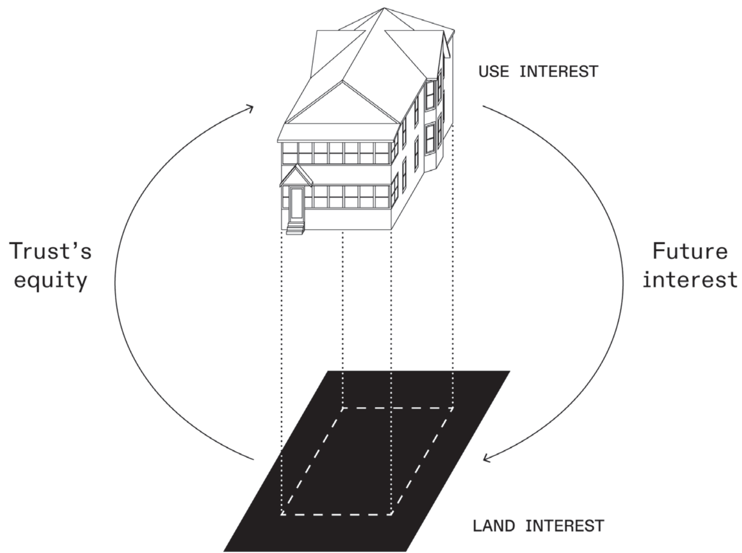

Fig. 3

Fig. 2: The spatial dimensions of popular landholding in the US, 1600s to present. Drawing: authors.

Fig. 3: Community land trust's legal-financial distinction between ground interest and use interest. Drawing: authors.

Scattering in the urban field

The premise of the CLT relies on distinguishing the interest in the land itself from the interest in using the land. The land interest is held by a non-profit organisation which holds the land 'in trust' for a particular community and its future residents, while the plot's use interest is held by a leaseholder, who agrees to a long-term rental and a resale agreement.[10] When the lease is to be transferred to another party, the market appreciation accruing over the duration of the lease is retained by the trust, rather than being captured by the leaseholder. [Fig. 3] Although CLTs are led and managed by residents, not investors, their success depends significantly on these financial terms: how the cost of the land interest is buffered from market appreciation. This allows the use interest to be leased at a low price in perpetuity. However, CLTs have an impact beyond financial terms – they also act spatially.

Beyond financial terms and as explained above, what is most striking from a spatial point of view is that virtually all CLTs are scattered, in other words the properties in the trust are dispersed over an area. [Fig. 4] The reasons for this are various. Unlike commercial developers that have capital to afford long-term and risky strategies, land trusts negotiate the socio-financial dynamics of the property fabric with funding limited by the annual cycle of grant-based financing. Spatial scattering is also a consequence of the diverse methods through which trusts acquire land.

Like any agent in the urban field, CLTs establish their spatial foothold in negotiation with other forces, material and immaterial. The conditions that influence the spatial formations of trusts can be attributed partially to their financial, architectural, temporal, operational, and organisational dynamics. In this respect, CLTs contend with the same spectrum of contingencies that market-oriented real estate actors do. Yet, the resources and methods that characterise CLTs differ from those of established commercial developers. Some of these effectively amount to financial constraints that make property scattering an inevitability, but CLTs also respond strategically to the dispersal of their landholdings. In other words, while resident-led landholding practices exist within the hegemonic capitalist system, they nevertheless employ different kinds of leverage and techniques to achieve their aims. Importantly, trust properties are embedded in the geometric matrix of property lines. Therefore, any analysis of a CLT's establishment, maintenance, and change over time must account for, on one hand, the multitude of conditions that influence the trust and, on the other, the formal characteristics of the property fabric.

In financial terms, CLTs have fewer resources at their disposal than market-oriented land practices, because their financial model is based on different funding sources. In general, in comparison to commercial developers that operate in a financial ecosystem driven by venture capitalists, equity offers, and several forms of private lending, non-profit land trusts typically compose their project financing from a variety of regional public and private sources.[11] Moreover, the funding they ultimately amass rarely approaches the scales of market-driven real estate. This results in a couple of spatial implications. Firstly, due to the limited capital available, new construction is, in most but not all cases, financially out of reach. Consequently, CLTs primarily focus on the acquisition of existing building stock. Secondly, grant funding is typically tied to grantees making a 'demonstrable impact' – a measure that most expediently translates to trusts managing an ever-expanding portfolio of affordable housing units, the use category most favoured by grant-makers.[12] In other words, grant-based financing leads trusts to invest mainly in a high quantity of lower-cost residential properties.

As it concerns morphological and time-based factors, trusts rarely have the opportunity to acquire several adjoining properties, which also contributes to their scattered pattern. CLTs generally serve neighbourhoods where land subdivision has produced a fine pattern of properties. The discrete

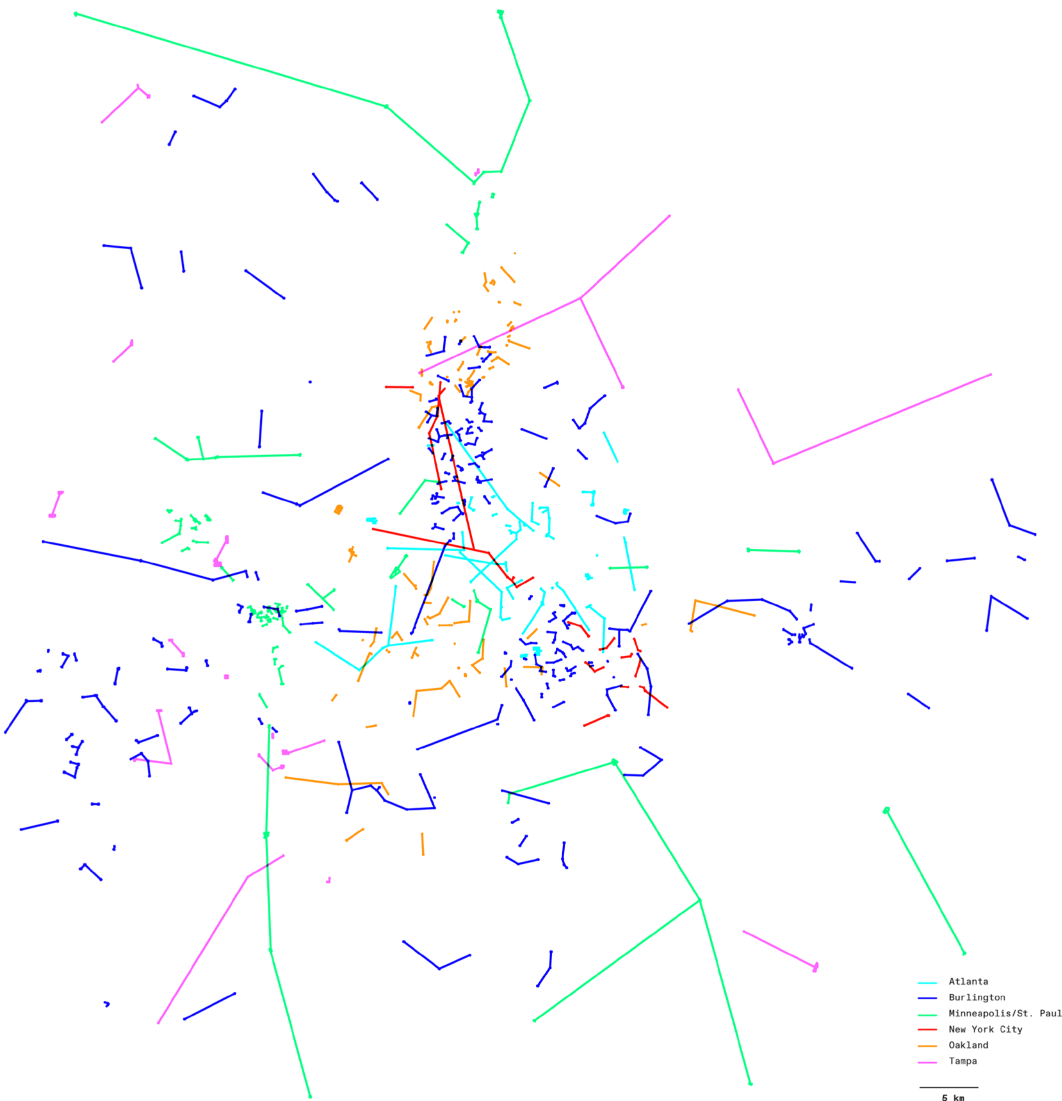

Fig. 4: Superimposed CLT holdings in various US cities. Map: Gabriel Cuéllar, Athar Mufreh, Xiaohan Gu, Clare Coburn.

units that make up this territorial organisation are each held by a different entity, with its own timeline for investment and interests in the land in question. Every property line, in other words, bounds a different set of socio-financial dynamics. These rarely align at any point in time in a way that would allow a CLT, within its funding cycles, to perform a convenient assemblage of multiple parcels. These formal and temporal characteristics diverge markedly from that of commercial developments, the economy of scale of which generally depends on the merger of numerous directly adjacent plots of land, facilitating the efficient construction and management of a single development.[13] Although CLTs do have long-term plans and target certain parcels for acquisition, the risk involved with assemblage strategies makes them largely unfeasible within the grant-financed system.[14] Accordingly, the lands incorporated into trusts are mostly proximate, rather than immediately adjacent to each other.

Interpreting a map of a trust's landholdings, one may easily conclude that the pattern is arbitrary. This appearance is due in great part to the operational context of any given trust. More specifically, it has to do with the means by which the CLT incorporates land into its trust. Unlike commercial development, the outright purchase of land is only one of the many options available to a CLT. In fact, means of acquisition are a key indicator of the level of responsiveness that a trust has in relation to the community it serves. Rondo Community Land Trust in Saint Paul, for example, uses a 'buyer-initiated' building rehabilitation grant programme that provides residents money to renovate their house in exchange for title to the land. This is tied to the fact that in the Rondo neighbourhood, the median building age is over 105 years. Similar acquisition models include those directed to residents facing tax forfeiture, building code violations, or mortgage foreclosure. In such instances, trusts pay off residents' outstanding debts in exchange for the land title. Another important avenue to acquire property is through donations or symbolic one-dollar sales. This may occur when a government jurisdiction aims to support a trust by donating its publicly-held 'surplus property' land in kind. The acquisition of vacant public lands is a priority of the Sacramento Community Land Trust in California, which has a working group dedicated to surveying and prioritising them.[15] Land donations are ideal for many trusts, as they partially relieve the need for loans. The New York Community Land Initiative, which represents the interests of several emerging CLTs, is a campaign to channel public land into community control, using, among other means, right-of-first-refusal contracts.[16] Additionally, public-private partnerships also feature in trust's land acquisition models. Using Developer Agreements, for example, the Flagstaff Community Land Trust in Arizona has obtained lots within new masterplanned subdivisions built to the market specifications of commercial developers.[17] In summary, the spatial landholding patterns of CLTs can be read to a degree as the consequence of their diverse methods of acquisition.

Histories of coordinated scattering

The resident-led land trust, and real property in general, is more than a matter of law, policy and economy. As described above, spatial aspects are always present. For that reason, the territorial patterns of property must be of concern to any spatial practitioners interested in supporting them. Nevertheless, while there is marked interest in alternative models of ownership, designers seem to have been unhurried in taking on property as a 'quintessentially spatial' set of processes.[18] Writing about scattering, 'a fundamental rural spatial problem', UK geographers King and Burton note that property has much to do with space and form, including 'the size of the holding, the number of plots, the size of the plots, the size distribution of the plots, the spatial distribution of plots, and the shape characteristics of plots'.[19] Property lines on a cadastral map, in other words, can be interpreted much in the same way as lines denoting walls on an architectural floor plan. Like buildings, aggregates of property and

their concomitant patterns of use and dynamics of reconfiguration are eminently spatial artifacts that '[encode] the identities of particular societies.'[20]

To more adequately appreciate the spatial nature of these formations of property, this section will highlight antecedents to the property scattering observed today. Scattering is not strictly a recent phenomenon and it has appeared in socio-spatial contexts that do not directly relate to the community land trust. We will draw from two such scenes of scattering, the early modern rural landscape and late twentieth-century urban homesteading in the US, to describe how the intentional dispersal of land was central to identified objectives, rather than being a mere outcome of other determinants. These two reference points will demonstrate how land scattering has figured into design decisions.

Rural societies in particular have organised themselves according to scattered landholdings. This spatial pattern is prevalent across vastly different biomes, social structures, and time periods, and scattering persists in rural areas today. The common thread among these is the concerted and persistent efforts by villagers to prevent individual landholdings becoming undesirably large or unfairly positioned consolidations.[21] The major contributions that legal theorists and geographers have made to this issue is showing that those efforts represent a form of spatial intelligence on the part of coordinated villagers. In some cases, scattering was a means of efficiently spreading risk: by locating one's vineyards, for example, over an area of varied microclimates, solar exposures, and soil types, the burden of a poor season could be lessened and the spread of plant pathogens could be better controlled.[22] In other areas, scattering was used as a device to facilitate 'semi-commoning', where private and common land claims overlap. In the early modern open-field system, for example, individual strips for cultivation were dispersed over several fields, the accumulated surface of which served as collective grazing. By making it difficult for a shepherd to readily recognise which plot might belong to whom (due to the scattering), the benefits (manure fertilisation) and costs (hoof trampling) of raising the herd were equally distributed across the fields.[23] This allowed the villagers to undertake both collective grazing and individual cultivation on the same land.

While the above-mentioned scenes demonstrate certain efficiencies gained by scattering, the land pattern was also used as a measure of equity, or political virtue. For example, dispersing plots over the heterogeneous land of a village ensured that no single farmer was at a permanent disadvantage due to location. Moreover, while farming plots were physically dispersed, they were often socially unified in a way to replicate the proximity of neighbours in the village; it is suggested this was a measure to facilitate cooperation.[24] Another case of scattering occurred on the Atlantic Ocean coast of the US in the late nineteenth century, where seabed properties of both common or individual use were scattered around the Long Island Sound.[25] Allowing both open access lots for commoners and exclusive lots for commercial boats, legislators used spatial interspersing to negotiate countervailing lobbying from those two interest groups. This patchwork of properties ultimately produced a cumulative ecological effect, replenishing the oyster grounds.

These scenes are helpful for understanding the historical association of scattering with commoning. Suggesting that scattering is synonymous with practices of common property (or the other way around) would be overstating, yet there is some degree of correlation between the politics and the pattern. For an interrelated set of scattered properties not to devolve into disassociated fragments or uncooperative assemblages, some social contract and collective choice-making is needed. In the case of the contemporary CLT, this takes the form of the future interest embedded in the landholding scheme and the logic of community control embodied in the trust board.

Scattering is also found in urban contexts, albeit with incomparably different factors and purposes.

The major reference point is the 'scattered-site' public housing schemes that emerged in the late twentieth century and continue today. Unlike CLTs, scattered-site housing does not represent a resident-led landholding practice; its growth coincided with the marketisation of urban homesteading during the 1970s and 80s.[26] Nonetheless, the example is relevant because, as will be shown, scattered-site housing is the closest spatial antecedent to the CLT, responding to the many forces of an urban location and proximity. Additionally, its spatial scattering was deliberate and tied up in political debates at the time.

Scattered-site housing, a policy that called for the spatial dispersal of publicly subsidised housing, can be understood as a reaction against US public housing projects in the late twentieth century. Until roughly the early 1970s, public housing took the well-known shape of concentrated apartment towers 'floating randomly in a sea of green'.[27] Exactly like the real estate developers today, public housing authorities used economies of scale to concentrate new housing units onto vast land parcels, which legally and spatially consolidated the finer grain of individual landholdings. The geographic siting of such projects in neighbourhoods that were deemed ghettos led to a racialised polarisation between the government-planned housing in central city areas and the government-subsidised single-family market housing in suburbs.

The solution to the conspicuousness and stigmatisation of public housing was found in scattering. Proponents of the policy argued that if subsidised housing could be dispersed and made indistinguishable from their surroundings, both racial integration and better urban design could be achieved.[28] So-called ghetto dispersal called for securing a spatially deconcentrated array of subsidised housing units in low-density white-majority neighbourhoods such that Black and Brown residents would 'blend into their surroundings'.[29] This spatial atomisation corresponded well with the federal government's post-1973 marketisation of urban homesteading: rather than providing concentrated, government-built housing, residents were given subsidies with which to find market housing on their own.[30]

While scattered-site housing purported to offer economic efficiencies, it was not without a political dimension. In one of the few surveys of the policy and its outcomes, James Hogan notes that the scattered-site programme may have been aimed at mitigating civil uprising by African-Americans in the late 1960s. Indeed, Hogan's literature review covers several authors that argue that spatial dispersal in the name of racial integration actually amounts to the disintegration of Black and Brown residents' political power.[31] Furthermore, by dispersing public investment across an entire city rather than concentrating it, the neighbourhoods with historically under-resourced infrastructure remain largely unaccounted for. Hogan ultimately concludes that the scattering policy is not a demonstrably better alternative to one that favours concentration.

Paradoxically, the public capital stream that was diverted to market-based scattered-site urban homesteading is the same one that today funds resident-led landholding models like the CLT.[32] Nevertheless, the basis for such funding remains in notion of land as a populist imperative. The privatisation of the land market has meant that other organisations – such as non-profit resident-led land trusts – have had to substitute and redefine the federal government's historic role as a land clearinghouse.[33] Despite scattering having been used as a device to both socially empower and politically disband, CLTs today use the same device to reclaim a spatial agency that meets the aspirations of its residents.

Strategic scattering

Given the degree of contingency to several entrenched conditions described above, trust landholding patterns may appear formless and without intention. Yet, as virtually every CLT in the US consists of at least two properties in its trust, the

spatial relationship between those properties and between those properties and their surroundings is significant. Over time, spatial strategies are complicated by the fact that trusts tend to acquire more and more land as they establish their position in the non-profit financial ecosystem.[34] Despite these factors, land trusts also design, proactively, urban strategies that impact their spatial formations. To introduce some of the range of possibilities, we will explain the spatial strategies of two CLTs, both of which consist of over 150 properties in trust, in the city of Minneapolis-Saint Paul. [Fig. 5]

The first favours an intentional scattering that aims to buffer as much as possible the proximity of lots within the trust. The service area of this CLT covers over 1300 square kilometres, allowing a sparseness of community control that is effectively imperceptible on the ground. Indeed, the trust, the mission statement of which prioritises 'homeownership', intentionally disperses its landholdings so as to reduce the chance that any of its ground leaseholders (beneficiaries of the trust's financial assistance) might be stigmatised by their neighbours. In this case, involvement with the trust is seen as a liability to be mitigated – a measure that results in a median distance of 291 metres between the CLT's properties. The second favours an intentional scattering aimed at a critical mass of landholdings in a given neighbourhood. While the trust operates in various parts of the city, its highest concentration of landholdings is in a neighbourhood covering forty square kilometres, where the median distance between CLT parcels is 145 metres. This comparatively high degree of clustering is aimed at what the CLT refers to as 'neighbourhood revitalisation', which aims to provide financial stability in places facing displacement. It is important to note that in fact, the political ambition behind each differs. In the first case, the trust aims more strictly toward an efficient delivery of individual homeownership, with little to no intended benefit to the conditions of a particular neighbourhood. The second case uses a denser pattern of scattering to influence a geographically-defined area, potentially providing some degree of social resilience to a wider constituency. These two examples demonstrate how a trust's mission, and its orientation to economics and politics, has direct spatial implications. The spatial formation of a resident-led land trust, and the particularities of its scattering, can therefore be linked to its ambitions.

Fig.5 illustrates the spatial implications of two different CLTs in the same city. One focuses on economic integration, which involves distancing the residents to the extent that they are not detectable in the host neighbourhood, to avoid being stigmatised for participating in the trust programme. The other focuses on neighbourhood revitalisation, which demands a tight clustering of lots that aims to financially stabilise a neighbourhood undergoing gentrification. These two examples demonstrate how a trust's mission, and its political orientation, has direct spatial implications.

Coordinated spatial action

The coordinated action involved in property scattering is rooted in a known progressive political benefit gained from strategic dispersion – proposed here as a virtue of proximity. In order to achieve such virtues, trusts coordinate the position, distance, and relation of their properties to the surrounding urban field. When designed and implemented carefully, CLTs can bring proximate parcels of land into a larger scheme of agency and operation. Unlike economies of scale, where the concentration of investment may lead to greater efficiencies and lower costs, virtues of proximity may lead to a variety of different benefits and objectives. Whereas squatters in colonial society were atomised smallholders, CLTs accumulate smallholdings in larger gestures of coordination.

The spatial coordination observed in CLTs in the US draws from three formations: clustering, constellation, and consolidation. [Fig. 6] Clustering refers to a critical mass of scattered lots in a given geographic area; constellations use carefully

scattered lots to interact with a large-scale urban structure; and consolidation deploys directly adjacent trust lots to facilitate activity across property lines. Virtually all of the hundreds of CLTs in the US make use of such formations, and according to the goals and virtues of a proximity that a particular CLT has in mind, it will make use of one or more of them.

While the contribution of CLTs to the provision of affordable housing is documented and appreciated, their spatial agency in a broader urban field, beyond housing as such, remains relatively undocumented. Using the premise of virtues of proximity, the following case studies aim to fill this gap and demonstrate the specific spatial characteristics of this form of populist landholding. The following section shows how these formations are not just contingent realities, but purposeful, strategic designs that organise land in different ways. We will describe case studies for all three patterns and also some design schemes that create virtues of proximity.

Clustering

The English Avenue and Vine City neighbourhoods in Atlanta are positioned along the city's north-south racial divide. [Fig. 7] The area has been subject to multiple plans and city branding projects, which have brought relatively few and questionable benefits to mainly African-American residents. Moreover, during the city's urbanisation, several creeks were buried and built over. Due to their low elevation, several blocks of the neighbourhood are in the floodplain and the houses have deteriorated as a result. The Westside Atlanta Land Trust has intervened here since 2015 by strategically acquiring a cluster of parcels on higher ground. Swapping the land of residents in low-lying areas with new or existing houses nearby, the trust has relocated residents from the floodplain and allowed them to remain in the neighbourhood.[35] The clustering formation operates here by deploying a sufficient quantity of lots in proximity to the residents' current houses but at higher elevation. This is a virtue of proximity in which residents maintain their local social relations. Without involving economies of scale, the floodplain lots might even be used to renaturalise the buried creeks. The CLT mobilises the neighbourhood's resources, instead of waiting for the municipality to implement some governmental response. Accordingly, the coordinated action addresses the floodplain issue while also building a resident-led programme for environmental justice. The trust's mission 'to organize the community's power for self determination and to serve and preserve in-place residents' is therefore implemented by coordinating its landholdings in relation to its environmental, social, and financial context.

City of Lakes Community Land Trust (CLCLT) is a resident-led trust in Minneapolis. Since its founding in the early 2000s, CLCLT's spatial strategy has relied on incorporating property within specific neighbourhood boundaries, namely the two swaths of the city most affected by decades of discriminatory mortgage policies and racial covenants. The conditions in these neighbourhoods have led to a drastic inequity in the rate of homeownership between the city's white population and people of colour. Although CLCLT's scattered lots consist mainly of unremarkable single-family houses, the clustering formation of its properties has had an impact that transcends homeownership and the traditional benefits it carries. A group of researchers has determined through regression analysis that during the economic recession, house values stabilised the more proximate they were to trust land.[36] The trust's landholdings should therefore not be interpreted solely in terms of their provision of affordable housing. As a territorial intervention based on close proximities, the trust provides benefits to its members and neighbours alike. CLCLT thus uses its multiple lots clustered in the area to support the emplacement of existing residents, while producing an impact on land beyond its properties.

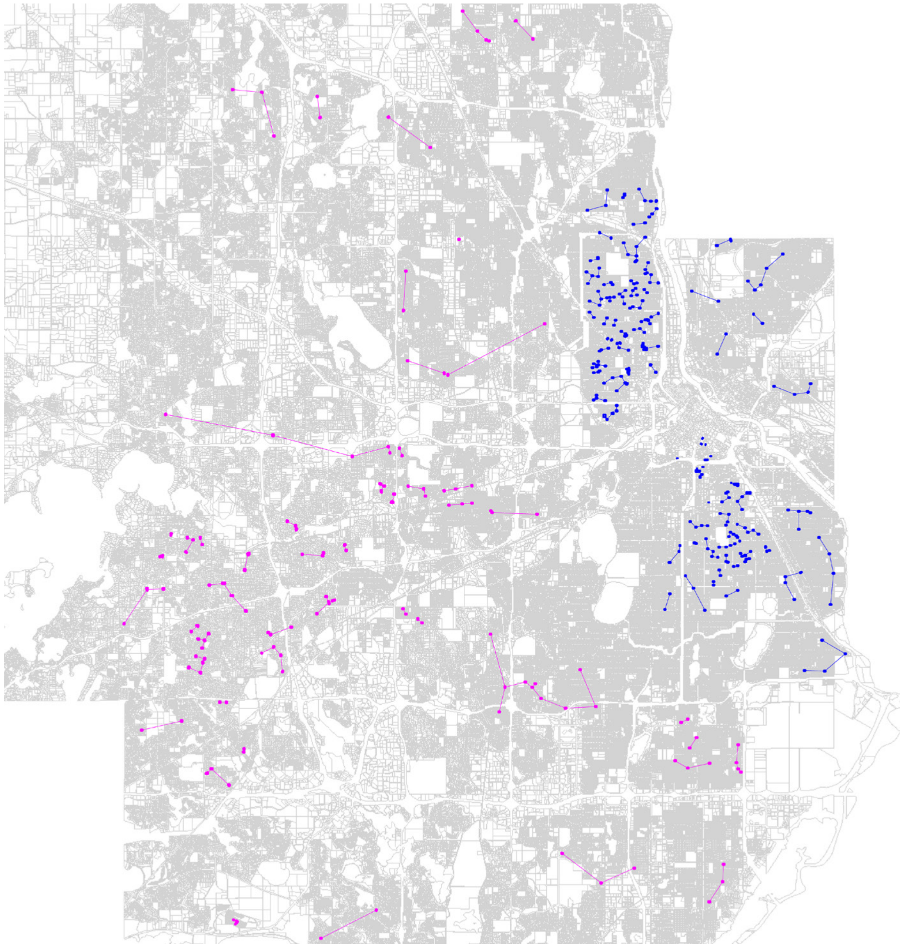

Fig. 5

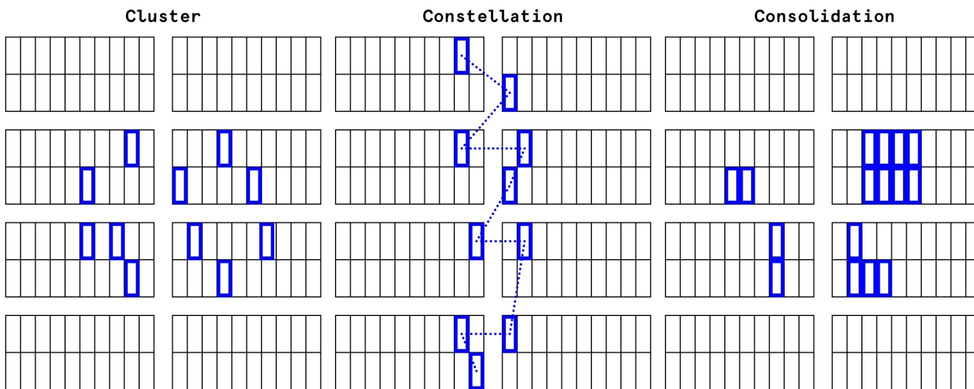

Fig. 6

Fig. 5: Map of two example CLTs in Minneapolis-St. Paul. Map: Gabriel Cuéllar, Athar Mufreh, Xiaohan Gu.

Fig. 6: Three principles of property scattering. Drawing: Gabriel Cuéllar, Athar Mufreh, Clare Coburn.

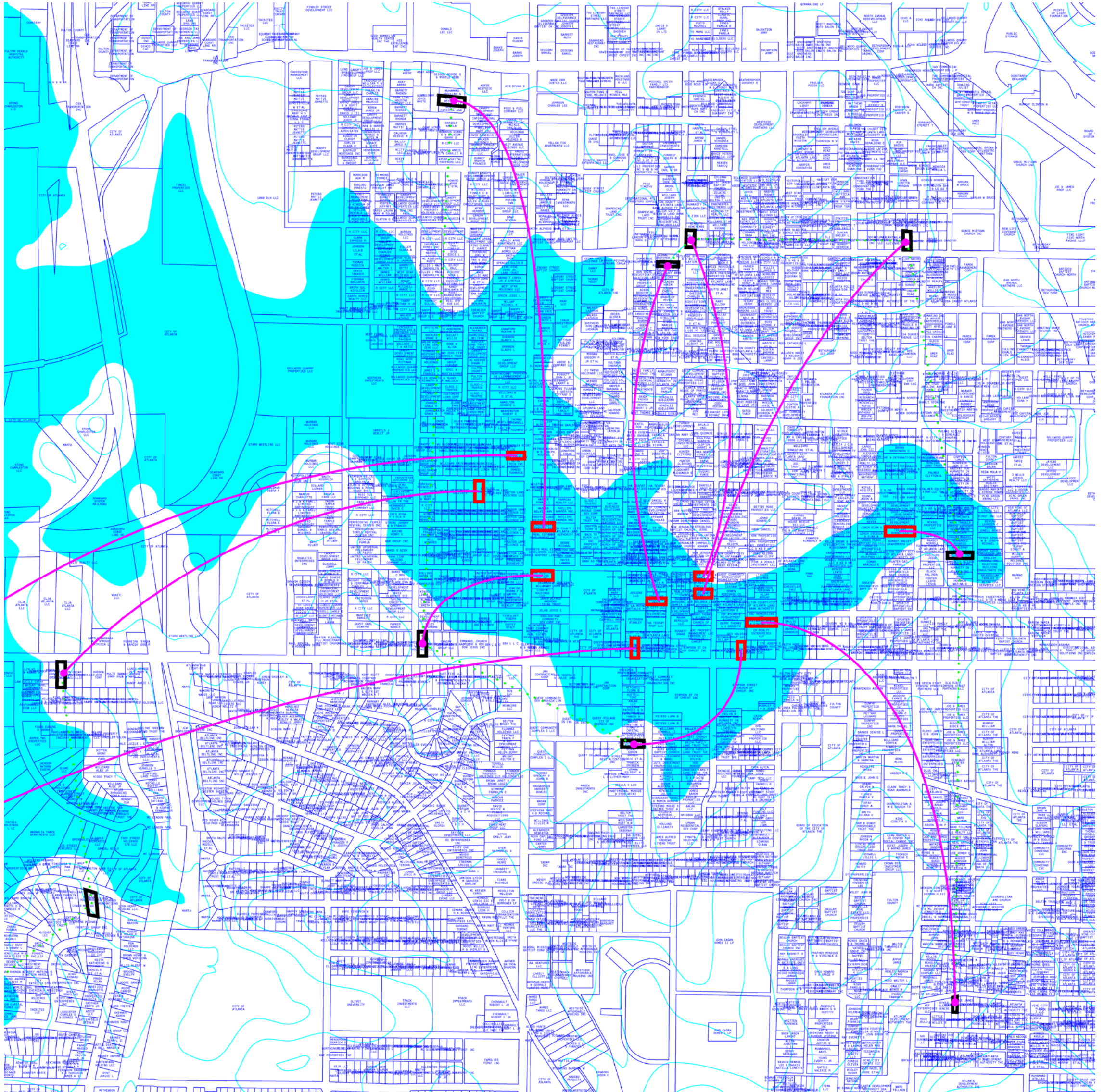

Fig. 7: Westside Atlanta Land Trust's clustering formation. Map: Gabriel Cuéllar, Athar Mufreh, Clare Coburn.

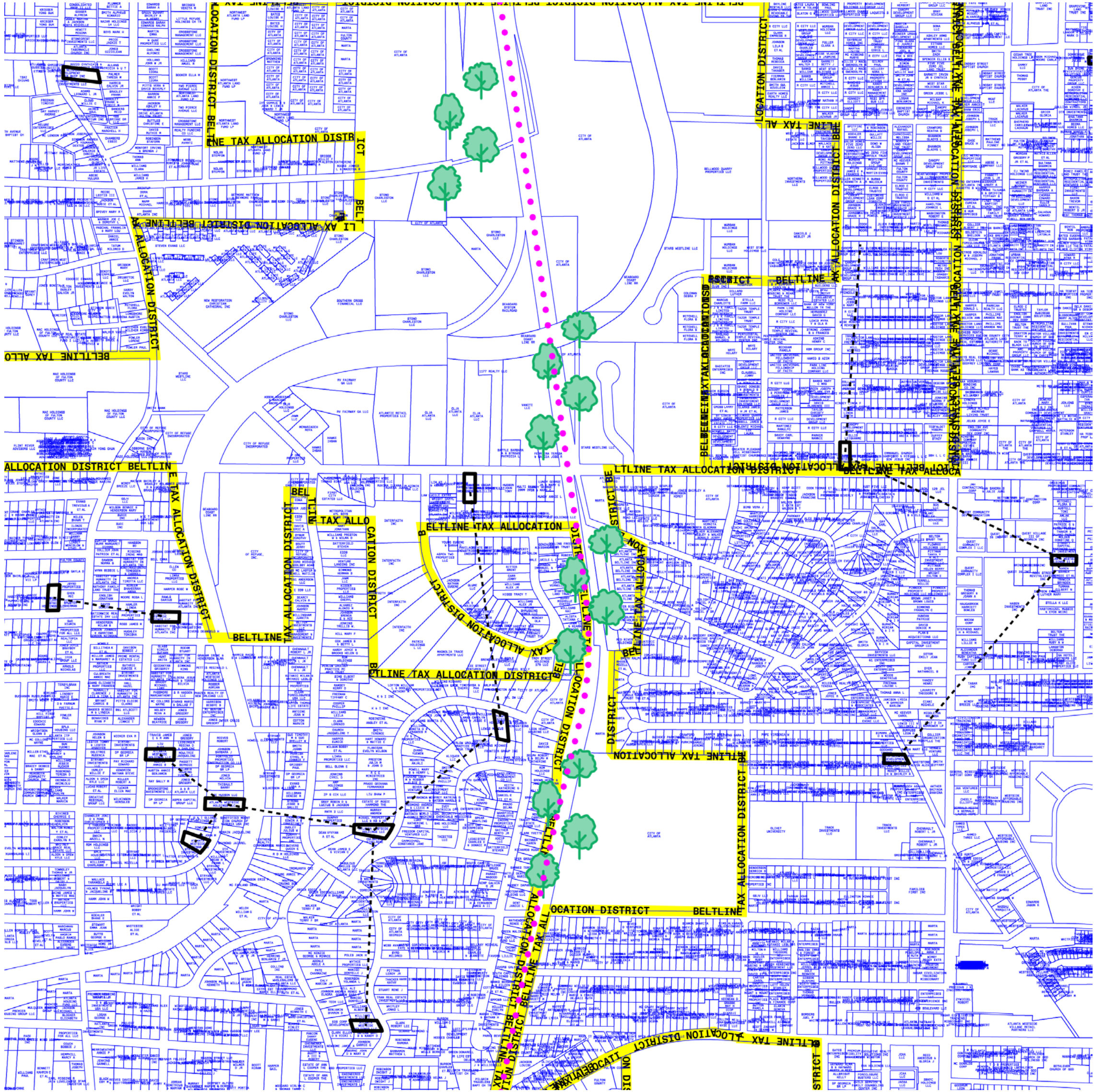

Fig. 8: Atlanta Land Trust’s constellation formation. Map: Gabriel Cuéllar, Athar Mufreh, Clare Coburn.

Constellation

The Atlanta Beltline is a city-wide revitalisation converting railroads into a large-scale recreational, transit, and ecological corridor encircling the city. [Fig. 8] As part of the new linear park passing through the city, the municipality has established a special tax district that encompasses the neighbourhoods along the beltline. Within the district, real estate development is incentivised and new parks are being constructed. As with many sweeping investment projects, the district will inevitably cause a rise in land values and property taxes not only within its boundary but up to a kilometre away from the trail, as adjacency to the new infrastructure becomes more desirable. In response to this unfolding situation, the Atlanta Land Trust (ALT) was formed in 2007 as a measure to mitigate displacement in the fourty-five neighbourhoods included in the district. By strategically obtaining land for the trust near and inside the tax district scattered over 60 km, the CLT's urban design aims to provide its members with long-term stability in the neighbourhoods and access to the new trails and parks. As property taxes and land values increase around the Beltline, a constellation of CLT parcels arranged along the infrastructure ensure that current tenants and landholders can remain despite the new investment.

The Bronx Land Trust in New York City consists of eighteen parcels used for community gardens. Its mission to 'preserve, improve, and promote community managed open spaces for the benefit of all' contends with the fact that the borough has historically been under-resourced in terms of park funding.[37] While the density of parks per capita is not substantially different from other parts of the city, Bronx parks are not maintained to the same level as those supported by private organisations, such as the Central Park Conservancy.[38] In a neighbourhood shown to suffer disproportionately from air pollution, the trust uses its land for gardens to support residents with social, nutritional, and recreational opportunities. Given the high cost of land in the city and the inability to purchase additional lots, the trust uses its relatively small footprint to its advantage. While there is significant distance between each of the trust's garden lots, altogether they are constellated in the areas with highest population density in the district. This particular formation uses a small total surface area strategically deployed in order to reach as many residents as possible. In this way, the trust is arranged according to the large-scale geography of population density in order to partially offset the prevailing environmental inequities in the society.

Consolidation

Bright Community Land Trust (BCLT) consists of over 170 parcels dispersed over the metropolitan region of Tampa. [Fig. 9] The trust focuses on affordable housing and offers both rental units and single-family houses for purchase. When viewed at the scale of the city, the trust properties are scattered in clusters, but within those many are closely situated and even directly adjacent lots. In these cases, an economy of scale exists, but there is also a virtue of proximity, as several of its tightly organised landholdings are organised around community amenities. For example, one consolidated cluster of fifty-five parcels is organised around a YMCA community centre that offers recreational and social programmes to the neighbourhood. In this case, the position of the holdings creates a compact spatial relationship in which the trust benefits from the amenity while extending its patronage to the community centre. Unlike many purpose-built residential projects that include amenities within the building, BCLT facilitates the interaction of its members with community-oriented entities beyond, but in close proximity to its trust land. By concentrating its resources in this formation, more residents have access to the amenity.

In summary, the spatial formation of the community land trust can be understood as a balance between contingency (with finance, morphology, time, operations and so on) and an intentional design strategy. These cases show that while resident-led

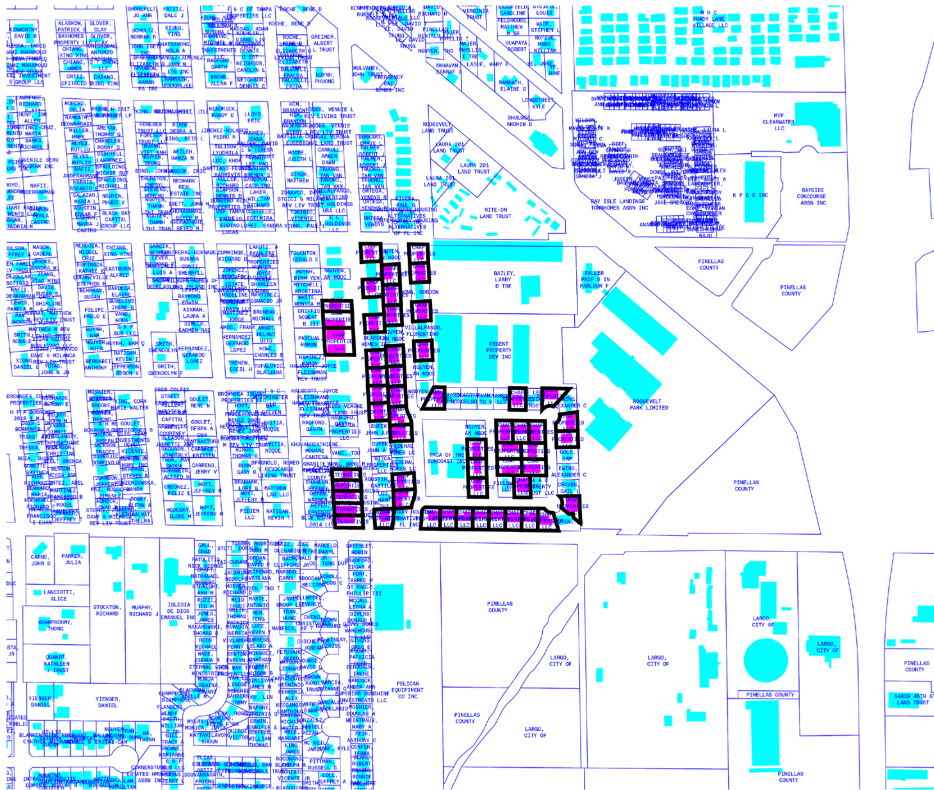

Fig. 9

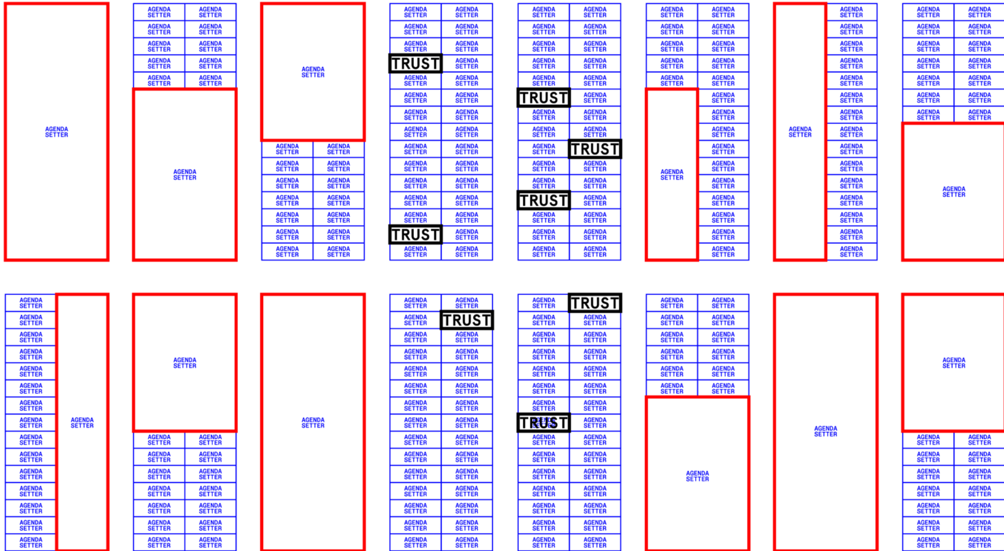

Fig. 10

Fig. 9: Bright Community Land Trust 's consolidation formation. Map: Gabriel Cuéllar, Athar Mufreh, Clare Coburn.

Fig. 10: Designing virtues of proximity: popular checkerboarding. Drawing: Gabriel Cuéllar, Athar Mufreh, Clare Coburn.

landholdings deal with many of the same constraints and opportunities as market-led development schemes, there is a consistent ambition that guides their design strategy, either intentional or unintentional. As shown above, these may range from environmental justice to widespread financial stabilisation, equitable park provision, and access to public transit infrastructure. These of course are only a selection from hundreds of CLTs across the US, all of which must consider how their spatial formation can support their mission statement.

Designing virtues of proximity

Observing how these CLTs deploy scattering in intelligent ways that contend with the dynamics of urban fields, architects ought to be able to support such populist landholding models through their spatial techniques and ways of thinking. More specifically, however, this task might not involve simply designing or renovating a trust's buildings, but to contribute to the design of scattered property formations. To that end, the following section speculates on designs for each of the identified formations employing this kind of coordinated spatial action.

In US cities, commercial developers buy out several adjacent properties and merge them, creating larger parcels for bigger developments. [Fig. 10] This provides higher density, but it often contributes to the displacement of existing residents. Could a CLT coordinate its landholdings in a way to control real estate projects? CLT properties cannot be sold and their use is controlled by a community board. Using a clustered, checkerboard pattern in blocks that are slated for redevelopment, CLTs could disrupt commercial real estate patterns. Not able to achieve an economy of scale with land mergers, real estate developers would go elsewhere. The CLT might thus contribute to preserving the neighbourhood.

Many communities of colour in US cities contend with food insecurity due to the lack of supermarkets and space for agriculture. [Fig. 11] Could a CLT help resolve this conflict by coordinating property for urban agriculture? Farmers need an economy of scale, but in a city, large plots of land are hard to find. A CLT could assemble partial interests into a larger interconnected surface. This would provide urban farmers the economy of scale they need. Landholders who dedicate a portion of their parcel directly adjacent to where another landholder has done the same will receive a share of the harvest. As the land trust interests consolidate multiple yards on a single block, everyone gets a bonus.

The majority of land development in the US happens at the outer fringes of cities. [Fig. 12] In such areas, developers buy agricultural land and subdivide it into residential properties, extending the harmful environmental footprint of suburbs. How might trust land position itself in this frontier zone to suspend urbanisation? Organising themselves as a constellation of land interests following the peripheral edge of the urban frontier, CLTs could cooperate to acquire agricultural land and limit further development. As the availability of extension land decreases, outlying habitats are maintained and development might be refocused to existing urban areas, which could be densified for the benefit of local communities.

Conclusion

Virtues of proximity is a design premise that focuses on what traditional design tools tend to overlook. Masterplans and individual landmarks, the traditional architectural tools, do not account for contingencies and dynamic changes in an urban field. An urban playbook based on potential virtues of proximity, however, merges contingency and strategy while taking advantage of spatial intelligence. This approach reflects the conceptual ideas behind Keller Easterling's terms 'medium design' and 'infrastructure space.' The matrix of underlying properties and the relationships it mediates are the subject of design here, shifting the focus from built structures to the infrastructures that condition any given urban context. Furthermore, in contrast to masterplans that perform largely as fixed, top-down instruments, the premise of virtues of proximity offers populist civil

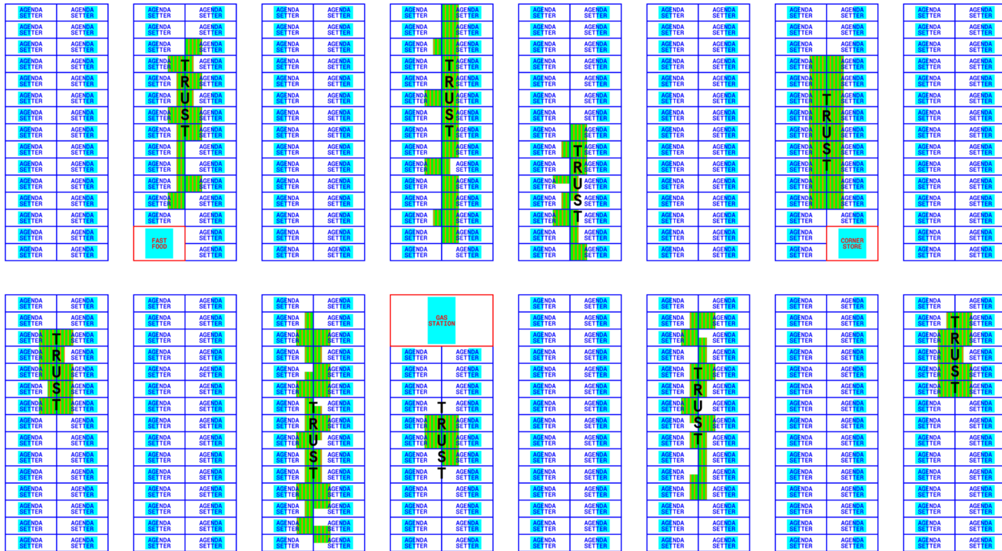

Fig. 11

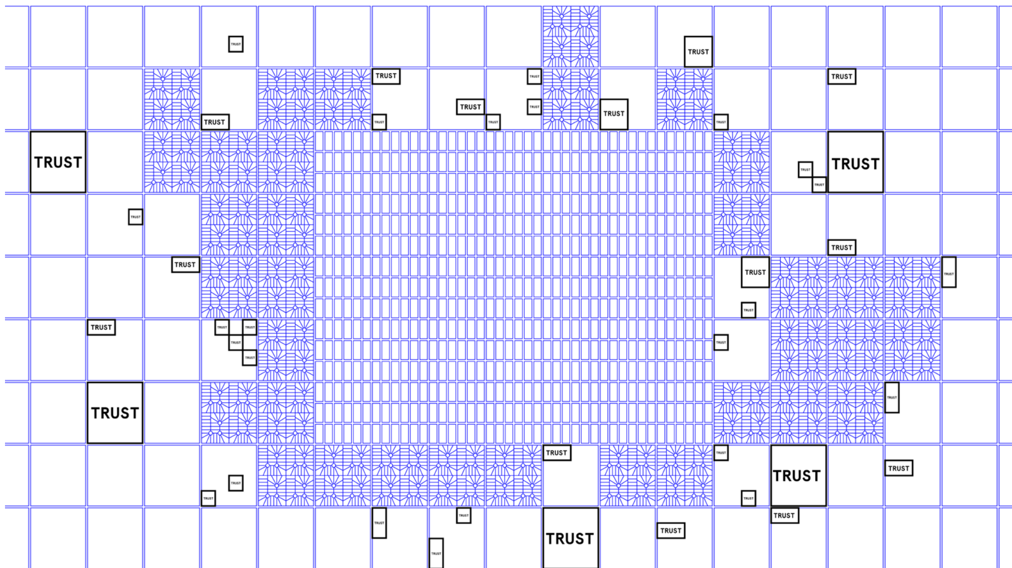

Fig. 12

Fig. 11: Designing virtues of proximity: yard consolidation. Drawing: Gabriel Cuéllar, Athar Mufreh, Clare Coburn.

Fig. 12: Designing virtues of proximity: habitats on the urban periphery. Drawing: Gabriel Cuéllar, Athar Mufreh, Clare Coburn.

society organisations, such as CLTs, an opportunity to disrupt the framework of liberal, market-oriented landholding in the US.

The role for spatial practitioners in the context of a society organised around land populism cannot be understated. However, the spatial dimensions of CLTs cannot be apprehended strictly from an analysis or design of their respective buildings. The formation and support of a resident-led trust also requires a design intelligence that applies to the urban field in which economies of scale are rarely achievable. As such, a variety of forces and actors must be understood and negotiated with. Moreover, landholding formations, vis-à-vis their multi-dimensional contexts, must themselves be understood as a design project, much in the same way that the land trusts described above have done. To this end, we offer our articulation of scattered clustering, constellation, and consolidation as formal spatial concepts that may contribute to the generation of virtues of proximity. Lastly, for designers interested in supporting such programmes, the inherently spatial facets of property are essential. Beyond property's relationship with law, policy, and economy, spatial practitioners have much to contribute by engaging with its territorial and material underpinnings.

In the US, the marketisation and racialisation of land have motivated civil society to reform prevailing landholding models. The emergence of CLTs, and the populist political movements before them, are evidence of the crucial role that land plays in self-determination and political identification. Nevertheless, these forms of landholding, and their accordant spatial manifestations, present their own challenges and risks.

The case of scattered-site housing shows that spatial dispersal can lead to justice just as much as injustice. While the scattered-site model continues to dominate public housing strategy, geographic deconcentration is a complex task, the results of which are difficult to ascertain. Similarly, despite the CLT model's leftist orientation, the populist imperative for landholding – already established in the 1600s – is generally left untouched. As many community land trusts follow the spatial template of scattered-site housing, it is important to consider how the complications of 'ghetto dispersal' and an allegiance to US land populism might burden this model as well. Scholars have noted that although CLTs purport to create and reinforce 'community', often there is little sense of it among their members.[39] If there is a possibility of more radical politics within the CLT model, it may require reconstructing the underlying cultural values and financing schemes currently relied upon.

Moreover, as the great majority of CLT lots in the US are single-family houses, the role of building design continues to have significance. As long as the unconditional belief in 'homeownership' and its social, environmental and financial implications remains unquestioned, CLTs will likely continue to proliferate this type of landholding. Therefore, in addition to the aspects of urban formation mentioned above, the refashioning of the single-family neighbourhood, a product of early property subdivision schemes, as a site of populist collective landholding is a vital task.

Lastly, there is the question of whether resident-led landholding could take on a role of 'development' so as to have a more significant impact on the dynamics and projects occurring in the urban field. A first step here would be to study how CLTs understand and act upon their perceived agency, and how financial dimensions relate to social, cultural and spatial aspects. If there is any doubt as to the specifically spatial agency of CLTs, we hope this study reveals some potential.

The dispersal of landholdings has long figured in territorial designs and these patterns are artifacts of spatial orders rooted in coordinated action and cooperation. Scattering represents the efforts of civil society organisations to organise and predispose environments according to some desired notion of a spatially just coexistence. Through this premise, spatial practitioners have a means of remaking territories to those measures.

Notes

1. In order to emphasise that actions and practices are associated with real property, through this paper we use 'landholding' instead of 'landownership', the more term more conventionally employed within architectural discourse.
2. Edgar T. Thompson, *The Plantation* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2012), 43–48.
3. Ibid.
4. Roy M. Robbins, *Our Landed Heritage: The Public Domain, 1776–1936* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 18–27.
5. Ibid., 5.
6. See item six in the Ocala Demands, History Resources at Mott Community College, 'The Ocala Demands 1890', accessible at https://history.mcc.edu/wordpress/history/2014/03/06/the-ocala-demands-1890/ (March 2014).
7. Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in* America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 316–17.
8. Robbins, *Our Landed Heritage,* 91; Paul Gates, *History of Public Land Law Development* (Washington: US Government Print Office, 1968), 388.
9. Robbins, *Our Landed Heritage,* vii.
10. Karen Gray**, '**Community Land Trusts in the United States', *Journal of Community Practice* (2008): 65–78.
11. For example, One Roof CLT in Duluth, Minnesota, which has nearly three hundred lots in its trust, lists over forty funding sources on its website: https://www.1roofhousing.org/about-us/funders-partners/, accessed 28 October 2020.
12. On CLT funding, see Olivia R. Williams, 'The Problem with Community Land Trusts', *Jacobin*, 7 July 2019, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/07/community-land-trusts-clts-problems.
13. One57, a condo tower in Manhattan, is the result of over fifteen years of strategic development rights assemblage; see Robin Finn, 'The Great Air Race', *The New York Times*, 22 February 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/24/realestate/the-great-race-for-manhattan-air-rights.html. Hagan N. Dick also writes: 'In order to assemble the land and to obtain the necessary entitlements for the proposed development to become a reality, it is necessary to structure a strategy to obtain control of the various parcels of land and to successfully entitle them while maintaining an acceptable level of risk for the Developer and involved third parties'. Dick, *Land Assemblage and Multifamily Development*, MS Real Estate thesis, Johns Hopkins University (2012), 21.
14. See Emily Thaden, Kim Graziani and Annie Stup, 'Land Banks and Community Land Trusts: Not Synonyms or Antonyms. Complements', *Shelterforce*, 9 November 2016, https://shelterforce.org/2016/11/09/land-banks-community-land-trusts-not-synonyms-or-antonyms-complements/, where the authors write: 'Just like other nonprofit developers, CLTs must be as efficient as possible with new construction or rehabilitation in order to make good use of public funds, keep properties affordable, and mitigate their risks.'
15. Sacramento Community Land Trust homepage: http://www.sacclt.org/.
16. New York Community Land Initiative homepage: https://nyccli.org/statement/.
17. City of Flagstaff, Arizona, City Council Report, 6 May 2020, https://www.flagstaff.az.gov/DocumentCenter/View/63706/CCR--Community-Land-Trust-Program.
18. Russell King and Steve Burton, 'Land Fragmentation: Notes on a Fundamental Rural Spatial Problem', *Progress in Human Geography* 6, no. 4 (December 1982) 475–94.
19. Ibid., 476.
20. Edward Price, *Dividing the Land: Early American Beginnings of Our Private Property Mosaic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 3–25.
21. Henry Smith, 'Semicommon Property Rights and Scattering in the Open Fields', *The Journal of Legal Studies* 29, no. 1 (January 2000): 131–69.
22. John Quiggin, 'Scattered landholdings in common property systems', *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 9 (1988): 191.
23. Smith, 146.
24. Quiggin, 'Scattered landholdings', 192, 200.
25. Zachary C.M. Arnold, 'Against the Tide: Connecticut Oystering, Hybrid Property, and the Survival of the

Commons', *The Yale Law Journal* 124, no. 4 (Jan-Feb 2015): 1206–50. Arnold's argument against strictly economic interpretations of property has been relevant in the development of this article.

26. In fact, political theorists have noted the 'conceptual resemblance' of right populism with neoliberalisation; see Stephan Pühringer and Walter O. Ötsch, 'Neoliberalism and Right-Wing Populism: Conceptual Analogies', *Forum for Social Economics* 47, no. 2 (2018): 193–203.
27. Richard Plunz quoted in James Hogan, *Scattered-Site Housing: Characteristics and Consequences* (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1996), https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pubasst/scatter.html.
28. Ibid., 16–21.
29. McEntire quoted in Hogan, *Scattered-Site Housing,* 6.
30. Joseph Fried, 'Nixon's Housing Policy', *New York Times*, 29 September 1973.
31. Ibid. 17–20, especially the accounts from Labrie and Piven and Cloward.
32. See Michael S. LoStocco, 'How Have Community Land Trusts Used the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit? Case Studies from Athens, GA and Park City, UT', Masters thesis? University of New Orleans (2013).
33. Chapter 5 of Alexander von Hoffmann, 'To Preserve Affordable Housing in the United States: A Policy History', *Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University* (2016).
34. Williams, 'The Problem with Community Land Trusts'.
35. Amber J. Boll-Bosse and Katherine B. Hankins, "These Maps Talk for Us": Participatory Action Mapping as Civic Engagement Practice', *The Professional Geographer* 70, no. 2 (2018): 319–26.
36. Katharine Nelson et al., 'The Commodity Effects of Decommodification: Community Land Trusts and Neighborhood Property Values', *Housing Policy Debate* 30, no. 5 (2020): 823–42.
37. Bronx Land Trust homepage: https://www.bronxlandtrust.org/about-us.
38. Samantha Stokes, 'Where the Grass is Greener', *The Bronx Ink*, 2018, http://bronxink.org/parks-2018/.
39. Williams, 'The Problem with Community land Trusts'; Richard Kruger et al., 'The Production of Community in Community Land Trusts', *City & Community* 19, no. 3 (September 2020): 638–55; James DeFilippis et al., 'On the Transformative Potential of Community Land Trusts in the United States', *Antipode* 51, no. 3 (2019): 795–817.

Biography

Athar Mufreh is a designer, urbanist, and educator. She received a Bachelor of Architecture from Birzeit University and Master of Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable Design from Stuttgart University and Ain Shams University. Athar worked as a designer and researcher at the Storefront for Art and Architecture, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency, and the Bethlehem Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation. In 2018–19 she was a lecturer at the University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning. At present, Athar is a lecturer at the University of Minnesota School of Architecture. She is focused on multi-generational housing, kinship relations mediated by ecology, and emerging modes of citizenship.

Gabriel Andrés Cuéllar is an architect and educator. Gabriel completed studies in architecture and urban design at Carnegie-Mellon University and the Berlage Institute. Prior to establishing Cadaster, a design practice with Athar Mufreh, he worked in the offices of Gramazio & Kohler, Philippe Rahm, Anne Holtrop, CDR Studio and Enter Architecture. Gabriel has contributed to exhibitions in the Canadian Centre for Architecture, the Netherlands Architecture Institute, the House of World Cultures, The New School Parsons School of Design, and the University of Michigan. Gabriel is a member of NOMA, The Architecture Lobby, and AIA. He was the Oberdick Fellow at the University of Michigan in 2018–19 and is currently Assistant Professor-in-Practice at the University of Minnesota School of Architecture. His interests include the spatial implications of real property and architecture's role in mediating claims to land.

Call and Response: Popular Media and Architecture in London's Historic Housing Crises

Jesse Honsa

The term 'housing crisis' is rarely defined, but it is generally understood as a moment when affordable housing becomes scarce. Such imbalances are persistent in cities within a free market economy, pushing land and home prices up as demand outweighs supply. They have become of increasing concern in both the developed and developing world, and many experts agree that a major component of any solution must be to build our way out of scarcity.[1] But this problem-solving mindset, founded on the classical economic theory of supply and demand, betrays the productive nature of crises. Crises are born out of popular, qualitative sentiments and can raise questions about the architecture of housing itself. This article considers historic and contemporary housing episodes in London, a city in which crises have featured prominently in the production of the built environment since the nineteenth century. It reveals how architecture did not only solve problems but contributed to the discursive formation of questions.

According to the German historian Reinhart Koselleck, the term 'crisis' lacks precision. Koselleck traces a genealogy of the word from its origins in the Greek *krino* – 'to separate, judge, decide' – which developed significance in the three professional realms of law, theology and medicine. A crisis could be the judgement that marked the end of a legal case, the apocalyptic last judgement for humanity or the turning point in a disease when the patient either recovers or perishes. The medical term was carried into the modern era through a metaphor for political strife infecting the body politic. Later in the nineteenth century the same metaphor was introduced in relation to market busts: like the congested arteries of a sick patient, the imbalances of supply and demand caused shocks to the system.[2] As this article will reveal, these various definitions continue to emerge in reference to housing crises: from the Victorian evocation of a medical and moral apocalypse, to an early-twentieth-century market imbalance that cascaded into a political conflict, to the framing of post-war reconstruction as an historic moment of opportunity. This is in contrast to how the term is used today: not as Koselleck's 'horizon of expectation' that brings decision and relief, but as a chronic condition.

Koselleck also discusses how crisis is a fuel for populism: since the enlightenment, it has been a tool for special interest groups to challenge absolute power. Conceptual bifurcations – society from state and moral critique from political authority – created space for popular sentiment to question business as usual. Crisis is a subjective construction, invoked to impose a choice between right and wrong. [Fig.1] Koselleck's concern is that this modern tendency amounts to a 'pathogenesis' formed through constant revolution, in which popular morality interferes in the accountable management of the state.[3] But as we will see, there has been a shift in who presents this ultimatum and who is called to answer it. Across a 200-year arc, housing crises have been reformulated, from a qualitative problem that architects helped to frame in the Victorian Era, to a quantitative problem framed predominantly by economists today. While historical crises were

collectively constructed through popular sentiments, the debate today rests on an experts' understanding of supply and demand, largely devoid of appeals to the senses.

Crisis is a way of reading history through the moments that bookend epochs.[4] It plays an essential role in Thomas Kuhn's famous theory of paradigm shifts, whereby innovation occurs through the creative destruction of the old, not through linear progress.[5] Even the commonplace economic crisis – an eddy caused by the inherent imbalances needed to create surplus value in a capitalistic economy – can cascade into political and cultural transformations. As revealed by Jürgen Habermas, the role of the state, when charged with the thankless responsibility to manage anarchic capitalism, is called into question when crises occur. Attempts to re-establish institutional legitimacy entail reforms to existing systems.[6] Housing crises do not just catalyse a numeric upswing in house production but leverage change to building practices, domestic values and architecture.

This article therefore looks at several critical episodes when housing was transformed through the blood and fire of conflict. While these episodes are well-known in British architectural history, I look at them through the lens of criticism: considering who challenged the status quo, how dilemmas were framed and how the architecture of housing mutated as a result. I look primarily at popular media, considering the contributions of architects and other figures, and question the comparatively passive role that architects have taken today.

Victorian overcrowding: the medical and moral apocalypse

While the Victorians were familiar with economic booms and busts, few attempted to connect the irrationality of the market to the housing conditions they witnessed.[7] Rather, the crisis was framed through the sights and smells produced by housing shortages. There was a proliferation of new commercial enterprises to accommodate workers, from 'rookeries' – maze-like passages that filled the interiors of deep, dense urban blocks – to 'lodging houses' that filled old abandoned mansions with seas of mattresses. The cause was rapid migration which created an insatiable demand for housing: by 1866 there were 680 000 casually employed labourers in central London who were essentially 'on call' at any time, placing pressure on centrally located lodging.[8] But it was the effects, rather than the root causes, that were of great interest to architects and other reformers.

Friedrich Engels noted that the poor had perhaps always lived in dire straits,[9] but in the second half of the nineteenth century, special interest groups began to take notice of the unwholesome state of the poor. One motivation was epidemic: cholera outbreaks in 1849 and 1853 and waves of typhus plagued the city. Diseases that were perceived to spread in the congested, poorly ventilated dwellings of the poor touched the lives of the better off as well.[10] Another risk was political: the ruling class feared that the 1848 revolutions that beset the continent could spread to Britain, and saw the terra incognita of London slums as breeding grounds for radical dissent.[11] Architect and editor George Godwin claimed that 'if there were no courts and blind alleys there would be less immorality and physical suffering', linking urban morphology to 'evil habits'.[12] Finally, an emerging evangelical morality could not accept the ways that strangers mingled in such intimate quarters, as multiple families often shared houses with 'flesh pressed against flesh', in the words of Robin Evans.[13] What epidemiologists today call 'social bubbles' had a deeper moral dimension.

This newfound popular concern was encouraged by a new form of media: illustrated periodicals such as the *Illustrated London News, Punch* and *The Builder*, which all emerged in the 1840s and gave its middle-class readership an elevated consciousness of the urban affairs surrounding them.[14] Columns reporting on London slums often stood side by side with exotic accounts of British colonies,

Fig. 1: A nineteenth-century understanding of crisis. Source: *Punch Magazine*, 16 May 1868

sensationalising conditions and giving readers an agency to judge. Popular media was the maker of crisis in the 1850s, giving different professionals and special interest groups a space to criticize the laissez-faire processes of urban development. Medical professionals such as Hector Gavin scientifically plotted out sanitary arrangements and the spread of disease. Preachers like Thomas Beames illustrated the immoral conditions of the poor, in a plea for action. Reporters such as Henry Mayhew sensationalised the lives of those living in slums, while Godwin's periodical *The Builder* focused on the relation with the built environment. Charles Dickens illustrated conditions through fictional novels as well as editorial commentary. The explosion in interest even led to new enterprises in 'slum tourism' as the rich wanted to see first-hand what they had read about.[15]

In both their illustrious descriptions and supplementary graphics, this brand of literature attempted to capture the chaos and desperation of slums through accumulating filth, soot-covered walls, piles of bodies and the ubiquity of rats – all of which became recurring symbols of plague in the popular press.[16] [Fig. 2, 3] Far from objectively describing places or events, metaphorical imagery evoked the medical and moral connotations of crisis, indiscriminately mixing physical and spiritual 'evils'.[17]

With all the changes occurring in the Victorian city, references to the apocalypse were ever-present in literature. For optimists, technological development as exhibited in the Crystal Palace could contribute to a 'New Jerusalem', a holy city for a new age. For pessimists, the 'brick and mortar deserts' of urbanisation and environmental disasters recalled a collapsing Babylon.[18] Father Beames frequently conjured biblical imagery in speaking of London's rookeries as a 'vast Babel or Babylon',19 or the 'city of God's wrath' that would face its end if it did not restore its morality.20 The pious medical officer William Rendle exclaimed, 'our religion and our social institutions are on trial in this matter.'[21] Though the term 'housing crisis' was rarely used, the issue was frequently put in eschatological terms that recalled the Last Judgement, the moment where the city would be saved or be damned.

When the word 'crisis' was actually invoked, it was as a premonition. Speaking of overcrowding, Lord Ashley (later crowned Lord Shaftesbury, the pre-eminent evangelical housing crusader) exclaimed in a letter to *The Times*: 'the change which is gradually taking place in London is rapidly bringing matters to a crisis.'[22] This matched how the term was used in politics, denoting an oncoming moment of tribunal decision between two opposing viewpoints – in this case between state intervention or urban decline.

Responses to crisis put this concern for hygiene and morality in architectural terms. But within the architectural discipline there was still some division of labour, between those posing questions and those answering them: Godwin was heavily engaged in documenting conditions and lobbying for new housing standards, while the preeminent housing architect Henry Roberts limited his work to designing solutions to the problems of overcrowding. His treatise *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes* defers to the arguments by other reformers, before quickly moving to his designs: demarcating social bubbles, articulating spatial relationships, delineating circulatory networks and devising the standards for ventilation and daylighting.[23] An obsession with such concerns, born out of this corporeal conflict, became the basis for modern architecture in the twentieth century.[24]

Interwar shortages: overcoming 'business as usual'

After World War One, the term 'housing crisis' became widely accepted and understood as a form of market failure, but it was woven into a political critique that led to new architectural standards. During the war, the state had redirected industry towards munitions production, essentially freezing the normal processes of housing construction and maintenance for a five-year period. There was a halt

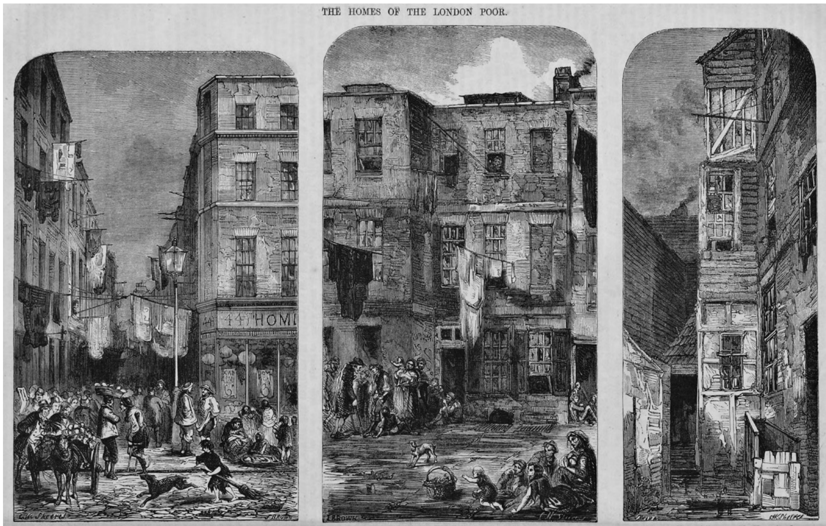

Fig. 2

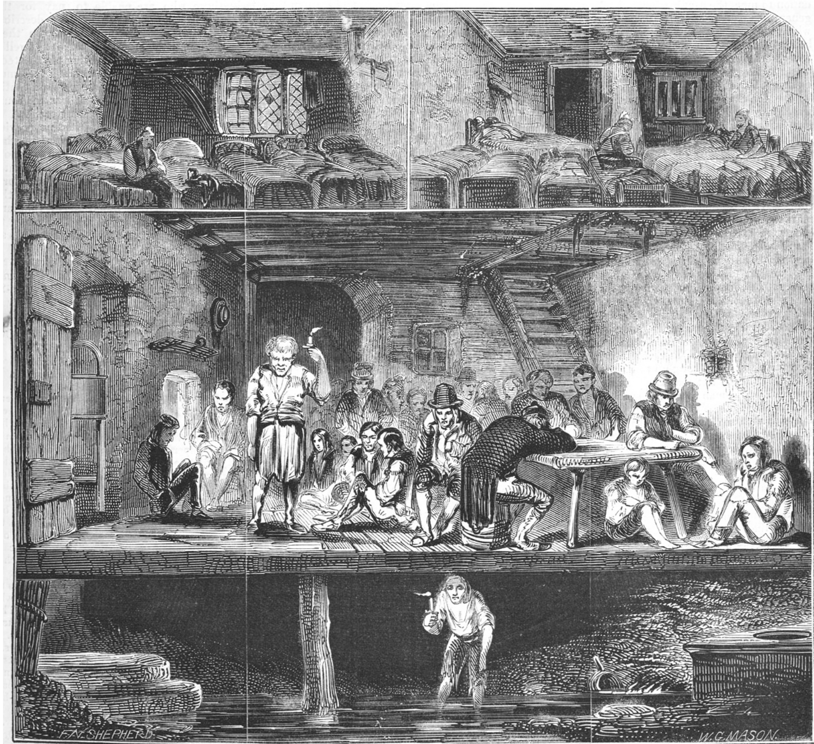

Fig. 3

Fig. 2: A ‘rookery’ in the architectural press, depicting an increasingly intimate procession from street to court to alley, with an increasing level of dilapidation. Source: J. Brown, ‘The Homes of the London Poor’, *The Builder*, 18 November 1854.

Fig. 3: Lodging House in Field Lane. The image depicts the stratification of sanitary, criminal and sexual ills. Source: *The Poor Man’s Guardian*, 20 November 1847.

in the production of building materials. Labour diminished as over five million British men – the majority of able-bodied workers – enlisted in the armed services and the war interrupted the training of new workers. The total number of building craftsmen in the UK was cut in half, declining from 720 230 in 1901 to 365 000 by 1920.[25] Inflating house prices led to rent strikes and in 1915 the government introduced a rent cap. While previous housing shortages affected the worst off, these caps prevented even the better-off from securing housing.[26] Put succinctly in one editorial, the supply crisis was 'like the old game of musical chairs. There are thirteen people with only twelve chairs to sit upon.'[27]

So deep was this crisis that it would not be possible to return to normal. In fact, the term 'business as usual' emerged out of the war: in 1914 the government claimed that the Germans would be easily defeated with no need to disrupt the economy. But as the war dragged on, 'business as usual' slid into a concerted effort to win. 'Total war' relied heavily on propaganda to motivate the country, appealing to a sense of patriotism. As asked in one Irish recruitment poster, 'Is your home worth fighting for?'[28] This question would take on another meaning after armistice, when nearly five million soldiers returned from the continent to their squalid Victorian tenements and terraces – reminders of class immobility.

After the war, the media focused on poor living conditions, with all the usual suspects from Victorian reportage: rats, rotting floorboards and soot-covered ceilings.[29] But the crisis took on a different dimension because wartime interventionism placed responsibility on the state to manage production after armistice, turning an economic crisis into a political one. Soldiers had 'been through hell ... they want something very much more positive than [preventing German victory]; and, what is more, they mean to have it'.[30] Labour movements seized the opportunity to postulate that 'the men who suffered, worked and fought for their country will not accept the pre-war conditions of life on their return'.[31] One article in *The London Magazine* presented the housing question with an ultimatum: 'bricks and mortar cost less than revolution', suggesting with tongue in cheek how aristocratic estates could be subdivided if the state did not take action.[32] [Fig. 4] If the war was a crisis that devised new nationalistic sentiments to protect the homeland, those sentiments were transferred onto the subsequent housing crisis. Writings no longer talked about perfunctory 'dwellings' for the working class but of 'homes', emphasising a desire for domestic autonomy, security and tranquillity. Fearing an epidemic of communism that was spreading across the continent, the Liberal government begrudgingly took a step towards improving housing through direct intervention. Prime Minster David Lloyd George's 'Homes Fit for Heroes' programme attempted to kill three birds with one stone: to manage the quantitative supply crisis by building homes with state financing; to prevent an economic crisis by employing demobilised soldiers in construction; and to contain a political crisis by improving domestic conditions. This had immense aesthetic implications, as it was not enough to build more tenements. [Fig. 5] New housing had to be of a different nature from that of the past.[33]

As once put by economist Milton Friedman, 'when [a] crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around.'[34] The 'Homes Fit for Heroes' programme picked up an idea lying around: the sensibilities and aesthetics of garden cities. Ebenezer Howard's garden city concept from twenty years earlier had been a rallying critique towards capitalist accumulation and urban concentration. The very first passage of the book could be seen as a poetic definition of crisis itself: 'new forces, new cravings, new aims, which had been silently gathering beneath the crust of re-action, burst suddenly into view'.[35] But the solutions proved detachable from the original critique. Though the new government programme employed the garden city designs of Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker, they applied them to suburban housing

estates for workers around London. While they featured low-density settlements of semi-detached houses with gardens and meandering roads, they did not address Howard's call for autonomy and decentralisation.

Unwin himself was part of the Tudor Walters Committee that set the standards for new council estates. His influential pre-war publications *Town Planning in Practice* and *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding!* presented low-density settlements as an economic and pleasant alternative to typical speculative development. The picturesque placement of roads and buildings also offered more to the senses than the mechanical grids of urban developments. The semi-detached house with its hipped roof expressed some degree of individuality and enclosure, while pre-war terraces expressed soldiered repetition and endlessness.[36] Unwin's writings were appeals to experts – architects, developers and politicians – and employed plans, diagrams and calculations when presenting his ultimatum. [Fig. 6]

The post-armistice government programme, on the other hand, appealed to the public to buy into the virtues of private property, attempting to defuse a potentially combustible working class. Council housing estates effectively 'trained' the working class in how to maintain their own house, with fixed floor plans for single families, private walled gardens and strict rules regarding maintenance.[37] The council housing boom was closely mirrored by a speculative housing boom, supported by new 'building societies' that offered mortgages to a great spectrum of workers.[38] The crisis, which had been framed as an ultimatum between architecture or revolution, found its resolution in the aspirational qualities of home ownership. It prompted a paradigm shift as Britain morphed into a property-owning democracy in the twentieth century, ushering in not just new aesthetics but new economic concepts such as the 'property ladder' that still haunt the contemporary city.

Post-war reconstruction: framing an historical opportunity

The post-World War Two period is often characterised by its enthusiasm for expertise, as the newfound welfare state gave the reigns to architects and planners who experimented in new forms of high-rise housing, high-tech building methods and comprehensive urban design. But it was also a period of immense effort to bring the public on board with the ambitious housing programme that would make a strong break with the past. This was a component of the new welfare state, emerging not out of a fear of revolution as was the case after World War One, but out of a consensus based on principles.[39] The wartime coalition government's Beveridge Report set a course to attack the 'five giants' that had allowed inequality and suffering to continue. Idleness, want, disease, ignorance and squalor were the effects of business as usual, to be slain through new employment programmes, social security, the national health service, public schools and an enlarged council housing programme.[40]

Crisis is a malleable term without clear boundaries, though it is generally considered more severe than a risk but less urgent than a disaster.[41] As London lost 80 000 homes to the Luftwaffe and 700 000 were damaged beyond repair, this was a disaster more than a crisis per se.[42] Heightened urgency can actually prevent a paradigm shift, as power is relinquished to existing modes of practice, given the impatient need to act. This was certainly the case in the immediate aftermath of destruction: government resources were funnelled towards repairs, temporary shelters and a continuation of pre-war estate development driven by numeric housing goals. But there was nevertheless frustration with this continuation of the status quo. Many architects saw the disaster as an opportunity to rebuild London along different lines.[43] The post-war Minister of Health and Housing Nye Bevan argued that 'while we shall be judged for a year or two by the number of houses we build, we shall be judged in ten years by the type of houses we build', turning the crisis from a purely quantitative into a qualitative one.[44]

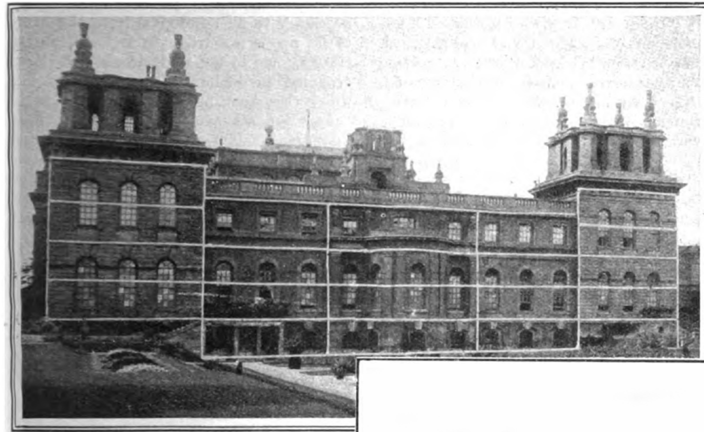

Fig. 4

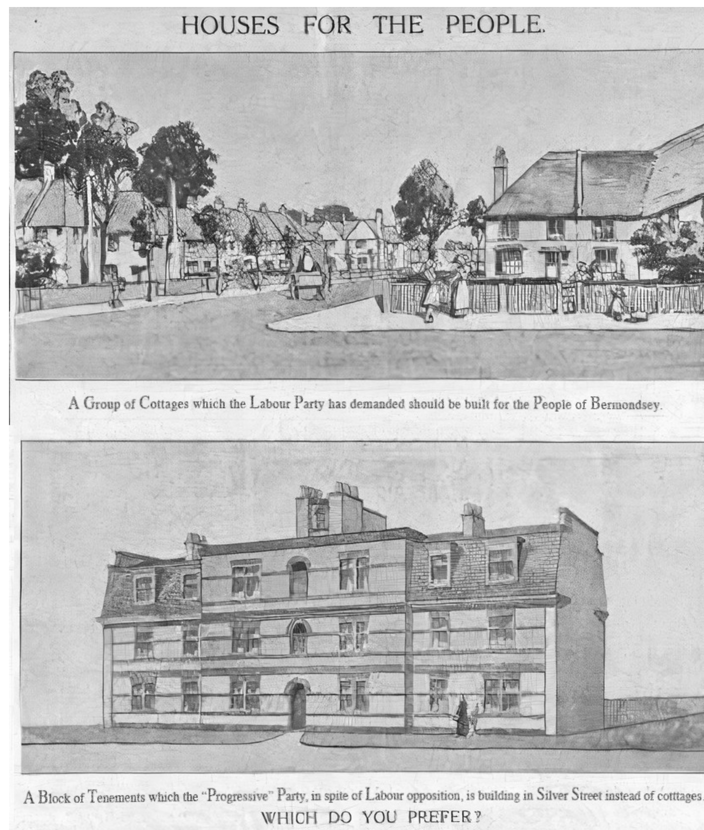

Fig. 5

Fig. 4: A magazine article about the housing shortage proposing that if the government does not step up to organise a massive building campaign, the alternative should be to seize and subdivide the estates of the wealthy. Source: Desmond Shaw, *The London Magazine*, August 1920.

Fig. 5: In the early years after the war, the emerging Labour Party promoted single-family houses for workers. Source: *Bermondsey Labour News*, 1922, Southwark Local History Library and Archive, The Wellcome Trust, licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Licence.

Diagram I.

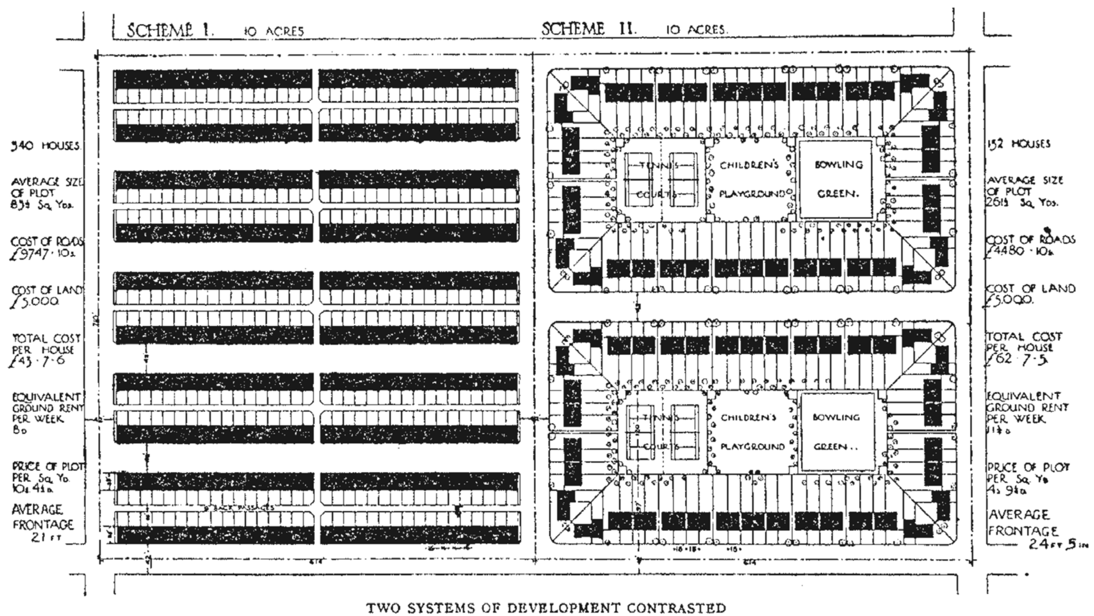

Fig. 6: Raymond Unwin's contrasting of two systems of development: 'business-as-usual' speculative development versus lower-density garden suburbs. Source: Raymond Unwin, *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding* (London: P.S. King & Son, 1912).

The London County Council (LCC) municipality pitched this to the public as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with their 1943 *County of London Plan*. LCC leader Lord Latham heralded the plan as a weapon in London's war 'against dirt, decay and inefficiency'. In an overt homage to Churchill's famous 'finest hour' speech, he referred to the problem as 'a grand opportunity... if we miss this chance to rebuild London, we shall have missed one of the grand moments in history'.[45] He recalled how London had previously failed to answer destiny's call in 1666, when the city was rebuilt as before after the great fire, rejecting Christopher Wren's plan for a more monumental urbanism.[46] For Koselleck, this concept of crisis as a 'final reckoning of universal significance' has been a method to place everyday decisions on a historical trajectory of immense gravity.[47]

The *County of London Plan* was developed while the bombs were still dropping on the capital. Eager to rally public support for the ambitious plan, the LCC disseminated the ideas through various popular media: public exhibitions at County Hall and the Royal Academy, a promotional film and an abridged Penguin edition of the plan with illustrations by Ernő Goldfinger.[48] [Fig. 7] Throughout the era, LCC architects often drew twin sets of plans: technical drawings for experts and communicative drawings to share with local inhabitants.[49] The publication of hundreds of different pamphlets and books and the widespread use of abstract graphs, diagrams, maps and plans were meant to create a technically literate and congenial public.

LCC propaganda was thorough in its attack on pre-war conditions: the old laissez-faire cacophony of industrial and residential development, obsolete housing and congested streets. The film 'Proud City' explained that while London had once been a constellation of towns and hamlets with their own centres and boundaries, uncontrolled growth had dissolved those boundaries. [Fig. 8] It made a popular appeal to make London great again by restoring the concept of neighbourhood units at different scales.[50] It also attacked what Minister Bevan called 'East Ends and West Ends', the spatial segregation of the city that had maintained an antiquated class system.[51]

The 1951 Festival of Britain also used its platform to criticise the status quo. In addition to a prototypical new neighbourhood built in the East End, the exhibition featured a replica of a typical 'jerry-built' house: imitating shoddily built cottages that were typically erected by speculators. 'Gremlin Grange' featured 'all the major mistakes of which unscientific builders are guilty'. [Fig. 9] It featured a leaking roof, an uneven foundation, poorly designed chimney flues, cracked walls and inadequate daylighting.[52] It served as a foil, demonstrating that industrial methods of construction were both superior and necessary to meet housing demands. As one reporter claimed, the British public was accustomed to thinking of the home in 'old-world terms', with their preference for 'Tudor, ingle-nook, the roses round the door.[53] The crumbling pavilion was a reminder of what could occur if they did not adapt their preferences and seize the opportunity the crisis had presented.

It goes without saying that the architecture of housing in this period placed itself in juxtaposition with the old. Many council architects were heavily influenced by the continental avant-garde modernists. One of the ubiquitous photographic tropes of the era is that of the modern tower rising from the ancient city. But the meaning of such dialectical images shifted in the period, from first optimistically signalling the beginning of a new epoch, towards later vilifying failed paternalistic housing.[54] Part of that shift occurred decades after construction, as Thatcher's 'right to buy' policy and the marginalisation of council housing created stark divisions between the private and public realms.[55]

London today: folk politics and the perpetual crisis

Since the 2008 global financial crisis – not a housing supply crisis but one that involved home

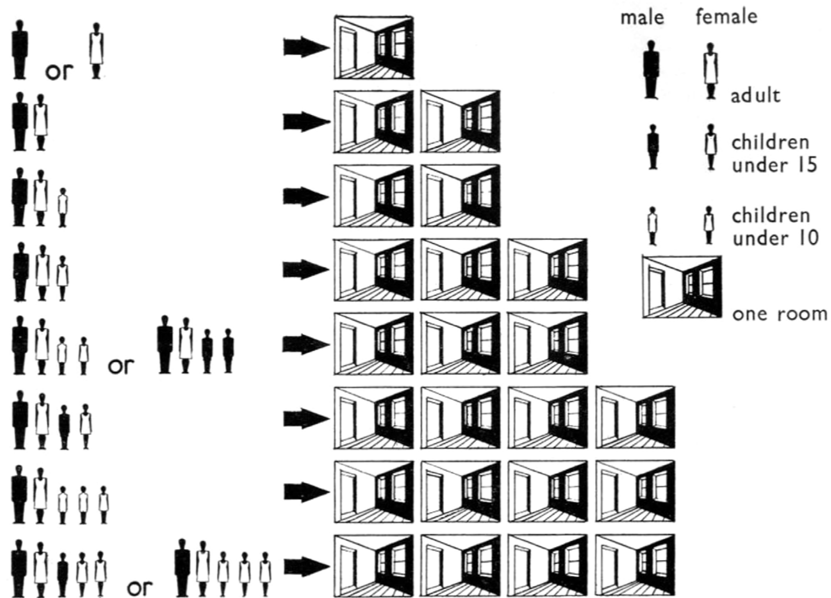

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 7: Diagram of housing needs, from the popular illustrated edition of the 1943 LCC plan. Source: E.J. Carter and Ernő Goldfinger, *The County of London Plan* (London: Penguin Books, 1945).

Fig. 8: An image of overcrowded and chaotic Stepney in East London used as evidence to highlight the need for urban planning. Still from the LCC's promotional film 'Proud City', 1945.

mortgages – there has been much scholarship on crisis in general. But rarely is the premise of crisis itself questioned.[56] Chronic shortages in London, festering over several decades for a variety of reasons, have severely hindered affordability and led to a universal recognition of the crisis and agreement around its solution: build more houses.[57] This is founded in the classical economic theory of supply and demand, a *ceteris paribus* ('all else being equal') condition that only works in stasis.[58] Some marginal voices warn that increasing supply would rather lead to an 'if you build it, they will come' scenario.[59] Beyond these minor opinions, popular consensus has revolved around a unquestioned theory of supply and demand.

At the same time, the term 'crisis' has lost its productive urgency. Crisis was once, in the words of Koselleck, 'meant to reduce the room for manoeuvre, forcing the actors to choose between diametrically opposed alternatives'.[60] But this is no longer the case. The systemic questions of land scarcity, construction expense and unequal access are no longer building 'towards a crisis' and therefore resolution. The term is used rather to describe a pervasive phenomenon.[61]

While earlier generations of architects were engaged in debates, today they have relegated themselves to solving problems posed by others, or they pose questions external to their discipline.[62] With such a high level of public economic literacy, the situation is devoid of popular appeal to the senses. For example, a comprehensive 2015 report and exhibition by the New London Architecture research centre frames the crisis in a series of statistics and graphs. It presents the viewpoints of real estate developers, bureaucrats and project managers, who place the issue within their disciplinary understanding, focusing on the need for planning reforms, political action or land assembly. But the discussion of architecture is limited to the responses to a design competition, defined along topics such as densification and faster construction.[63]

As another example, Patrik Schumacher, principal at Zaha Hadid Architects, has penned an essay for the Adam Smith Institute in which he blames the UK's regulatory regime for housing shortages. He claims that Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) democratic action blocks new development, motivated by a desire among the property-owning class to keep prices high.[64] What is striking is that Schumacher, an architect at a firm renowned for its striking taste, makes no mention of aesthetics in this five-thousand-word statement and shrugs off concerns that deregulation will usher in a new era of slums.

In the absence of any qualitative agenda, architectural initiatives that address the crisis are largely ineffective. They could be categorised by what Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams have recently coined 'folk politics': a brand of do-gooder populism that relies on 'common sense' notions of the world – intuitions that are historically constructed and not always correct. Folk politics places emphasis on the human scale, the authentic and the immediate while looking with suspicion towards the strategic and scalable.[65] Folk political solutionism has become commonplace in the architectural discipline, reacting to what is perceived as an external problem, rather than initiating a change to the discipline itself.[66] Spatial immediacy makes every problem local, but it avoids confronting a housing crisis that is regional or international in nature, linked to global flows of labour and capital. Temporal immediacy, favouring action today over planning for tomorrow, can be seen in the popularity of 'pop-up' solutions, 'meanwhile projects' and infill housing that make insignificant contributions to the housing question.[67] Conceptual immediacy emphasises the uniqueness of every problem while doubting universality, making each group's housing problems distinct and rendering collective action impossible. The result is a blooming of self-help housing, promoted by architects that want to build and a municipality that wishes to divert the problem to the individual.[68] Instead of criticising the neoliberal agenda that places responsibility on the individual, the architecture of self-help legitimises it.

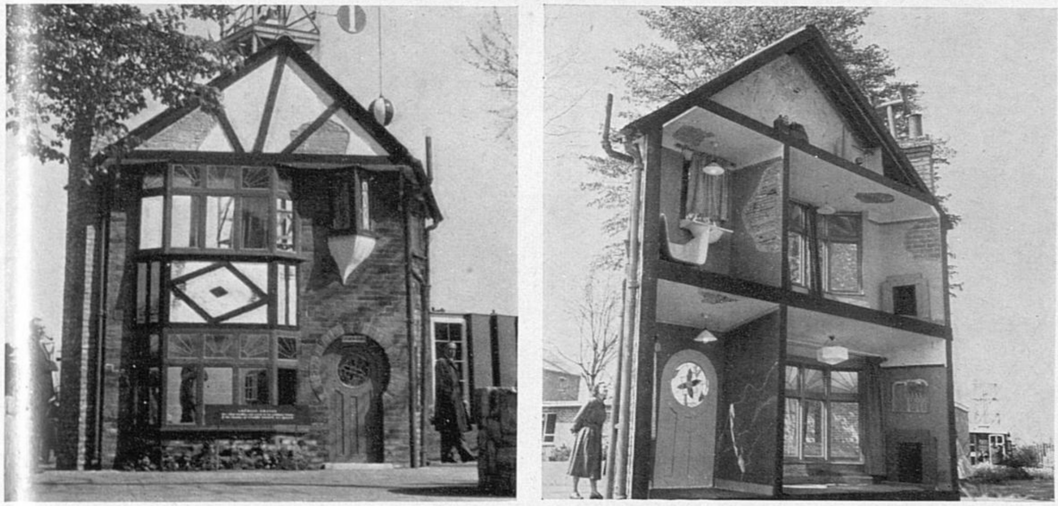

Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 9: 'Gremlin Grange', a pavilion in the 1951 Festival of Britain which depicts the practices of 'unscientific builders' as a foil to modern construction methods. Source: 'Live Architecture at Poplar', *The Sphere*, 2 June 1951.
Fig.10: 'New development may be the cause of ugliness; but it can also be the cure'. Source: *Living with Beauty* (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 30 January 2020).

In a recent article on the narratives of the London housing crisis, Julia Heslop and Emma Ormerod point to the Grenfell Tower disaster of 2017 as a moment in which the prevailing practices of deregulation and austerity were challenged. The fire, which killed seventy-two inhabitants and injured seventy more due to fire-combustible cladding panels added in a retrofit of a social housing block, was deemed a symptom of social neglect that had valued a cosmetic improvement over the lives of those who lived there.[69] Though the disaster has contributed to a growing discourse on inequality, it has not yet generated a strong architectural response. Architects sympathetic to social housing are uneasy about further condemnation.[70] And the fire has sparked doubt about the safety of new flats, putting architects in a tricky situation amid the pressure to densify.[71]

But there is one faction that recognises how aesthetics contributes to the crisis: the conservative 'Policy Matters' think tank. Their 2018 publication 'Building More, Building Beautiful' claims that the poor quality of new developments is to blame for NIMBYism. [Fig. 10] The document was headed by Sir Roger Scruton, a long-time critic of modern architecture's 'problem-solving approach'.[72] The think tank claims that if new developments looked better, locals would be more welcoming and more houses could be built.[73] The document's findings were transformed into the government 'Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission'. Taking the side of the NIMBYists who want to protect their assets, the Tories have problematised the crisis around the issue of poor contemporary design. They promote a 'fast track' for good design, allowing developers with a proven track record to skip part of the approval process.[74] The government has also established a new steering group that will 'embed beauty, design and quality into the planning system'. This task force is headed by Nicholas Boys Smith, whose campaign group 'Create Streets' promotes 'beautiful, sustainable places of gentle density that will be popular'.[75]

There are a number of contradictions between the movement's rhetorical populist call for beauty and its prescriptions of what is beautiful. It bemoans architects' elitism and promotes individuals' choice, yet Scruton requests 'education of the general public *to want* specific details, specific styles, specific materials'.[76] Boys Smith claims that 'we go with what the people prefer', but simultaneously pushes specific designs supported by a vast catalogue of 'scientific' expertise: studies that correlate urban form with crime rates and facade expression with behaviour.[77] Populism here meets a strain of pseudo-scientific paternalism. The movement vilifies modernism's association with mass production, yet it champions Victorian and Georgian styles that were themselves products of ruthless template-based speculation. It attacks twentieth-century council housing as 'vertical slums', but some critics claim that the Conservative Party's simultaneous deregulation efforts will usher in the 'slums of tomorrow'.[78] And finally, it is unclear how the commission's 'fast track' policy, favouring large-scale developers with predictable design methods, would actually concede more democratic control to locals.

Unsurprisingly, the architectural community has been quick to shake off this new movement as a 'tedious hangover from 1980s', referring to Prince Charles' former appeals for vernacular architecture. By dismantling the welfare state and its architecture, the new movement apparently seeks an appropriate image for a hierarchical society rooted in an inegalitarian past.[79] Architect Douglas Murphy calls the commission an 'alt-right aesthetic movement' and claims that 'our current housing crisis has almost nothing to do with aesthetics, modern or traditional, but rather is to do with land, wealth and exploitation.'[80]

But despite the commission's dubious intentions and contradictions, it has picked up on something that the Left has long ignored. This is not a return to Prince Charles's style wars, but an unearthing of two hundred years of urban trauma associated with

housing crisis. While architects promote density on economic and ecological grounds, congestion conjures images of slums in the popular imagination.[81] Even in commendable new council housing, architects fall back on Victorian-era housing types such as back-to-backs, long condemned for their poor lighting and ventilation.[82] Co-living is heralded as a hip new method to overcome demographic problems, but there are still fears in the popular press that 'decent homes' will become 'scenes of filth and degradation', recalling Victorian concerns about overlapping social bubbles.[83] And self-building is celebrated by entrepreneurs and architects as way of bypassing a dysfunctional market, but it might all sound like jerry-building in the ears of the public.[84] Attempts to solve a quantitative crisis run up against a long-gestating qualitative one, which requires engagement with popular sentiment.

Conclusion: challenging scarcity

Crisis is controlled by narratives that are sedimented in the public imagination. The narrative use of the term has itself evolved: from a moral judgement, to a question of political legitimacy, to a historic rupture and finally to a permanent condition of scarcity today. While poor conditions in the nineteenth century were building 'towards a crisis' and therefore a resolution, the gravity of the term has been lost today. The types of images used in discourse across time reveal a gradual shift in how the housing question has been framed: from a qualitative problem presented in illustrations to a quantitative problem presented through statistics. There has likewise been a gradual shift in the role of the architect: from contributing towards the construction of the problem and offering a qualitative solution, to responding to a numeric problem today, when the discipline's aesthetic capacity apparently matters very little.

In order to corral the crisis into the realm of architecture, one productive route might be to consider the cultural formula of scarcity that has fed the numeric problem. As Jeremy Till reveals, concepts of scarcity have shifted across time from Malthus to environmentalism and have become enacted in architecture, a discipline wrapped up in economic means of building.[85] Scarcity is not always determined by the planet itself but by human agents that regulate supply in the interest of stabilising prices.[86] The British concept of the property ladder, using the home as a tradeable asset, places exchange value over use and feeds on the insufficiency of housing stock.

The property ladder is founded in a belief that the market is a zero-sum game, where one's loss is another's gain. This is a folk economic theory – a populistic idea based on intuition rather than scientific fact.[87] Economists have already suggested that policies should be changed to incentivise development and reduce asset protectionism.[88] But this might require a simultaneous popular and cultural shift, from exchange value towards use values, from the image of the home as fixed asset towards an image of the home as a site of production, from an implied competition between adjoining pieces of property to an implied collaboration. This would require an embrace of large-scale and long-term planning beyond the confines of individual projects with which architects have become comfortable – overcoming the folk-political tendency to make immediate but ineffective gestures. Taking a cue from the right-wing Building Beautiful movement, an adequate supply need not be met with resistance, if aesthetic and urban considerations make a positive contribution towards the city.

Notes

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Biography

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'New Classical' Contemporary Architecture: Retrotopic Trends and Phantasms of Tradition

Pierre Chabard

As many commentators have recently observed, major movements on the populist right, or plain far-right, have become involved in the active promotion of neo-traditional (whether neo-vernacular or new classical) architecture in a 'metapolitical' perspective[1]: Identity Evropa [sic], an American white supremacist movement campaigning in favour of a return to neoclassical architecture;[2] the German nationalist party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) promoting a deliberately völkisch architecture;[3] Thierry Baudet, leader of the xenophobic anti-European party Forum voor Democratie, victorious in the Dutch senatorial elections in May 2019, denouncing the ruin 'of what was once the greatest and most beautiful civilization the world has ever known, a civilization… that reached all corners of the world, that was full of confidence, and that created the most beautiful architecture.'[4] But this kind of argument may also come from the less extreme areas of the conservative right. In British context, for example, Prince Charles's personal and long involvement in a return to pre-modern traditions helped to frame a thriving milieu of architects who share a desire to revive a largely idealised and reinvented 'classical architecture'.

This phenomenon of metapolitical use of architecture, that occurs, with variations, in several western countries and echoes grim precedents from the interwar period, is of first concern for the political sciences, and could be interpreted as the umpteenth instrumentalisation of culture (in this case architecture) for ideological, identity-related ends and/or straightforward propaganda. It could thus be analysed as an architectural extension of the realm of politics, architecture being envisaged as the weapon, the prolongation, the reflection, or the translation of an ideology.

However, the history of architecture can also help us enrich and add nuance to our understanding. Firstly, it allows us to distinguish 'neoclassicism', a historiographic notion designating a complex sequence of phenomena that have punctuated the history of architecture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from 'new classicism', an auto-appellation designating the circle of architects who, over the past three decades, have been calling for a return to what they call a classical tradition. Secondly, from neoclassicism (which in France went from being the face of the reign of Louis XV, and then, only a few years later, that of the First Republic) to interwar modernism (which was as much the expression of fascisms as it was of social democratic regimes), architectural history shows to what extent the political hijacking of architecture is always relative, unstable, and equivocal, never definitive or entirely accomplished. Which is why, to analyse this recent phenomenon, we must move away from the Manichaeism at work in the rhetoric of those who are animated by the 'far right's obsession with modern architecture'.[5] We must move beyond the caricatural opposition that they wish to establish between the classical tradition, essentialised and supposedly immemorial, and modern architecture, seen as a homogeneous and indivisible whole, encompassing the early twentieth-century avant-garde right up to the starchitecture of the early twenty-first century.

What precisely does this invocation of the architectural past, or rather, a certain architectural past, largely fantasised and rebuilt in the present, oppose itself to? What are the reasons? To avoid turning architecture into a simple illustration of a strictly ideological and political phenomenon that takes place beyond itself, and to understand the sociohistorical logic of this return to the past that motivates certain contemporary architects, it is necessary to go back to the concrete terrain of their practice and resituate them within the complexity of architectural debate over recent decades.

A classical event

On 10 May 2010, a singular event took place in the magnificent art-deco building designed by George Grey Wornum situated at 66 Portland Place, London, seat of the venerated Royal Institute of British Architects since 1934. It was a remarkable public performance, a 'drawing marathon', that began at 10 o'clock in the morning and finished at 6 o'clock in the evening.[6] [Fig. 1] Three youngish British architects participated in this unbroken eight-hour session to make, with six hands, a huge drawing: Ben Pentreath (born 1972), Francis Terry (born 1969) and George Saumarez Smith (born 1973).

The event occurred in the grand reception hall on the building's first floor, above the main entrance. Upon a huge sheet of paper, two and a half metres high by five metres wide, fixed across a large window, the three men produced a hand-drawn copy of an architectural drawing, a neo-classical *capriccio*, perhaps an eighteenth-century theatre backdrop, in the style of Bibiena. The sporadic groups of spectators who witnessed the performance did not contemplate a finished, static drawing, delimited by its frame; rather, they observed the act of creating the drawing, its making. The performance, independent of what the drawing itself represented, put on display, as if under a magnifying glass, the graphic skills of these three architects, their mastery of the tools and codes of representation, the precision of their movements.

In addition, the size of the drawing set it apart from the usual format of architectural representation and put it closer to the scale of a real space. Rather than representing architecture, it was almost as if the drawing was architecture. Substituting itself for the large window, the drawing effectively opened a new space within the room. Much more than the decor or the backdrop of the performance, this classicising drawing was the goal: its graphic elaboration was the object of the show. It was a sort of theatre, but one in which the actors turned their backs to the audience and where the attention was focused on this emerging decor and its collective production.

Beyond its intriguing character, why pause upon this architectural event? For a start, because it was atypical if we consider its setting. In the spring of 2010, this event, the aim of which was to 'raise awareness of classical architecture and the enjoyment of drawing', was something of an exception at the RIBA, where modernism followed by the architectural neo-avant-gardes have largely dominated since the post-war period.[7] It would appear that by 2010, the mood within the RIBA had changed sufficiently for the institution to open itself to the disciples of a return to the classical tradition. The graphic performance that took place on 10 May, alongside a retrospective exhibition entitled *Three Classicists* dedicated to the work of these three fortysomething English architects who were gaining increasing media recognition, was in fact just one part of a wider whole. The exhibition shows their architectural projects, of deliberately neo-Georgian, neo-Palladian, or neo-Regency lexicon, their numerous drawings (measured surveys, project drawings, shaded perspectives), prototypes of elements from their buildings (mouldings, bas-reliefs, capitals). Strangely, there were almost no photographs, nor models. However, a collection of antique furniture, precious rugs, and decorative art objects borrowed from renowned London antique dealers colonised the grand gallery of the RIBA, creating an atmosphere that was less like an architecture exhibition and more like the drawing room of an aristocratic house.

The *Three Classicists* event was the work of the Traditional Architecture Group, affiliated to the RIBA, founded in 2003 by the architect Robert Adam, and presided over by Francis Terry since 2016. Relatively restricted, the group has gradually expanded to include around one hundred members today. The Traditional Architecture Group organised the exhibition in response to a minor controversy that blew up when the jury of the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy of Art refused two drawings in 2008: a 1:1 scale drawing of a Corinthian capital for Hanover Lodge, the extension of an aristocratic residence near Regents Park designed by Francis Terry (2003–2010), and an ink drawing of the dressed stone façade of the small building in central London that George Saumarez Smith designed for the gallerist Richard Green in 2009. The uncontemporary workmanship of these two drawings purposefully set them apart from the eclectic and pop visual universe favoured by the Royal Academy jury. [Fig. 2]

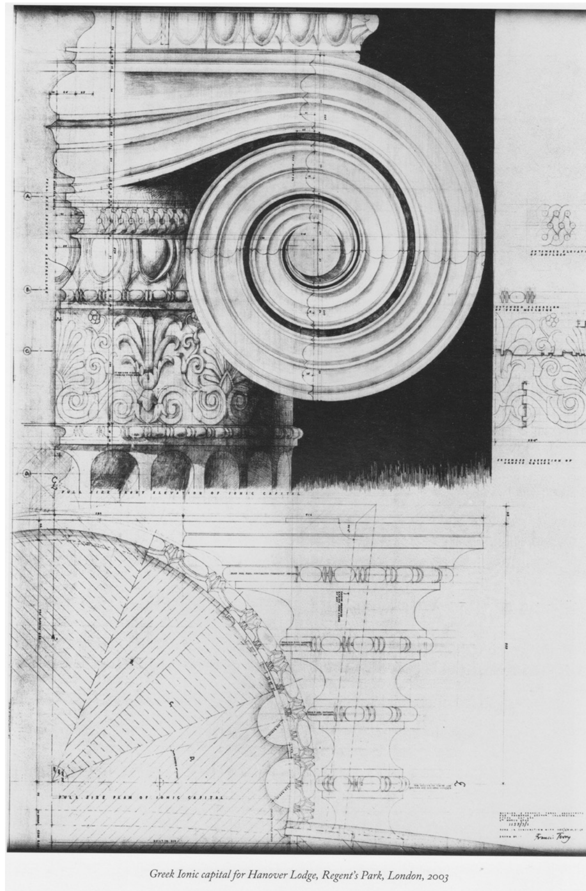
The *Three Classicists* exhibition and all the associated events (drawing marathons, conferences) at RIBA in the spring of 2010 – to which we can add the itinerant exhibition *Palladio and His Legacy: A Transatlantic Journey* produced by the RIBA and touring the United States in 2010 and 2011– must thus be situated in the context of the internal tensions within the discipline of architecture.[8] These events are the work of young architects who have produced a considerable body of built projects and who demand access to the dominant channels of architectural recognition. Beyond its cool and hushed atmosphere, the exhibition they organised at the RIBA should be seen as a manifesto, a propaganda operation for the movement to which they belong. The drawing marathon expresses not only an attachment to 'classical architecture' as an ideal and a model, whose contours are nonetheless rather unclear, but above all to the collective dimension of this neo-traditional ethos, as the antithesis to contemporary pluralist architectural production marked by its stylistic individualism.

New versus neon-classicism

How might one explain this convergence of events in London in the spring of 2010? At first glance, it is tempting to draw a parallel with the major political transition underway at the time in the United Kingdom. After thirteen years of Labour rule (ten of which were dominated by the figure of Tony Blair), the Conservative Party regained power in May 2010.[9] However, the conservative right's return to power cannot be considered the cause of the emergence of a movement of neo-traditional architecture. To understand the structuring of the network of architects calling for a revival of the classical tradition in contemporary architecture we must go back thirty years, to the architectural debates of 1980s England that were dominated by the subject. One of the principal sites of these debates was the English architecture journal *Architectural Design*, the most effervescent of the post-war period, that had been bought in 1977 by Andreas Papadakis (1938–2008).[10] Having branched into bookselling and then publishing, in 1967 the Cypriot entrepreneur and doctor in physics founded Academy Editions, an active publishing house that in 1977 would publish, at great expense but profitably, Charles Jencks's *The Language of Postmodern Architecture*. Though untrained in architecture, Papadakis relied on his intuition and personal network to federate the best writers of the moment, and he created an eclectic and inclusive editorial space, open to a new generation. He regularly invited writers to take over the editorship of the journal for specially themed issues, and collectively, these diverse figures, including Kenneth Frampton, Charles Jencks, Demetri Porphyrios, Colin Rowe, and Léon Krier, would turn the journal into the principal stage for architectural debate. Evidently, on one front, the disciples of postmodernism opposed those arguing for loyalty to modernism and the avant-garde. But another, more subtle front opposed different nuances within postmodernism itself. The subject of referencing classicism, and the attitude of contemporary architects towards this practice, incited a great deal of

Fig. 1

Fig. 2



Greek Ionic capital for Hanover Lodge, Regent's Park, London, 2003

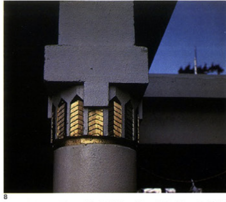
Fig. 1: Francis Terry, Ben Pentreath, and Georges Saumarez Smith after their Drawing Marathon at RIBA, 10 May 2010. Photo: Benjamin Moore.

Fig. 2: Francis Terry, drawing of the Doric capital of Hanover Lodge, Regent's Park, London, 2003. Source: *Three Classicists: Ben Pentreath, Georges Saumarez Smith, Francis Terry*, exhibition catalogue.

Vitruvius. This tradition finds an unlikely exponent in Yasufumi Kijima, who has written on the semantic importance of ornament, and designed a new Order for addition to a Japanese temple (8). Like Stirling's columns, Kijima's accentuate the structural facts and possibilities of new technologies – their thinness, sharpness of profile and machine-like finish – but they also refer to the surrounding vegetation, the pine trees, with their chevron incisions, and the orthogonal route, with their accent on the frontal and side planes (the T-shape of the square abacus). Aside from these two entrance columns, which are especially marked, the rest are left in their primitive, uncut state. Their small scale and great redundancy make the open porch into a virtual temple, increasing the sense of intimacy, sanctity and mystery through compression and miniaturisation.

The notion that a column should represent a specific location, a national identity or a person's emblem, was put forward by Philebert De L'Orme, who had a long-standing classical precedent for this idea. He designed five new French Orders (he believed that all great nations had their distinctive types) based for practical reasons (to incorporate the smallish 'French' drums) on the notion of horizontal banding. Benjamin Latrobe designed an American Order, with a corn-on-the-cob capital, for similar reasons, and following these precedents I have attempted a London column which represents, quite obviously, various states of weather and a connection to the ground and sky. The idea is to use, wherever possible, ready-made parts (such as mouldings) in a new context (fluting for instance) and to use them semantically so that they reinforce the main conceptions of the house (in this case based on solar energy and symbolism).

Charles Moore and his co-designers have refashioned the Five Orders, with Vignola's proportions, and combined them with water to produce, like the Trevi fountain, a hybrid. Here the mixture is water with column rather than sculpture with architecture. Water shoots down in front of a stainless steel background to become a Tuscan fluted column, with 'wetopes', not metopes, above (12). The Doric, with its chiselled features and paramilitary visage – the cutaway of a Greek helmet – has water pouring down inside, while below are beautiful pedestal cross-sections – like Labrouste's drawings with white veins instead of the cross-hatching of the pencil (11). The Ionic Order, with its egg and dart mouldings of water, carries forward the transformation of stone details into crisp, clear, sharp steel – volutes like razor blades (10). The Corinthian capitals have spurting acanthus leaves and faceted crystals meant to represent nature – the tree is turned into a sparkling, glistening silver (13), while the Deli Order, to mark the restaurant, glows with neon. Thus two traditional aspects of the Orders are being revived: firstly the translation of an old form into



8 Yasafumi Kijima, Matsuo Shrine Colonnade, 1975-6. T-shaped abacus and 'echinus' of pine needles decorate the pre-cast entrance columns, while the side ones remain uncut. (Photo Osamu Murai)

Left – Charles Jencks, London Column, 1980, represents the sun bursting through clouds and into rain, for a solar-oriented house. The relation to the ground and sky are made slightly reversible, or anastrophic, to underline this connection.

9 Wendel Dietterlin, Five Orders personified and given pure syntactic relationships, Nuremburg, 1594-8. Dietterlin extends the personifications throughout the syntactic parts of architecture inventing, for instance, a 'fat man' Order for the cook in the kitchen. One can see how masculinity, femininity and barbarity are symbolised here. Venturi, Stern and others seem close to beginning to 'characterise' their columns semantically.

10-13 Charles Moore, UIG & Perez Associates, Tuscan, Doric, Ionic and Corinthian columns. Following Vignola's proportions but introducing water, colour, stainless steel, sectioned imposts and neon. There is a recurrent mixture of Modernism and classicism, extrusions, pure forms, demi-forms with a traditional centrality, proportion and colouring. (Photos C Jencks)

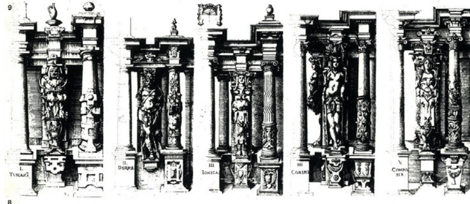


Fig. 3

CLASSICISM IS NOT A STYLE

Demetri Porphyrios

'There can be no social development which excludes all mythological relation to nature [. . .] and which accordingly claims from the artist an imagination free of mythology.'
Karl Marx, *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1857

It cannot be said with certainty when Modern Eclecticism began—in the 1950s with the late work of Gropius and Wright, with the mature work of Aalto, or still later in the sixties with the early work of Venturi, Moore, and Graves. But we know for certain that it is still alive and flourishing today. Its ideological features, however, can hardly be mapped in full without recourse to the ethical dimension of the most pervasive force in our century: orthodox Modernism.

Largely as a result of the cultural sterility we have experienced during the decades following the Second World War, we could now claim that the Modernism of the twenties concerned itself not simply with a wholesale revision of architectural values, but more significantly with the transvaluation of petty-bourgeois values. Uniformity of style and conduct which once—as in the classical world—bore radiant witness to the fact that civilised men spoke the same language and could communicate with urbane ease, now, with Modernism, threatened to become a universal *paradisus artificialis*. By the late forties, the socialist dreams of the intelligentsia of Modernism were realised—ironically enough—by the Democratic Capitalist State, retaining from the spirit of *Sachlichkeit* only a certain scientificism of vision and a distinct documentary quality. The oracular myth of Modernism, namely that industrial emancipation would lead to soci egalitarianism, was given—by the late forties—a specific conten democracy was to be understood as synonymous with unsolicite distribution of industrial goods. Yet, for the industrial capital, th goals both of distribution of goods and of freedom of choice aime not so much at the democratisation of public life as at the creation vast markets of consumption, which were to behave in a calculate and programmed manner. By the late 1960s—following the co tradictory experiences, on the one hand of the Welfare State housir programmes, and on the other the exhilarating phantasmagoria of make-believe high-tech culture—it had become clear that what in th twenties appeared to have been a global project of democratisatio had suddenly shrunk to a calculated strategy of creating 'circuses bread and spectacle'.

This socio-economic strategy was parodied in the conspicuo 'consumption of culture' that shaped Modern Eclecticism. In fac this strategy has been steadily naturalised under the moralisi pretext of democratic pluralism. From the middle sixties onward- breeding on relativism, toleration and eclecticism—pluralis emerged as the hegemonical ideology of twentieth-century Ameri and Europe. The second half of our century has surely proven to an age of *'conciliatory culture, widespread, springing out of its ow*

Classico-vernacular: from the house to the tomb:
1 Funerary monuments, first Cemetery of Athens, c 1860–1880
2, 3, 4 Houses at Symi, c 1880

Fig. 4

Fig . 3: Spread from *Architectural Design 50*, 'Post-Modern Classicism', edited by Charles Jencks.

Fig. 4: Spread from, *Architectural Design 52*, 'Classicism is not a style'edited by Demetri Porphyrios.

intense debate within the journal. No fewer than four special editions were dedicated to the subject between 1979 and 1982, and the number increases if we extend the period to the early 1990s.[11]

According to the architect and theorist Geoffrey Broadbent, who edited the 1979 *A.D. Profile* no. 23, classicism is first and foremost a language that has been in continual use throughout the history of architecture and that is thus available for any contemporary utilisation.[12] The term 'neo-classical', removed from an ideological or political context, designates, according to Broadbent, all architectural production that, since the Renaissance, has made use of classical references (understood as originating in antiquity), from Ledoux to Grassi via Schinkel, from fascist architecture to the 1970s neo-rationalists via Russian constructivism: 'the neo-classical architect obviously can choose any one of these – or even a combination of them – for the purposes of architectural expression.'[13] [Fig. 3] In the two issues of *A.D. Profile* dedicated to the subject, which he edited in 1980 and 1982, the historian and critic Charles Jencks suggests a less linguistic and more stylistic approach to the return to classicism, which he considers to be one possible path among others within postmodern eclecticism.[14] From Thomas Gordon's Tuscan and Laurentian Houses to Robert Venturi's Eclectic House, via Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia, he focuses on examples in which the codes of classicism have been voluntarily disrupted, subjected to mannerist games of distortion, deformation, even caricature. According to Jencks, 'the past becomes a field for rhetorical operation with paradox and elision becoming major figures, and amplification and hybridisation minor ones'.[15]

A few months later, in manifest contradiction with Jencks, whose position he argued would lead to nothing but a 'neon-classicism', the Greek architect Demetri Porphyrios, who graduated from Princeton in 1975 and set up his architectural practice in London in 1985, published another special issue of *Architectural Design*, affirming the notion that 'classicism is not a style'.[16] Some important doctrinal elements, that continue today to nourish the field of new classical architecture, were formulated in this issue.

First, this new classicism defines itself not so much as the antithesis of modern architecture, but rather as a criticism of postmodernism, and in particular of the pluralistic aesthetic proffered by Jencks or by Paolo Portoghesi in the 1980 Venice Biennale. 'Contemporary architecture bathes in the pantheistic limbo of eclecticism', Porphyrios laments.[17] His criticism of this postmodern eclecticism concentrates on the way in which it transforms the reference to historical architecture into a surface system of quotation, an almost advertising-like form of communication. Confronted with this problem, his position is clear: 'Renouncing novelty, ephemeral pleasurability, consumable iconographic individualism, and unmediated industrial production, we make an urgent plea for closing architectural discourse towards the constructional logic of vernacular and its mimetic elaboration: classicism.'[18]

Under Porphyrios's pen, the return to classicism expresses itself above all as an essentialist invocation of the premodern and vernacular traditions of the act of building and its aesthetic, mimetic, and mythical expression in architecture. He sees postmodernism has having reduced classicism to a surface show, to one option among others in a big game of referencing and style, whereas it should, like the early twentieth century 'Scandinavian doricism' that he writes about in the same issue, be the expression of an 'ontological essence of building', as the 'summation of the essential knowledge of building and dwelling'.[19] He adds: 'showing itself in a form of primitivist essentialism, it indicates the way by which "truth" may be acquired'.[20] Rather than a language, a style, or a reference, this fundamentalism defines classicism as an absolute truth, as the general and universal ethic of architecture. [Fig. 4]

In the same issue, the Luxembourgian architect Léon Krier, who was based in London since 1969

and close to Porphyrios, deplores the ugliness and shoddy materiality of contemporary architecture, to which he too opposes the perennity, universality, and timelessness of classical architecture, values that are rooted in its constructive legitimacy: 'By means of a series of fixed and permanent symbols and analogies, Architecture succeeds in expressing its very origin in the constructive logic of Building, based on nature, work and human intelligence.' [21] Against modern material engineering and industrialised construction, these architects championed a radical return to traditional craftsmanship and the art of traditional construction. Expressing his resolutely anti-modern perspective, Krier states: 'For the classical architect the notions of progress and innovation do not exist, since classical architecture has definitively solved its technical and artistic problems in solidity and permanence, in beauty and commodity.'[22]

Unbracketing the past

Another important doctrinal aspect that Porphyrios formulates in *Classicism is not a Style* concerns the relationship to the past and to history. Very hostile to what he calls 'abject pluralism' and to eclecticism, whether that of the nineteenth century or the 1980s, he effectively criticises the historicist conception of time that they presuppose, bracketing each episode of history. [23] [Fig. 5] Porphyrios developed his thinking on the philosophy of history in the second half of the 1970s, while working on his PhD on Alvar Aalto at Princeton and encountering important historians, such as Anthony Vidler, Alan Colquhoun, Carl Schorske, Kenneth Frampton, David Coffin and Stefan Morawski.[24] He formalised his thinking in 1981 in a special issue of *Architectural Design* under his editorship, dedicated to the methodology of architectural history, in which he invited historians of varied allegiances, from Joseph Rykwert to David Watkin via Manfredo Tafuri, to lay out their theoretical and historiographic positions.[25] In his contribution, Porphyrios defended his own stance, which was to denounce the Hegelian theory of history and the legacy that it has left upon art and architectural historians, from Heinrich Wölfflin to Sigfried Giedion via Aloïs Riegl, Rudolf Wittkower, and Nikolaus Pevsner. His main point of disagreement with this historiographic tradition concerns the definition of architecture that it presupposes, deploring that 'against the classical category of "imitation of nature", Hegel proposed that of the "Representation of the Idea"'.[26] In the Hegelian perspective, the function of architecture would no longer be to imitate nature – classic mimesis – but to express the idea of its creator, which itself translates the spirit of the times – the zeitgeist.

If one adopts this Hegelian point of view, the past is never anything more than an elapsed present. The course of time rips it irreversibly from the present and transforms it mechanically into historical matter. The architecture of the past appears as 'bracketing historical unities on the basis of calendar contemporaneity, or on the basis of stylistic filiations'.[27] Hegelian historicism would thus have two main problems: it tends not only to render history lifeless, but above all to cut it off from the present of architecture. Consequently, we see that Porphyrios's criticism is as relevant to the epistemology of history as to the practice of architecture. Essentially, the aim of this contestation of the bracketing of the past is no more than an attempt to reconnect the practice of contemporary architecture with classical tradition. Léon Krier would tackle the same issue in his writing. For example, in *Architecture: Choice or Fate*, he denounces the 'rupture with the past, its historization', meaning its transformation into a historical object separate from the present.[28] Against this phenomenon, the position of Krier and Porphyrios is paradoxical. It consists in both overvaluing and dehistoricising the past, with the aim of turning it into the norm for the present. Torn from its proper chronology, classical architecture changes in nature. Rather than a past episode of history, it becomes a timeless and transhistorical living tradition.

In this sense, the neo-traditional doctrine set out by Porphyrios and Krier establishes a completely

alternative regime of historicity than that which was being formulated by the postmodern theorists at the same time. According to Paolo Portoghesi, for instance, it is memory – meaning the idea of a presence of the past as an inexhaustible raw material feeding the individual creativity of architects in an extended and perpetual present – that substitutes history as the grand modern narrative of time.[29] 'The Presence of the Past', the title of the 1980 Biennale, must be understood in this perspective of memory and presentism, like the recapitalisation of the past in this immobilised present time. In Portoghesi's view, 'memory can help us leave our impotence behind, and exchange the magical act that once deluded us into exorcizing the past and building a new world without roots, for the lucid and rational act of the reappropriation of the forbidden fruit.'[30]

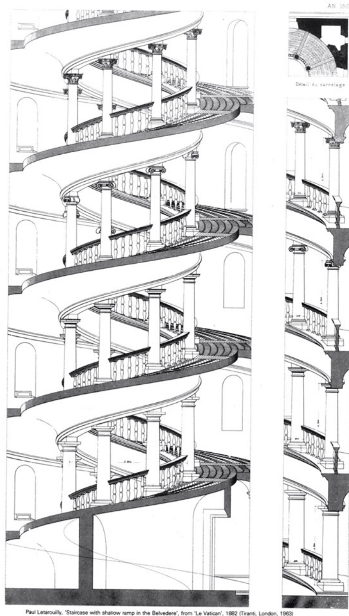
In an equally post-historical, even counter-historical, perspective, Porphyrios and Krier substituted another concept for that of 'history': not 'memory', but 'tradition', as a cyclical vision of time that implies an entirely different way of making the past available in the present, abolishing the idea of it as 'past'.

In face of the same uncertain horizon, the neo-traditionalist architects dreamt of abolishing linear time, which no longer carries with it the promise of a radiant future, and of restoring cyclical time regulated by immemorial and comforting tradition. As Manfredo Tafuri and Georges Teyssot noted in *Classicism is not a Style*, 'classicism is the art of the eternal recommencement'.[31]

The invention of a classical tradition

The 'classical tradition' that George Saumarez Smith, Francis Terry, and Ben Petreath refer to in their drawing, writing, and projects, has thus in large part been shaped by the preceding generation of neo-traditional architects, in the context of the early 1980s architectural debates in London. As we have seen, this period was an intense and controversial moment of radical and essentialist theorisation, even revision, of classical architecture by a small group of architects, both practitioners and theorists, who rejected modern historicism as much as postmodern presentism, and were looking for an alternative route in neo-traditionalism. By extracting classical architecture from architectural history and from the memory repertoire of past styles, Porphyrios and Krier were looking to redefine it as tradition. If we transpose the theories of the historian Eric Hobsbawm onto the phenomenon, we could even consider them to have 'invented' this tradition.

In this sense, it is interesting to note that at the turn of the 1980s the discussion around the concept of tradition was as intense in the field of humanities as it was in architecture. In 1977 the social history journal *Past and Present*, run by members of the Communist Party Historians Group, organised an important conference in London, 'The Invention of Tradition'. This event formed the basis of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's eponymous collective publication, which shows how certain traditions that we believe to be the most immovable, are in fact relatively recent cultural, social, and political constructions.[32] The rituals surrounding the British monarchy, which have been incessantly invented and reinvented since the 1820s, and with particular fervour since 1953 under the reign of Elizabeth II and the advent of mass media, are one example.[33] Two aspects of 'invented traditions' are worth recalling here. First, 'insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, … the continuity with it is largely factitious'.[34] This collective fiction is mobilised to guarantee the mythical stability of tradition despite the chronic instability of the modern world. Secondly, this phenomenon makes manifest what Hobsbawm calls the 'social function of the past'.[35] From this standpoint, the invention of tradition is rendered particularly necessary by 'the widespread progress of electoral democracy and the consequent emergence of mass politics'.[36] Hobsbawm does not link the recourse to tradition exclusively to populism. And it must be noted that the English neo-traditional architects operate within a realm that



Paul Letarouilly, 'Staircase with shallow ramp in the Belvedere', from 'Le Vatican', 1882 (Tiranti, London, 1963)

On the Methodology of ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

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Demetri Porphyrios

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AD Architectural Design Profile

Fig. 5

«Le troisième genre de cabane qui donna naissance à l'ordre dorique», reconstruction de Quinlan Terry d'après Williams Chambers.

Fig. 6

Fig. 5: Title page of *Architectural Design 51*, 'On the Methodology of Architectural History', edited by Demetri Porphyrios.
Fig. 6: Photo of the 'rustic hut' that Quinlan Terry designed for the gardens of West Green House, Hampshire, 1976–1978. Source: Demetri Porphyrios, 'L'infâme pluralisme', in Quatremère de Quincy, *De l'Imitation*.

is more elitist than populist. But, in their work, the political instrumentalisation of tradition, including architectural tradition, appears in its full complexity. During the same period, diametrically opposed to this undertaking of the deconstruction and demystification of tradition by Hobsbawm and the Past and Present historians (whom he would frequently criticise) the conservative and anti-Marxist philosopher Roger Scruton wrote numerous reactionary texts about art and architecture.[37] In 1979 he published *The Aesthetics of Architecture* in which he called upon the timeless principles of classical harmony and beauty to banish the aesthetic deadlock and mediocrity of contemporary construction.[38] Mixing erudite analysis of great Renaissance and Mannerist works with caricatural analysis of modern and contemporary architecture, Scruton's text endlessly naturalizes 'tradition' and invokes the return to it as the unique ethical and stylistic perspective for the present:

> The achievement represented by the classical tradition, the translation of the aesthetic demand into an agreed and flexible language of signs, a language which facilitates at every juncture the outward projection and realization of the self, is not just a passing object of respect, a temporary speciality in the arcanum of taste, but on the contrary, the perfect representative of all that is good in building, all that building contains by way of decency, serenity and restraint.[39]

This conviction struck a chord with the London network of neo-traditional architects, who despite their militantism, remained a small group at the start of the 1980s. Other than Demetri Porphyrios and Léon Krier we can count Quinlan Terry (born in 1937), trained at the Architectural Association School, a 1968–1969 Rome Scholar, brief collaborator of James Stirling, and then the associate of Raymond Erith from 1962, before setting up his own practice after Erith's death in 1973. A former student of the traditionalist Bryanston School, Terry never hid his Christian faith and his belief in the divine origin of Classicism.[40] Another important protagonist was Robert Adam (born in 1948), who trained as an architect at the University of Westminster, was Rome Scholar in 1972–1973, and worked for a while as an architectural journalist before becoming an associate, and ultimately director, at the Winchester-based practice Evans, Roberts and Partners.[41] In 1982, the publication year of *Classicism is not a Style*, these architects had little built work to their names. Robert Adam had completed a few terraces of neo-Victorian or neo-Georgian housing in Hampshire (such as the modest operation of Hyde Church Path in Winchester).[42] In the continuation of his projects with Erith (such as the new country house in Kings Walden Bury, Hertfordshire, 1969–1971), Quinlan Terry had built little but for the aristocratic elite in heritage contexts, such as his classicising pavilions in the gardens of West Green House, Hampshire, for Sir Robert McAlpine, between 1976 and 1978. With its archetypal form, its archaic timber frame roof, and its peristyle of barely squared-off trunks – which calls up the Vitruvian origin myth , revisited by Sir William Chambers – the 'rustic hut' that he created in this setting prefigures Porphyrios's essentialist definition of Classicism.[43] [Fig. 6]

In *Classicism is not a Style*, to illustrate his thoughts on Classicism, Porphyrios is thus obliged to broaden the focus and include some less orthodox projects. He publishes, notably, some of the protagonists of Italian rationalism such as Giorgio Grassi and Aldo Rossi, but also some of the figures that Léon Krier brought together in his exhibition at the Art Net Gallery in London in March 1975, such as the Spanish architects Miguel Garay and José Ignacio Linazasoro, or even Krier's own unbuilt project for a school in Saint-Quentin en Yvelines (1977–1979), a transitional work more inspired by Tessenov than strict Neoclassicism.[44]

The construction of a 'classical tradition' is thus founded less upon the identification of a vast and coherent whole of projects in the present, and more upon a discursive and mediatic strategy of

reconfiguring architectural culture and history. Frequently republishing Wittkower's book, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (first published in 1949) ever since he bought the rights from the publisher and bookseller Alec Tiranti, Andrea Papadakis was an active participant of this reconfiguration, publishing for example an 'Architectural Monograph' on John Soane by John Summerson, the curator of the Sir John Soane Museum since 1945.[45] At the start of the 1980s, Summerson, a historian and the author of the classic text *The Classical Language of Architecture*, received particularly favourable critical attention. He had worked not only to shape the classical tradition into a concise and appropriable form (even if, for him, this appropriation concerned mostly modern architects) but also to turn it into a central part of the narrative of English identity, and he saw his work on Inigo Jones, John Nash, and on London's Georgian architecture undergo a significant editorial revival.[46] The construction of the classical tradition finally makes a detour via the rediscovery of twentieth-century British architectural figures who had followed an alternative path from that of modernism. The works of Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944), Charles Holden (1875–1960) and Raymond Erith (1904–1973), were published, re-evaluated, and retrospectively redefined as milestones of this tradition.[47]

Political support

Despite its activism and proselytising tendencies, the English new classical architecture circle would certainly have remained marginal and confidential, restricted to elite commissions, if, from the early 1980s, it had not received powerful political support. In 1980 Margaret Thatcher, within a year of coming to power, appointed Quinlan Terry as architect in charge of the renovation and decoration of 10 Downing Street, the same year that he formed part of the British selection in the first Venice Architecture Biennale.[48] As Michela Rosso has noted, the New Right's interest in heritage, tradition, and architectural classicism joins with a systematic questioning of the values advocated by English social democracy since the post-war period: 'in economics, the Keynesian precepts of full employment and moderate inflation, in the cultural field, state support for the arts, and in architecture, the dominance of modernism.'[49] The paradox of this right-wing populism is that it advocates, in the name of defending the 'people' against the 'elite', a return to an architecture of classical tradition, despite its historical association in England with elitist, scholarly, and reformist dynamics.

Digging a little deeper into this paradox, the most valuable and powerful support for the new classical circle would come from the royal family itself. Overstepping the reserve usually expected of the monarchy, Prince Charles became personally implicated in the 1980s architectural debates, criticising the formal cacophony of contemporary architecture, between brutalism, high-tech, and postmodernism.[50] Ever since his famous speech to RIBA members at Hampton Court on 30 May 1984, during which he castigated modern architects' 'imagination without taste' and invoked people's 'natural preference … for the more "traditional" designs', he has tirelessly contested major architectural and urban projects in London.[51] He has fought them with words, but also with his support of classically inspired counter-projects, notably for the reconstruction of Paternoster Square next to Saint-Paul's Cathedral (1988–1992), led by John Simpson and Terry Farrell, responsible for the masterplan, and 'a heterogeneous group of Classicists and traditionalists', including Robert Adam, Thomas Beeby, Allan Greenberg, Demetri Porphyrios, Quinlan Terry.[52] [Fig. 7]

Throughout his speeches, Prince Charles's populism has been focused on a favourite theme: the return to classical architecture. Through its importance to national history, classical architecture would work in favour of a narrative of English identity and Englishness that fits with his communitarian and natural vision of society.[53] Through its obvious

stylistic contrast with modernist architecture, classical architecture promises to mark a rupture with the socio-democratic architectural and urban landscape, and to provide a spatial manifestation of this 'internal antagonistic frontier separating the 'people' from power' that is at the source of all populism.[54] But at the same time, as a meticulously essentialised and naturalised tradition, possibly associated with a divine origin, it does not, in any way, oppose itself to the values and aspirations of the conservative aristocratic elite that the Prince of Wales is part of.[55] The prince thus manages to overcome the apparent paradox of his position and make classical architecture both the expression of general common sense and elitist good taste.

In the alliance of Prince Charles with the traditional architecture movement, it is difficult to distinguish the different contributions of one side from the other. The small group of architects (including Léon Krier, John Simpson and Theo Crosby) that the prince associated himself with in 1987 seems to have had a significant role in clarifying his position in relation to architecture, notably ahead of his Mansion House speech on 1 December 1987, and the BBC documentary 'A Vision of Britain' shown on primetime television on 28 October 1988.[56] By polarising and politicising the architectural debate, Prince Charles certainly contributed, in his turn, to radicalising this network of architects, and, consequently, isolating them from the architectural intelligentsia that they had belonged to until the turn of the 1980s, ultimately excluding them permanently from the main institutional and mediatic scene (prizes, magazines, museums, schools, and so on).

At the same time, Prince Charles provided these architects with an alternative institutional framework, via his foundation,[57] created in 1986 as a grouping of not-for-profit organisations devoted to diffusion, charity fundraising, and teaching, such as the Prince's Institute of Architecture,[58] set up in 1992 and integrated in the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment in 1998. Renamed The Prince's Foundation in 2018, it federates other parent institutions such as the Urban Villages Group, founded in 1989 and the International Network of Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism (Intbau), founded by Robert Adam in 2001.[59]

A precise social history of the neo-traditional architecture network in the United Kingdom and beyond remains to be undertaken. It would reveal the Prince of Wales's crucial role in the structuring of a specific doctrinal, institutional, mediatic, and academic framework in London. It would also reveal his role in the shaping of the professional field. Effectively, the fortunes of figures such as Prince Charles, or in the United States, the philanthropist Richard H. Driehaus, have also sustained this international network of neo-traditionalist practitioners thanks to commissions for architectural and urban projects, including some of quite considerable scale.[60] In his role as the Duke of Cornwall, Prince Charles has notably instigated the development of the 450-acre model urban project of Poundbury in the suburbs of Dorchester (Dorset). In 1988 Léon Krier was appointed in charge of the masterplan, and the project, designed according to the principles of polycentrism, low density, programmatic mixing, and above all, strict stylistic control, has been on site since 1993.[61]

Progetto e retrotopia

Honoured by the RIBA in May 2010, architects such as George Saumarez Smith and Francis Terry are perhaps the biggest beneficiaries of this story. They are the descendants, even the inheritors, of the militant founding generation of this architectural traditionalism: Francis is the son of Quinlan Terry, George is the grandson of Raymond Erith and one of the directors of Adam Architecture since 2004. They were trained in architecture, the art of drawing, and the classical tradition by their fathers and colleagues.

They have benefitted from a constant stream of commissions, not only from Prince Charles, but also private developers, wealthy landowners, or

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Portico of Hanover Lodge, 2008

Fig. 7: Carl Laubin, The Square Mile,182cmx305cm, oil on canvas, 1997. Trained as an architect, Carl Laubin was the favoured illustrator for numerous new classical projects in the 1980s and 1990s, from Paternoster Square to Pounbury, via Atlantis (Léon Krier's utopian project on Tenerife, 1987–1988). This painting was commissioned by Linklaters, owners of The Square Mile in London. Source: https://www.carllaubin.com/projects/st-paul- s.

Fig. 8: View of the portico of Hanover Lodge, Regent's Park, London, designed by Quinlan Terry, 2008. Photo: June Buck, in *Three Classicists: Ben Pentreath, Georges Saumarez Smith, Francis Terry.*

even the major Oxford and Cambridge colleges, keen to expand without devaluing their architectural heritage. [Fig. 8] George Saumarez Smith is notably the author of important residential developments in Poundbury, in The South West Quadrant (229 homes) and the North East Quadrant (500 homes). They have frequently worked on large urban or suburban homes for the English aristocracy, such as Terry's extension of John Nash's neoclassical villa Hanover Lodge, in the Regent's Park district of London (2003–2010), or the neo-Palladian country house designed by Saumarez Smith in Hayes, Hampshire (2003–2007), explicitly inspired by Andrea Palladio's unbuilt Villa Ragona.[62] Author of the new Howard Theatre, for Downing College, Cambridge, built in dressed stone, Francis Terry drew not only the plans, but also the Doric ornamentation, and the mural of the Acropolis that forms the backdrop to the stage (2009–2010). All these projects look to embody, both through their forms and through their construction methods (enlisting as much as possible traditional craftspeople, such as ironworkers, plasterers, cabinetmakers or stonecutters), this reinvented classical tradition.

Likeable and accessible, these architects, nicknamed the 'classical peaceniks' in the press, present an infinitely less militant front than their elders, who were involved in intense postmodern doctrinal debates, struggling with real ideological adversaries.[63] Yet, the large neo-classical drawing that Pentreath, Saumarez Smith, and Terry performed at the RIBA in May 2010 is a direct manifestation of the neo-traditionalist doctrine formulated at the turn of the 1980s, combining a critical posture towards the contemporary period, a rejection of the idea of progress and historicism more generally (in the sense of a historical and teleological conception of time), and a desire to dehistoricise the past to render it active in the present.

This classical architecture, whose 'tradition' has been retroactively shaped by authors such as Porphyrios, Krier, Terry and Adam, defines itself, above all, as a new narrative of time, a sort of regressive uchronia that contests the generally-held view of history. Uchronia, a utopian genre common within English literature, is a fictional process that, by altering a part of the past, modifies the trajectory of history, making it diverge from the path it actually took. An author of uchronia 'writes history, not as it was, but as it could have been, as he believes and he doesn't warn us of his intentional errors, nor of his aims'.[64] Usually, this literary genre serves a revolutionary project, modifying a past event to give, fictitiously, a preponderant importance to a minor actor and to reverse a status quo. Paradoxically, neo-traditional architects use the uchronic process in the opposite way, to erase major aesthetic and technological ruptures of the past (artistic or architectural avant-gardes, major technological innovations, major politico-economic shifts), and to establish a natural continuity with a chosen, idealised, and massively reconstructed past.

Known for his intense practice and regular teaching of 'measured drawing', George Saumarez Smith effectively establishes a direct relationship that works to suppress historical distance with the buildings that he surveys.[65] Through this graphic ritual, he claims an immediate experience with objects from the past, focusing on their timelessness as supreme quality.

Another illustration of this immediate, revisionist, and nostalgic relationship to the past can be found in Prince Charles's book, *A Vision of Britain.*[66] On a double-page spread he publishes a full colour reproduction of Canaletto's famous landscape of the Thames, painted between 1746 and1754, that embodies, for him, the idealised neoclassical past that history has torn us from: 'when Canaletto painted it, this landscape was still untouched, and the streets remained more or less intact until 1960'.[67] But in the book, the painting is covered by a sheet of tracing paper onto which has been printed a contemporary photograph of the same landscape with the current skyline of sky-scrapers and cranes. The visual and editorial device works in both directions: when we overlay the tracing paper

Fig. 9: Carl Laubin, Poundbury, 71 x 91cm, oil on canvas, 1992. Source: https://www.carllaubin.com/album/buildings-and-archi- tecture.html?p=1.

on the painting, it functions as a criticism of the present, as a demonstration that current architecture and urbanism has destroyed the harmony of the neoclassical landscape, causing perhaps even more damage than the German bombings; when we lift the tracing paper, it functions inversely, as the representation of a strange project, conceived as the unveiling of a past that subsists by fragments in the present, and of which it would suffice to recreate the disappeared fragments to restore the whole.[68] This project, both idealist and regressive, resembles in many ways what Zygmunt Bauman has called 'retrotopia', that is, a utopia with an inverted front, a 'symmetrical inversion' of the utopia that we observe in western civilisation where 'the global epidemic of nostalgia' has replaced 'the frenetic progressist epidemic'.[69]

In the final paragraphs of his book *Architecture: Choice or fate*, Léon Krier clearly describes this nostalgic motor that animates new classical architecture:

> We all come from somewhere, and we all feel the need to belong. If that desire is not fulfilled it turns to pain. That is the literal meaning of nostalgia – the longing to return, the pain of being severed. Our ideal of a beautiful city, of a beautiful house, of beautiful architecture is not utopian; nor is it a fantasy or an impossibility. We have all experienced the reality of it and it works strongly inside us. We have found there an unimaginable feeling of freedom, a possibility of happiness, a dream of well-being. … A beautiful village, a beautiful house, a beautiful city can become a home for all, a universal home. But if we lose this aim, we build our own exile here on Earth.[70]

Is retrotopia not precisely this construction of an ideal and perfect topos, which allows us escape from a nightmarish future and to rekindle links with a past that we have lost touch with? However, there are some important differences with what Bauman describes. For him, retrotopia is a neoliberal negation of all state order, a project focused on the individual and fundamentally despatialised: 'the projects of human happiness … have lost all fixity, have ceased to be connected to a particular *topos*, becoming individualised, privatised, personalised projects ('outsourced', carried by individuals as a snail carries its shell).'[71] On the contrary, the neo-traditionalist movements project themselves onto a horizon that is certainly regressive, but profoundly conservative and anti-liberal, centred not upon the individual but on an idealised 'community', identified with a common architectural and urban space of classical tradition, federated by its beauty and harmony.[72]

In November 2018, Theresa May's conservative government appointed Roger Scruton to preside over a highly controversial commission of enquiry into architectural quality. Baptised 'Building Better Building Beautiful', this commission argued for the 'beauty' of the built environment as a civic value: 'Understood as the overall Gestalt character of a place, beauty is not only an intrinsic value: it has social and economic value too and is indeed fundamental to the happiness and well-being of human communities.'[73] If this beauty, guaranteed by traditional architecture, has an economic value, it resides within what Luc Boltanski and Arnaud Esquerre have called the economy of enrichment, symptomatic of late, deindustrialised capitalism, no longer extensive but intensive.[74] According to the two sociologists, over the past years, rather than focusing on the production of new objects, capitalism's development has focused on the never-ending revalorisation of already produced objects, through their incessant recycling on the antique, art, and historic property markets, or in the realms of second-hand trade, heritage, or tourism. The enrichment economy, which 'is based on the exploitation of a deposit none other than the past', could be seen as the economic model of retrotopia.[75] [Fig. 9]

It is interesting to note that, to describe their respective models, Bauman, Boltanski and Esquerre all make a detour via the work of Walter Benjamin. Bauman reinterprets Paul Klee's 1920

painting *Angelus Novus* in the inverse sense of the German philosopher: no longer as the representation of a historical angel being carried to a radiant future by the winds of progress and progressist utopia, scanning the catastrophe that he is fleeing, but rather as the representation of a retrotopian angel flying towards a reassuring past, eyes fixed on the apocalyptic future announced. Boltanski and Esquerre invert the Benjaminian reflection on the phantasmagoria of merchandise: no longer the fetishisation of the value of the newness of objects, but rather a mise en scène of their aura of oldness, or at least their familiar, accustomed character, their conformity to tradition.[76]

To conclude, we can ask ourselves if, much more than an epiphenomenon, the neo-traditional and new classical architecture that is flourishing today in several national contexts, and that is promoted by populist ideologues more or less close to power, might not be, on the contrary, the most well-developed architectural incarnation of the spirit of late capitalism, animated by this retrotopic phantasmagoria of the past.

Notes

1. In the sense that Karlheinz Weißmann uses the term, as an 'occupation of areas in the pre-political realm'. Cited by Stephan Trüby, 'Right-wing Spaces', *e-flux,* 23 January 2017, https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/superhumanity/68711/right-wing-spaces/.
2. Hettie O'Brien, 'How Classical Architecture Became a Weapon for the Far Right', *The New Statesman,* 21 November 2018, https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2018/11/how-classical-architecture-became-weapon-far-right.
3. Trüby, 'Right-wing Spaces'.
4. Speech made by Thierry Baudet, 20 March 2019, cited by Bart-Jan Polman in 'A Masochistic Heresy', *The Avery Review* no. 40 (May 2019), https://www.averyreview.com/issues/40/masochistic-heresy.
5. Joe Mathieson and Tim Verlaan, 'The Far Right's Obsession With Modern Architecture', *Failed Architecture,* 11 September 2019, https://failedarchitecture.com/the-far-rights-obsession-with-modern-architecture/.
6. See the time-lapse film by Benjamin Moore, https://vimeo.com/11735656.
7. George Saumarez-Smith interviewed by the author, 2 February 2018.
8. Charles Hind and Irena Murray, eds., *Palladio and His Legacy: A Transatlantic Journey* (Venice: Marsilio, 2010). The exhibition toured to the Morgan Library & Museum, New York (2 April – 1 August 2010), the National Building Museum, Washington, DC (2 September 2010 – 9 January 2011), the Milwaukee Art Museum, (27 January – 1 May 2011), and the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (3 September – 31 December 2011).
9. After the dissolution of parliament by the queen, at the request Gordon Brown, the Conservative Party, led by David Cameron, claimed a narrow victory in the general election held on 6 May 2010.
10. Steve Parnell, 'Acroshaw: Forgotten, but not Forgiven', *Architecture and Culture* 6, no. 1 (2018): 37–59.
11. Elizabeth Keslacy, 'The Alibi of Style: Reading Classicism in *Architectural Design* Magazine (1979–1982)', in *Mediated Messages: Periodicals, Exhibitions*

and the Shaping of Postmodern Architecture, ed. Véronique Patteeuw and Léa-Catherine Szacka (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 175–96.

12. Geoffrey Broadbent, ed., *Architectural Design*, 49, no. 8–9 (1979) (*A.D. Profile* no. 23: *Neo-Classicism: Schinkel, Johnson, Stirling*).
13. Ibid., 6.
14. Charles Jencks, ed., *Architectural Design* 50, no. 5–6 (1980) (*A.D. Profile no. 28*: *Post-Modern Classicism*); Charles Jencks, ed., *Architectural Design* 52, no. 1–2, (1982) (*A.D. Profile no. 39*: *Free-Style Classicism*).
15. Charles Jencks, 'Introduction' to *Free-Style Classicism*, 10.
16. Demetri Porphyrios, ed., *Architectural Design* 52, no. 5–6 (1982) (*A.D. Profile* no. 41: *Classicism is not a Style*).
17. Demetri Porphyrios, 'Classicism is not a Style' in Porphyrios, *Classicism is not a Style,* 52.
18. Ibid*.,* 56.
19. Demetri Porphyrios, 'Scandinavian doricism: Danish and Swedish architecture 1905–1930' in Porphyrios, *Classicism is not a Style,* 22–35; 30.
20. Ibid., 28.
21. Léon Krier, 'Classical architecture and vernacular building', in Porphyrios, *Classicism is not a Style*, 40. Krier and Porphyrios collaborated on a re-edition of Quatremère de Quincy, *Essai sur la nature, le but et les moyens de l'imitation dans les Beaux-Arts* (Brussels: Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1980).
22. Krier, Classical architecture and vernacular building', 40.
23. Demetri Porphyrios, 'L'infâme pluralisme', in Quatremère de Quincy, *Essai sur la nature*, vii.
24. In 1980 Demetri Porphyrios defended his PhD on Alvar Aalto, published under the title: *Sources of Modern Eclecticism: Studies on Alvar Aalto* (London: Academy Editions/New York: St Martin's Press, 1982).
25. Demetri Porphyrios, 'On the Methodology of Architectural History', *Architectural Design* 51, no. 6–7 (1981) (*A.D. Profile* no. 35: *Building & Rational Architecture,* ed. Demetri Porphyrios).
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28. Léon Krier, *Architecture: Choice or fate* (Winterbourne: Papadakis Publisher, 1998), first published in French in 1996, 199.
29. Anthony Vidler, *Histories of the Immediate Present: Inventing Architectural Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008); epilogue, 'Postmodern or Posthistoire?' 191–200.
30. Paolo Portoghesi, 'The End of Prohibitionism', in *The Presence of the Past, First International Exhibition of Architecture*, ed. Gabriella Borsano (Milan: Electa,1980), 9.
31. Manfredo Tafuri and Georges Teyssot, 'Classical Melancholies', in Porphyrios, *Classicism is not a Style*, 7.
32. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
33. David Cannadine, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition", c. 1820–1977', ibid., 101–64.
34. Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in Hobsbawm; *Invention*, 1–14.
35. Eric Hobsbawm, 'The Social Function of the Past: Some Questions', *Past and Present* 55, no. 1 (May 1972): 3–17.
36. Eric Hobsbawm, 'Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870–1914', in Hobsbawm and Ranger *Invention of Tradition*, 267.
37. Notably in Roger Scruton, *Fools, Frauds and Firebrands: Thinkers of the New Left* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).
38. Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Architecture* (London: Methuen, 1979).
39. Ibid., 256.
40. Lynn Barber, 'The Shock of the Old', *The Guardian,* 7 March 2004, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2004/mar/07/architecture.
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42. Richard John, *Robert Adam: The Search for a Modern Classicism* (London: Images Publishing Group, 2010), 164–65.
43. William Chambers, *A Treatise on the Decorative Part of Civil Architecture* (London: J. Haberkorn, 1759), 105 and further.
44. See Alan Colquhoun's criticism, 'Rational Architecture', *Architectural Design* 45, no. 6 (June 1975): 365–70; the catalogue was published later: *Rational Architecture Rationnelle* (Brussels: Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1978).
45. Stephen Parnell, 'Acroshaw: Forgotten, but not Forgiven', *Architecture and Culture* 6, no. 1 (2018): 7–8; John Summerson, *John Soane* (London: Academy Editions, 1983).
46. Cf. Michela Rosso, 'Classique et anticlassique : récits de l'architecture en Grande-Bretagne, entre XIXe et XXe siècles', in *Louis Hautecœur et la tradition classique*, ed. Antonio Brucculeri (Paris: INHA, 2008) (http:// books.openedition.org/inha/2931); Elizabeth McKellar, 'Popularism versus professionalism: John Summerson and the Twentieth-Century Creation of the "Georgian"', in *Articulating British Classicism: New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Architecture*, ed. Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar (London: Ashgate, 2004), 35–56. John Summerson, *Inigo Jones* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983 [1966]); John Summerson, *The Life and Work of John Nash, Architect* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1980); John Summerson, *Georgian London* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978 [1945]).
47. David Dunster, ed., *Edwin Lutyens* (London: Academy Editions, 1979). In 1988 RIBA organised an exhibition of Holden's drawings at the Heinz Gallery. Lucy Archer, *Raymond Erith, Architect* (Burford: The Cygnet Press, 1985); Lucy Archer, *Raymond Erith, East Anglian Architect* (Sudbury (Suffolk): Gainsborough's House, 1979).
48. Before Quinlan Terry, in 1958 Raymond Erith had been appointed as architect responsible for the site. He undertook the restoration of Nos. 10 and 11, and the full reconstruction of No. 12 Downing Street (1959–63). At the biennale, Terry exhibited the development of seven neo-Palladian houses at Frog Meadow in Dedham (Suffolk), 1967–80. See *La Presenza del passato: Prima mostra internazionale di architettura: Corderia dell'Arsenale: La Biennale di Venezia 1980, settore Architettura* (Venice: Edizioni La Biennale di Venezia, 1980), 300–1.
49. Michela Rosso, 'Heritage, Populism and Anti-Modernism in the Controversy of the Mansion House Square Scheme', in *Re-Framing Identities: Architecture's Turn to History, 1970–1990*, ed. Ákos Moravánszky and Torsten Lange (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2016), 233.
50. Cf. Federico Ferrari, *Le Populisme esthétique. L'architecture comme outil identitaire* (Gollion: InFolio, 2015), 118–62 ; Michela Rosso, 'Il principe Carlo e il dibattito pubblico sull'architettura in Inghilterra', in *1970–2000. Episodi e temi di storia dell'architettura*, ed. Francesca Filippi, Luca Gibello and Manfredo Robilant (Turin : Celid, 2006), 97–106; Benoit Jacquet, 'Londres, capitale du post-modernisme ? Transformations des modèles et des pratiques de l'architecture dans la culture britannique à la fin du XXe siècle' (PhD thesis, Faculté de l'Environnement naturel, architectural et construit, EPFL, 2016), 125–185.
51. Charles, HRH The Prince of Wales, 'A speech by HRH the Prince of Wales at the 150th anniversary of the Royal Institute of British Architects', London: Hampton Court Palace, 30 May 1984, https://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-150th-anniversary-royal-institute-british-architects-riba-royal-gala.
52. The characterisation is by Charles Jencks, 'Ethics and Prince Charles', *Architectural Design* 59, no. 5–6 (1989) (*A.D. Profile* no. 79: *Prince Charles and the Architectural Debate*), 26. See *Architectural Design* 62, no. 5–6 (1992) (*A.D. Profile* no. 97: *Paternoster Square and the New Classical Tradition*, ed. Andrea Papadakis).
53. Rosso, 'Classique et anticlassique', 1–3.
54. Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London Verso, 2005), 74.
55. The argument that Prince Charles's championing of classical architecture serves a 'Christian Crusade' is

articulated by Jencks in 'Ethics and Prince Charles', 28–29.

56. Charles, HRH The Prince of Wales, speech for the Corporate of London Planning and Communication Committee's annual dinner at Mansion House, 1 December 1987 (https://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-corporation-london-planning-and-communication-committees-annual). Cf. Blaise Dupuis, 'La nouvelle ville traditionnelle: géographies d'un modèle urbain mobile' (PhD thesis, Faculty of Geography, Université de Neuchâtel, 2017), 127.
57. Ibid., 126–29.
58. As Benoit Jacquet has noted (Ibid., 218), the Institute was in operation between 1992 and 2001, located from October 1993 at Gloucester Gate, in one of the neoclassical villas bordering Regent's Park built by John Nash between 1810 and 1811.
59. Inspired by Léon Krier who is one of the founding members, the Urban Villages Group was set up in 1989 as a private organisation, becoming, in 1992, a public organisation under the name of Urban Villages Forum, before being integrated in the Prince's Foundation in 1998. Cf. Michelle Thompson-Fawcett, 'Envisioning Urban Villages: A Critique of a Movement and Two Urban Transformations (PhD thesis, University of Oxford, School of Geography, 1998).
60. Through the foundation he created in 1984, the businessman Richard H. Driehaus (born in 1942) has become one of the mentors of contemporary classical American architecture. The first winners of the Driehaus Architecture Prize, founded in 2003, were Léon Krier (2003), Demetri Porphyrios (2004), and Quinlan Terry (2005).
61. Ferrari, *Le Populisme esthétique*, 91–117; Dupuis, 'La nouvelle ville traditionnelle', 282–97.
62. Ben Pentreath, Georges Saumarez Smith and Francis Terry, Three Classicists: (London: The Bardwell Press, 2010), 64.
63. Alan Powers, 'Classical Peaceniks', *The Spectator*, 22 May 2010, https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/classical-peaceniks. The term 'peaceniks' is a nickname for non-violent anti-war activists.
64. Charles Renouvier, Uchronie (l'utopie dans l'histoire): Esquisse historique apocryphe du développement de la civilisation européenne tel qu'il n'a pas été, tel qu'il aurait pu être (Paris : La Critique philosophique, 1876), II.
65. Pierre Chabard, 'Fresh Classicism', *Criticat* no. 20 (Spring 2018): 66–83.
66. Charles, HRH Prince of Wales, *A Vision of Britain: A Personal View of Architecture* (London, Doubleday, 1989), 56–57.
67. Canaletto, *London: The Thames from Somerset House Terrace towards the City, 1750–51*, The Royal Collection of the UK. Charles, HRH Prince of Wales, *A Vision of Britain*, 55.
68. Prince Charles used this argument in his 1987 Mansion House speech.
69. Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), 14.
70. Krier, *Architecture: Choice or fate*, 205.
71. Bauman, *Retrotopia,* 14.
72. 'Community' is none other than the last of the ten commandments of architecture given by Prince Charles in *A Vision of Britain*, 96.
73. *Creating space for beauty: The Interim Report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission* (July 2019), 19.
74. Luc Boltanski and Arnaud Esquerre, *Enrichment: A Critique of Commodities,* trans. Catherine Porter (London: Wiley, 2020 [2017]).
75. Ibid., 11.
76. Ibid., 10–11.

Biography

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End Times and Architectural Style on the Christian Campus

Rachel Julia Engler

> And the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.
> Revelation 8:7

In a 1984 Yankelovich poll, '39 percent of a sample population agreed with the statement "When the Bible predicts that the earth will be destroyed by fire, it's telling us that a nuclear war is inevitable".'[1] Indeed, for many in the twentieth-century United States, apocalyptic thinking of this kind – which marries biblical prophecy with contemporary geopolitical circumstances – was pervasive as a method for framing the world-historical events that occured in their lifetimes.[2] As William Martin described in a 1982 cover story for the *Atlantic*, 'a sizable subculture exists in this country, for whom the past, present, and future are interpreted in a manner radically different from the way they are presented to us in secular media and institutions.'[3] And while it was then, in that historical context, the atomic bomb that promised the fulfillment of biblical prophecy and allowed for a political and cultural alliance between secular and religious visions of the end of human history, similar conclusions continue to be drawn to meet today's novel horrors.

It is in relation to such a politically inflected anticipation of Christ's Second Coming that this essay considers the contrasting choices of futuristic and neo-vernacular colonial revival idioms – indeed the question of what might be called architectural style – in the building projects of the popular television evangelists Oral Roberts and Pat Robertson. What did stylistic choices implicitly coded by references to history mean for Cold War evangelical institutions? In a period when such religious cosmologies, specifically those informed by dispensationalist traditions, came into contact with the prospect of imminent nuclear disaster, what was it to build in a revival style, for example to return to a colonial idiom? Did such a vernacular suggest a different horizon of expectation than so-called futuristic or modernistic modes in ecclesiastical construction? More generally, can a style's relation to historical precedent reveal beliefs about the future? A belief in 'No Future'? For, as the Lutheran scholar of religion Martin E. Marty writes, 'whatever else the talk about apocalyptic ends in all its forms assumes, this stands out: the world as we know it and time as we experience and reckon with it ultimately have no future.'[4]

'Ephemera, ephemera, all is ephemera'

The future was in the air at Oral Roberts University – from the central spire of its Prayer Tower, which evokes the Space Needle of the 1962 World's Fair, to the cutting-edge communications technologies to be available to its Christian students.[5] [Fig. 1] The Oklahoma campus was notable for this gilded expression of modernity: a 1973 article in the *New York Times Magazine* remarked that the school's buildings were 'right out of '2001', and Robert Moses, the New York public official and planner, commented upon his visit to Tulsa, 'the new Oral Roberts University, set on a hill … is architecturally startling to Ivy League, Gothic, Georgian ancients.'[6] And there it was in plans and renderings: an

impressive campus laid out along diagonal sightlines; classrooms and administrative buildings with thin, exaggerated supports tracing their geometric perimeters; and three y-shaped dormitory blocks that evoke, among other things, the dogmatic city plans of highest modernism.

But a kind of ambivalence lay beneath the university's leaders ambitions for the new institution. An article in the July 1964 issue of the campus publication the *ORU Witness*, describing the new university's undertakings, concluded with this subtle but revealing promise:

> we intend to keep building until all who are ‘‘supposed to meet us” will find room on the campus … where we hope to see a new man brought forth to meet the challenge of this age and every age until Christ Returns. We are building the University to stand until the return of Christ.[7]

We are building the University to stand until the return of Christ: this is a pronouncement of intent that simultaneously bespeaks endurance and transience. And, when applied specifically to architectural efforts, it suggests a nearly equivocal relation to traditional architectural-historical notions of stability, durability, and permanence.

The promise made at ORU, of the university standing until Christ's return, also demonstrates a prophetic theme and orientation important to its eponymous founder. In 1963, as construction was underway on the tremendous project that would be his university, Oral Roberts (1918–2009) published a slim volume, *The Drama of the End-Time*, in which he asks his reader: ‘What lies just ahead? … Nations are perplexed; great leaders are baffled. … Marked uncertainty is everywhere. Mistrust hampers any real progress at the disarmament negotiations. Can anyone doubt that we are living in the last days?’[8] [Fig. 2]

The passage, which puts ‘disarmament negotiations’ and ‘the last days’ into immediate dialogue, points to a set of beliefs common to the world of television evangelism; not only Oral Roberts but also Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Jimmy Swaggart, among others, were adherents of a premillenial dispensationalism that ably internalised nuclear war, among other varieties of political and environmental disaster, as the realisation of biblical prophecy.[9] Paul Boyer, who has written extensively about this alliance, describes what he terms the ‘fundamentalist apocalyptic’: a ‘literalistic interpretive hermeneutic in which the key texts are viewed not as allegorical representations of spiritual realities … but as a guide for God's plan for human history, verbally dictated and inerrant in every detail.’[10] For example, nuclear weapons might be understood to have been foretold in scripture, particularly in the Book of Revelation, but also elsewhere; one common citation, mustered in support of the connection, is from 2 Peter: ‘The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up’ (3:10).

Roberts's forward-looking undertakings in Tulsa – defined as they were not only by a streamlined space-age mode but also by concrete technological sophistication – may seem to be at fundamental odds with his end-times thinking. But such contradiction might also suggest a broader phenomenon, an expansion of the possible spatial effects of the geopolitical moment. If, in some secular cases, the architectural reverberations of Cold War thinking manifested themselves as an orientation toward survival – think of the bunker or the dispersed centre – there was, equally, a contemporary mood by which the insubstantial and fleeting became a vital and counterintuitive response to the prospect of apocalypse. In 1954, John Ely Burchard, then a dean at MIT, suggested in *Architectural Record* that ‘historians trying to generalise from our buildings may develop elaborate hypotheses to explain the metal and glass cages as an expression of the feeling of a society with a sense of death, “ephemera, ephemera, all is ephemera”, in which

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

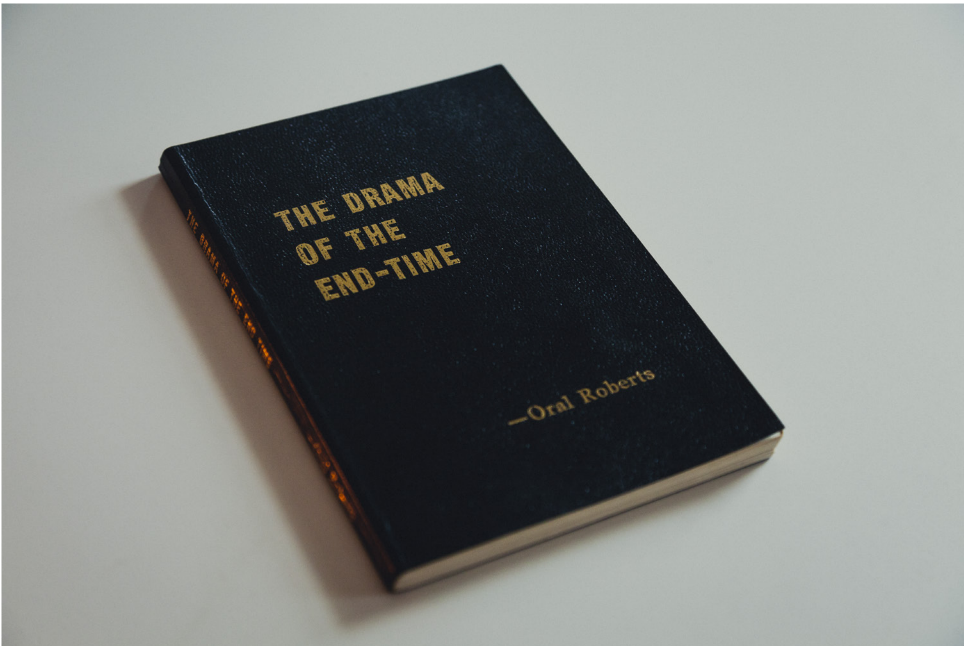

Fig. 1: Prayer Tower, Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Photo: Daniel Thomas.

Fig. 2: Oral Roberts, *The Drama of the End-Time* (Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1963). Photo of author's own copy.

building for permanence was obviously futile and for which there was something symbolic in using fragile and transitory materials.'[11] Imagine here the shimmering frangibility of the curtain walls that in the postwar era descended upon midtown Manhattan – so many noses thumbed at doom.[12]

Burchard's wording is a play on Ecclesiastes, 'Vanity of vanities; all is vanity' (1:2). The reference provides a re-entry into a Christian worldview defined by a sense of the impermanence of earthly concern. And indeed, rather than testifying to ephemerality of a fatalistic or ironic kind – of an empire engaged in a confident dance with its own destruction – Oral Roberts's architecture of glass seems a sign of allegiance to another timestream, suggestive of a logic by which it is not earthly survival, per se, that is germane, and by which the 'end' is not an absolute.

History ought to go someplace

One of Roberts's most immediate peers, in terms of national profile and a parallel involvement in education and broadcasting, is Pat Robertson (1930–), the minister, one-time candidate for president, and founder of both the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) and its partner in Virginia Beach, the Christian Broadcasting Network University (since 1990 known as Regent University). CBN's studio headquarters sit at the head of a symmetrically composed drive, the entrance inscribed in a sloping hand with Matthew 24:14: 'The Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.' This task of evangelism was, from the network's founding, to be undertaken with the aid of production facilities and broadcast technologies rivaling those of major networks. And yet, the headquarters' exterior – which founder Pat Robertson himself described as 'lovely Colonial architecture' – is incommunicative of these means, staunchly mute about the sophisticated equipment that it houses.[13]

Instead, Robertson's red brick and white columns evoke prominent secular institutions like the University of Virginia and the values – of gentility, of tradition – associated with such places. The contemporary reiteration of historical styles at the evangelical school might appear, from a certain critical perspective, as a kind of kitsch historicism, the replication of Thomas Jefferson's forms amid the blossoms of interstate off-ramps incongruous at best. But what if the campus at CBN was taken at face value, as an architectural effort to be read against the expressed beliefs of its founder, beliefs to do with the end of history, time, the world? In terms of style, and of style's relation to Cold War–era eschatology, Robertson's institutions serve as a compelling foil to Oral Roberts University.

Robertson has, in the years since CBN's founding, varied in his commitment to a particular prophetic timeline, but at some point he predicted the end of the world by 1982.[14] In February of that year: 'the onrush of events toward the end of the year may see the world in flames.' And then in May: 'I guarantee you by the fall of 1982 there is going to be a judgment on the world.'[15] The world in flames, including, presumably, the new red brick campus of CBN, planned from 1976 and constructed from 1979, based in part on designs by the Durham, North Carolina-based architect, Archie Royal Davis. Why build in a mode evocative of an American past when ultimate destruction – no future – is nigh?

At CBN, 'buildings were… fashioned out of half a million handmade bricks laid in Flemish Bond.'[16] The headquarters building was allegedly inspired, in part, by Monticello, and the architect Davis was described as 'one of the leading authorities in America on colonial architecture.'[17] A feature in *Harper's* magazine claimed that the campus 'got you to thinking not so much about Jesus but about Patrick Henry or Thomas Jefferson.'[18] Furthermore, Pat Robertson's personal office was decorated with eighteenth-century furniture that recalled his own Virginia roots and patrician background.[19]

The campus was placed at the intersection of Indian River Road and Interstate 64. An early proposal specified that the 142-acre (roughly 57 hectares) site would include 'International

Headquarters' with 'studios, offices, a 24-hour prayer center, and language translation facilities', 'satellite earth station for sending and receiving television signals for the United States and overseas', the 'CBN Institute, where students … will be trained in all aspects of radio and television broadcasting to prepare them to communicate the Gospel', as well as a conference center and an 'international, evangelical seminary'.[20] The cover of CBN magazine *The Flame* in which these plans for the campus were announced depicts 'a majestic sunrise' at 'the landing place of Cape Henry, Virginia, of America's first permanent English settlers, 13 years before the Pilgrims.'[21] A description within the issue makes explicit the intended connection between those settlers and the mission of CBN:

> as their first official act in the New World, the colonists knelt in prayer around a cross on this beach ... and in a service of prayer and thanksgiving dedicated the new land to Almighty God. … The light of the Gospel that they brought with them ... from the Old World – is now being broadcast by The Christian Broadcasting Network throughout America. Now God has led CBN to build an International Communications Center in Virginia Beach to claim, from this place of spiritual beginnings, our nation and our world for the glory of Jesus Christ.[22]

In other words, Robertson understood his work in Virginia Beach and at CBN to perpetuate that of the colonial forefathers and, moreover, interpreted that continuity as proof of providential will.

On another page in the issue, a painting and a photograph are paired to a similar end. On the left, Englishmen are painted in prayer around a cross: 'the first colonists' first formal worship service on April 29, 1607.' On the right is the painting's pendant, a photograph of the dedication ceremony for the CBN site. Captions underline further similarities: one says: 'both [gatherings] were attended by about 100 persons ... both dedicated the land to the glory of God.'[23] 'The God-fearing colonists little realized that balmy day that God, in His infinite goodness, would someday establish an international Christian ministry 12 miles away where prayer would be offered 24 hours a day for the needs of people everywhere.'[24] The connection between the settling of the New World and the world-converting aims of the television ministry is made explicit again and again. In *The Flame*, for example, in spring 1976:

> This unique ministry of preaching the Gospel literally around the world is a fulfillment of the dream of evangelization that God gave the Christian men who envisioned and supported the first permanent English settlement in the New World, Jamestown, located, like CBN, in the Tidewater Region of Virginia.'[25]

The exact timing of this work was meaningful: that the ground for the headquarters building was to be broken in 1976 was seen as 'a fitting gift from North American Christians to God in honor of the Bicentennial.'[26] Robertson and his supporters not only connected CBN to the Jamestown settlers but also tied the Bicentennial celebration itself to a project of evangelism.

Robertson's time-jumping – from the 'settling' of Virginia to the television-heavy 1970s – has as its background a specific relation to a providentially inspired telling of history. As Alva J. McClain, then president of Grace College and seminary, wrote in 1956, history 'should have some proper goal. It ought to go someplace … There ought to be in history some worthy consummation of its long and arduous course.'[27] Secular history, without a transcendent eschatological destination, appears, by contrast, aimless, without pointed meaning.[28] Further, though, there is a branch of Christian historiography, specifically postmillennial, that is attached to a vision of America's distinct role in history. In this sense, the references to Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson are apt.

In the secular realm, just up the road from the Christian Broadcasting Network, lies so-called

Colonial Williamsburg, an open-air museum of eighteenth-century Virginia life, a project that calls upon history, and historical style, in parallel pursuit of a Cold War diplomatic vision.[29] As John D. Rockefeller III said of his family's philanthropic support of the project, the hope was to use Colonial Williamsburg to 'indoctrinate visitors in the importance of American ideals.'[30] This is a critical comparison: the deployment of the colonial revival style at CBN connects both to a specific vision of the network's relation to history and place and to a patriotic anticommunism that was both of its time and fundamentally underwritten by a perception of the particular role of the United States in world history.[31] This vision of the United States dates back to writings by eighteenth-century theologian Jonathan Edwards, who figured the New World as the founding site of Christ's kingdom, and persisted into the twentieth century, when even those who otherwise held premillenialist beliefs at times 'adopted a type of postmillennialism which teaches that the United States has a divine mission as the last best hope of humanity.'[32] It is useful to acknowledge the doctrinal mismatch of these positions, and yet, its holders were thereby able to square prophetic claims about world history with a sometimes politically inflected orientation toward patriotic exceptionalism.[33]

Style at the End

In both cases, that of gold glass Oral Roberts University and that of red brick CBN, there is an apparent contradiction between what is said and what is done, between belief and action in the world – the end is coming; one builds as if it weren't. Timothy Weber observes in *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming* that at the Moody Bible Institute, for example, 'while the students were being taught that Christ might return at any moment, the Institute's administrators were building for the future in case he did not.'[34] It is a mode that is so common as to be defining. As Martin E. Marty observes, 'however much consistency concerning views of the end critics or cynics might demand, it is evident that many of the leaders and followers in apocalyptic movements and traditions are able to live with more than one apparently contradictory set of expectations and investments.'[35]

From the perspective of architectural history, it is surely worth considering how the imbuing of history with apocalypse-laced meaning intersects with the characteristically giddy meaninglessness of postmodernism. But what's more: design undertaken within the framework of an apocalyptic narrative troubles notions of permanence and durability historically vital to architectural discourse. And of course the question of how to build in a context of global precarity is not unique to a specific theological position; climate scientists warn that 'nearly 500 US churches built in low-lying coastal areas are in danger of flooding at least once a year by 2050, should seas continue rising amid unchecked climate change.'[36] Cold War-era, Revelation-inflected construction could reveal something about the style and nature of everyday building that continues in the face of such profound environmental disaster.

According to Oral Roberts's timeline, and to the general position of pretribulationists, the church will be raptured – in other words, the Rapture will occur – before the hardships of the Tribulation. Which is to say, the horrors accompanying the end of today's world will come, inevitably, but the saved will be exempted from them, spared the suffering to befall the unredeemed. This kind of doubled certainty resonates with our own moment of environmental devastation – those whose capital will directly or indirectly usher in its grotesque climax are sure, not by theology but by the very fact of their age and the irony of generational timing, that they will not be here when the inevitable comes to pass. It is a state of mystical exemption with an inconceivable toll.

Notes

1. Daniel Wojcik, *The End of the World As We Know It: Faith, Fatalism, and Apocalypse in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 1. As Charles Strozier puts it, 'the apocalypse is more than the subtext. It is the ground of fundamentalist being.' Charles Strozier, *Apocalypse: On the Psychology of Fundamentalism in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 11.
2. Wojcik, *The End of the World*, 3.
3. William Martin, 'Waiting for the End: The Growing Interest in Apocalyptic Prophesy', *The Atlantic,* June 1982, 31–37.
4. Martin E. Marty, 'The Future of No Future: Frameworks of Interpretation', in *Apocalypticism in the Modern Period and the Contemporary Age*, vol. 3 of *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: Continuum, 1998), 461.
5. I am grateful to the staff at the Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma, who in autumn 2019 pointed me to the possibility of a connection with the Space Needle and World's Fair architectures.
6. Edward B. Fiske, 'The Oral Roberts Empire', *New York Times Magazine*, 22 April 1973, 18; Robert Moses, 'Notes and Comments on a Brief Visit to Tulsa', *Newsday*, 16 March 1968, 14.
7. 'Eight Major Goals', *ORU Witness*, July 1964, 5.
8. Oral Roberts, *The Drama of the End-Time* (Tulsa: Oral Roberts, 1963), 5.
9. Wojcik, *The End of the World*, 7.
10. Paul Boyer, 'The Growth of Fundamentalist Apocalyptic in the United States', in *Apocalypticism in the Modern Period and the Contemporary Age*, vol. 3 of *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: Continuum, 1998), 140.
11. John Ely Burchard, 'Architecture in the Atomic Age', *Architectural Record* 116, no. 6 (December 1954): 120.
12. See, for example, Peter Blake, 'Slaughter on 6th Avenue', *Architectural Forum* 122 (June 1965): 13–19.
13. 'A Personal Message from Pat Robertson,' *The Flame*, n.d., special edition, 7. All issues of *The Flame* were consulted at the Special Collections Research Center at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina, where they are held as part of architect Archie Royal Davis's papers.
14. Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 138.
15. Ibid.
16. Dick Dabney, 'God's Own Network: The TV Kingdom of Pat Robertson', *Harper's*, 1 August 1980, 34.
17. 'CBN International Headquarters, a Bicentennial Gift to God, Fulfills First Colonists' Dream of World Evangelization,' *The Flame*, February–March 1976, 4–5.
18. Dabney, 'God's Own Network', 34.
19. Ibid. The architect's papers include specifications for the project that indicate the use of prefinished architectural woodwork, specifically the use of exposed American walnut in the president's office and conference rooms on the third floor. See CBN Specifications, 241.51.1, Archie Royal Davis Papers, MC #241, Special Collections Research Center, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC.
20. 'God's Word to CBN for 1976: Communicate the Gospel', *The Flame*, n.d., special edition, 3.
21. Ibid., and also see the cover of this issue.
22. 'God's Plan to CBN for 1976', *The Flame*, n.d., special edition, 4–5.
23. 'God Reasserts His Claim on America', *The Flame*, n.d., special edition, 6.
24. 'America's First Prayer Meeting Held in Virginia Beach', *The Flame*, n.d., special edition, 6.
25. 'CBN International Headquarters, a Bicentennial Gift to God', Fulfills First Colonists' Dream of World Evangelization,' *The Flame*, February–March 1976, 4–5.
26. 'America's First Prayer Meeting Held in Virginia Beach.' *The Flame*, n.d., special edition, 6.
27. Alva J. McClain, 'Premillenialism as a Philosophy of History', in *Understanding the Times: Prophetic Messages Delivered at the 2nd International Congress on Prophecy, New York City*, ed. William Culbertson and Herman B. Centz (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956), 23–24.

28. ‘Late-twentieth-century prophecy writers, like their predecessors, view history as predetermined. … What are the implications of this conviction that history represents the unfolding of a divine plan? First, it reflects a profound dissatisfaction with “secular” versions of history. Without an eschatological goal, observed one writer, history is meaningless’ and ‘most historical scholarship seems pointless – a mere recital of facts, signifying nothing.’ Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More,* 312.
29. In 1983, for example, Ronald Reagan hosted Margaret Thatcher, Pierre Trudeau, and Helmut Kohl, among others, in Williamsburg, for an economic summit meeting of the Group of Seven. On the occasion, and in his dinner toast, Reagan noted, ‘our countries were linked by a multitude of mutual interests and by a shared commitment to freedom and democracy. Williamsburg, as a site, was the site of the first representative assembly and the second university in the Colonies which then became the United States. It has been a particularly appropriate place in which to rededicate ourselves to these principles.’ US, Department of State, *Bulletin* no. 2076 (July 1983): 20, http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/summit/1983williamsburg/toast.html.
30. Anders Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002).
31. In 1988 Robertson ran as a candidate in the Republican presidential primary, a marked expression of patriotism and involvement in the worldly world for someone with a potent vision of the flames that lie beyond it.
32. Robert G. Clouse, ‘The New Christian Right, America, and the Kingdom of God’, in *Modern American Protestantism and Its World*, vol. 10 of *Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, ed. Martin E. Marty (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1993), 281, 285. While premillenialists believe in a literal eschatological chronology as laid out in the Book of Revelation, which specifies that the second coming of Christ will precede and begin the reign of peace known as the Millennium, postmillennialism puts forward the progressive, often reform-oriented, notion that Christians should themselves work toward a kingdom of peace on earth and that, after its achievement, Christ will return. For an overview of Christian apocalyptic narratives in the United States, see Matthew Avery Smith, *American Apocalypse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).
33. ‘There has always been inconsistency on the part of premillenial dispensationalists with regard to the interpretation of world events and their desire to be patriotic Americans. On the one hand they were forced to admit that America was just another secular power, but on the other hand they wanted to preserve their country as the unique expression of God’s purpose in a sinful world.’ Clouse, ‘The New Christian Right’, 288.
34. Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 45.
35. Marty, ‘The Future of No Future,’ 462–63.
36. Sebastian Malo, ‘Nearly 500 U.S. Churches Face Climate-linked Flooding Threat, Scientists Say ’, *Reuters,* 2 May 2019. link: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-climatechange-churches-idUSKCN1S903J.

Biography

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Cedric Price's Pop-Up Parliament: A Role Model for Media Architecture and Data Politics

Dennis Pohl

> *We shape our buildings, and afterwards, our buildings shape us.*
> Winston Churchill[1]

When proposing the Pop-Up Parliament as a replacement for Westminster Palace, architect Cedric Price and editor Paul Barker had one thing in mind: Political reform through architecture. In their new design, politics – traditionally happening behind closed doors – had to be made accessible to the public. Thus, the Pop-Up Parliament affirmed a definition of populism that distinguishes between political elites and ordinary citizens. To do so the designers had foreseen a block along the river Thames that connected Parliament Square with ramps running into the plenary hall to provide public access to the plenary sessions. In a period when TV cameras were not yet allowed inside, in the design three large television screens replaced Big Ben to stream plenary discussions live into the urban landscape. In front of the building, floor heating and a foldable roof gave shelter for protests to take place. Although Price's 1960s design for a new parliament was never built, it provides an architectural intervention in the relation between politics, media, and populism that is still pertinent today. In the following I use Cedric Price's work as the starting point for a reflection on the consequences of the mediatisation of politics and democratic processes. I seek to elaborate how Price's design for the Pop-Up Parliament dealt with the media-technical condition of politics and proposed architecture as an integral part in the network of governing. This not only opens up the question of how ownership and infrastructure affects the political agency of media, but also investigates how architecture influences the politics of media in the digital age.

The Pop-Up Parliament: from things to data

The main aim of the Pop-Up Parliament project was to make parliamentary politics public. If 'Parliament is to make electors feel involved in its activities…, it must be observable',wrote Price in his first contribution to *New Society,* a British centre-left weekly magazine for social and cultural commentary. [2] Published in 1965 in collaboration with the magazine's editor, Paul Barker, the project was in the first instance a provocative design proposal that imagined the demolition of the 'outdated' Westminster Palace in favour of an open architecture that would foster political reform.[3] In that period, many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century institutional buildings in London were considered for demolition, either for speculation or because they represented Victorian values and an imperial bureaucracy. This progressive project marked the starting point of a long-lasting collaboration in which the authors expressed their belief in an anti-elitist form of planning: 'what ordinary people wanted, was the best guide.'[4] This approach culminated in their later work with Reyner Banham and Peter Hall for the 'Non-Plan' project in 1969, which influenced many of Price's later projects.[5] In opposition to the allegedly outdated politics of Westminster Palace, Price and Barker argued that 'if we have an efficient parliament, let's give it a whole, efficient building to work

in. … Permanence isn't the thing to symbolise in an era of throwaway Pentel pens and planned obsolescence.'[6] Once instant architecture had become a trend in the UK by the mid-1960s, it was only a matter of time before this concept would extend into other fields.

Price had frequently used *New Society* – a magazine that often featured intellectuals like Banham, but also American linguist Noam Chomsky, and British historian Eric Hobsbawm, among others – to promote alternative social and architectural visions.[7] This time, Price was proposing his own design as a reaction to Leslie Martin and Colin Buchanan's government-appointed grand-scale Whitehall plan, running from the Thames to St James's, which favoured a brutalist aesthetic and a historicist acknowledgement in leaving the Abbey and the towers of the Palace of Westminster locally dominant.[8] But even if his project was primarily intended as a critique of the conservative architectural heritage practices of the time – which had been an ongoing topic of discussion at least since the identical reconstruction of the Houses of Commons after the 1941 bombings – the Pop-Up Parliament brought a number of political, social, and technological questions into the debate. The main question, however, was how architecture could contribute to bringing ordinary people into a discourse with the political elite. According to the designers, it is the 'politician's job to abolish the House of Lords, or revamp it. [Yet,] it is the architect's job to allow for that' to happen.[9] In other words, Price and Barker proposed a populist architecture that made the previously ignored voices of ordinary people heard by the political elite. The particular novelty here was the emphasis on mass media technologies.

An architecture of openness

The design of the Pop-Up Parliament was divided into three strips, running from North to South, parallel to the Thames River. While the riverside section would be privately reserved for MP's, the centre strip served for transport, and the section facing Parliament Square was meant for the public. In the public section visitors could access balconies and follow the plenary sessions of the House of Lords, the Commons as well as two committee rooms. With this gesture, Price inscribed the highest value of democracy into the building layout, giving public access to the tribunes of the assembly hall to attend plenary sessions – 'architecturalising' public politics in an idealised sense. On the one hand, this openness enabled the public to witness decision-making politics. On the other, it introduced the possibility of public protests disrupting the plenary sessions, inside and outside the parliament. Price considered 'the notion of keeping rioters away from the parliament' to be outdated.[10] To accommodate demonstrations, Price envisioned floor-heating in Parliament Square, together with a foldable plasticised nylon roof structure for rain protection. The presence of the protesters' bodies guaranteed citizen participation in the political sphere by intervening in the parliamentary space, and consequently in national politics. At the same time, Price intervened architecturally into a parliamentary debate about the legitimate presence of the public in Westminster Palace that had been happening for decades, if not centuries. The so-called Strangers' Gallery in the House of Commons is intended as a place where the public can follow proceedings of the House, but it is up to the speaker to decide when the public has to withdraw, with the order 'I spy strangers!' Even if the term 'stranger' has been replaced with either 'member of the public' or 'the public,' after the modernisation of Commons procedures in 2004, the practice remains the same.[11] [Fig. 1]

Through his political involvement with the Labour Party Price was aware that politics do not only result from relating politicians to the general public but also to interest groups and lobbyists.[12] Therefore, the middle section of the building was intended not only to serve the communication of people and things through an additional heliport, but was also for the exchange of secret information.

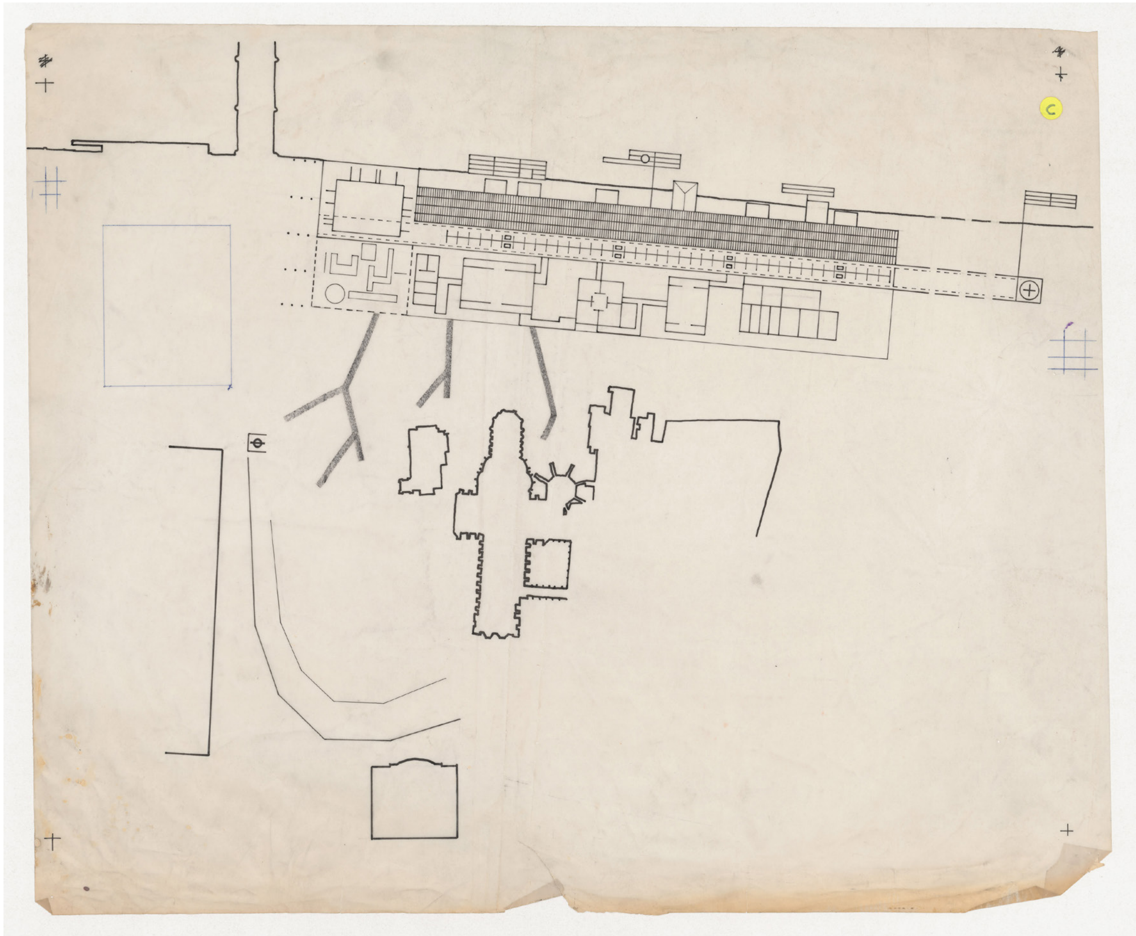

Fig. 1: Plan for Pop-Up Parliament with public access from Parliament Square, London, England, 1965. Source: Cedric Price Archive, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, File: DR1995:0219:011.

Barker wrote that in this informal zone, 'lobbying and opinion-forming will become buoyantly mobile.'[13] Both meanings of the term 'lobby' come into play here. In the spatial sense, the lobby is charged with the critical role of providing a space for discussions, where speech stays entirely off the record – that is, before the actual conference where speech is written down in the form of minutes and becomes an official document. In the political process, this is the moment where the special interest lobby can emerge, so that here lobbyism as verbal practice finds its purposely designed place. Thus, the architectural setting facilitates informal discussions that subsequently influence the official decision-making process. Here the lobby architecture is delineated within the political processes of Parliament, promoting practices that will remain entirely unmentioned in the official Rules of Procedures.[14]

Pop-Up Parliament as a populist design

The Pop-Up Parliament might be considered a populist design in the sense that it assumed the Marxist base/superstructure dichotomy as a condition for political change: the base of productive forces determines the social, economic and cultural relationships comprising its superstructure. The base/superstructure model essentialises class relations, that is, those between workers and industrialists or ordinary people and the political elite, as a result of material conditions and the mode of production. This combination of forces of production and relations of production forms the materialist base that influences the superstructure (political ideas about democracy, as well as social and cultural values). Any political change in society could subsequently only occur if the social relations are changed at the material base, and this is precisely the starting point of Price's design: making the gap between political elites and ordinary public explicitly tangible would eventually lead to a reconsideration of British political culture. Most populist strategies built on the assumption of essential class difference between and stigmatisation of social groups. But Price was anything but an orthodox Marxist. His design opens up the question to what extent populism is a media-based phenomenon, rather than a matter of historic materialism translated into contemporary political debate. For Price, media played an essential role in showing, if not distorting, class relations. It had the potential to be used either for or against political change. He designed the Pop-Up Parliament at the time when Marshall McLuhan was developing his media theory, and the House of Commons was discussing the role television could have in the parliament. Consequently, Price's Pop-Up Parliament was a model for a new dependency in the threefold relation between architecture, media and politics as an operative network. Intentionally or not, Price had translated McLuhan's dictum that 'the "content" of any medium is always another medium' into architectural design, thus bringing the media of pens, press, television, computer, and architecture into a common political field.[15] On the one hand his design strikingly anticipated how media make politics in the information society. On the other, it foreshadowed a media theory of cultural techniques that allows for a reconsideration of the human through the operative sequences of technology, in opposition to media-anthropological concepts that limit technology to the extension of human faculties.

The definition of populism that was embedded in Price's design may be understood to imply that such a dichotomy is a fundamental conflictual feature of democracy, which has to cover the whole political spectrum. In order to allow for conflict between adversaries, institutions such as Parliament need to ensure that opinions ranging from left to right can enter the debate.[16] But even the actual political connotations of populism are quite contrary to what Price had in mind with his emancipatory use of mass media and architecture. His embedding of media and use of information technology in architecture points the way to many of the political conflicts and trends present today. This project shows that populism is conditioned by a specific type of media architecture that differs from 1960s

pop-culture, which current-day populism has indirectly appropriated. The techno-political dimension of populism is firmly rooted in the type of media that provides immediate feedback loops for governing in real time. Subsequently, the Pop-Up Parliament stands as a paradigm for a period in which television, cybernetics, and parliamentary procedures paved the way for a digital populism where media operations of information compression, prediction, and audience targeting became more decisive for politics than the contents of debate.

This media politics is cloaked in a democratic ideology, which at its best allows transparency and citizen participation in the information society, and at its worst introduced affirmative data logistics into politics, anticipating today's exploitative feedback economy and disruptive platform capitalism.[17] But apart from these ambiguous effects, Price made explicit his belief that parliamentary architecture is a political medium that shapes politics and its public perception. He acknowledged not only that physical things have a political agency in parliament by the way that they arrange social relations through public access and make politics public, but also that data makes politics into an effective administrative field between state and individual. In short, Price's proposal converges the parliament of things with the parliament of data.

Politics on screen

Through his project, Price addressed the hot debate concerning television's presence inside the House of Commons. Even if today the publicness of British parliamentary sessions is taken for granted (and, at least since the Brexit debates, these sessions have gained worldwide attention), it is easy to forget that television was only allowed inside parliament from 1989 onwards. Price's proposal deemed the Big Ben tower to have 'outlived its use,' and planned to replace it with three large television screens that were to transmit live parliamentary debates.[18] The immediacy of politics and television was made explicitly coexistent, while ironically inverting the social function of the Ayrton Light on Big Ben. Originally, the well-known light had been installed to inform Queen Victoria about the status of parliamentary sittings after dark, but Price replaced it with illuminating screens that made the work of the Parliament public. But while the project had the ambition of informing the public about the parliamentary proceedings, the use of television introduced an ambiguous absence of the body politic, which made it impossible for the public to intervene other than by switching off the television programme, when the broadcasts were viewed at home. In any case, heckling and even riots that might happen in the plenary hall would not actually be shown on domestic televisions. Nevertheless, placing public screens on Parliament Square would allow for immediate public reaction. In a discussion from 1965, a member of the House of Commons expressed his concerns: 'Parliament is a wonderful and unique institution and I want to keep it as it is … it is different in character after television is brought in. That is what I am afraid of.'[19] Parliament would need to be protected 'against the mass and against the machine,' as Winston Churchill had put it.[20] By 'machine,' he was referring to television, and he was expressing his fear of mass media when he stated that it was 'a shocking thing to have the debates of Parliament forestalled by this new robot organisation of television and BBC broadcasting.'[21] Back then, when politics feared the mass in mass media, such a media turn in architecture and urban planning provoked a reconsideration of design in the age of television. But despite initial scepticism, research in the field of political science has not been able to find direct evidence of a personality cult in parliamentary politics and legislative behaviour following the advent of television. What the introduction of television cameras into the House of Commons did bring about was an increase of media coverage by 80 per cent.[22] The consequent increase in public interest is undeniable.

However, what contributes to the rise of populism is not so much the idea of politics as spectacle, but

rather the constant measuring of political success through data quantification. The advent of television made the mass into a quota, an integral part of modern democracy, quantifiable at any given moment. When politics feared the power of media to influence public opinion, television was still an unpredictable weapon. It is perhaps not incidental that McLuhan's affinity with television led him to note in his chapter on weapons in *Understanding Media* a 'trend toward more and more power with less and less hardware that is characteristic of the electric age of information.'[23] As television started transmitting politically relevant information, it was not far from becoming a political weapon, beyond even what McLuhan had described metaphorically in the TV debate between Nixon and the telegenic Kennedy.[24] The ballistic power of television was not only the result of the distorted representation of politics in compressed statements, as Jean Baudrillard discussed in his theory of simulacra, but also of the pre-digital capacity of data processing. Baudrillard developed his critique on the basis of newly emerging media spaces. His form of media criticism relied on television to reveal the dystopian dimensions of a technocratic society. Baudrillard argued that television, among other audio-visual media, introduced the inability to distinguish between reality and simulacra, leading to a society that replaced all meaning with symbols and signs. Under this theoretical umbrella, the contents of politics was rendered meaningless, and replaced instead by the effects it has in the simulation of reality. In other words, *Realpolitik* became deprived of the real.

But television can be considered a pre-digital medium of populism, not only because it turned politics into reality TV shows, but also because it provided direct feedback about the popularity of persons and political messages. If politicians could receive immediate feedback via television quotas about the success and impact of their broadcasting footage, then popularity and populism are constituted by the media-technical operations of quantification and correlation. Television quotas are the pre-digital statistical equivalent of metadata in the digital age, and has a similar meaning for politics. It was subsequently only a question of increasing computational power, before these could be used strategically as a weapon in politics.

Education as emancipatory tool for society

For Price education was an emancipatory tool for society, one that could bridge the gap between political elites and ordinary citizens. It was common sense among many people from the progressive left in the 'swinging sixties' to pave the way for cultural revolution through pop culture and mass media. In the introduction of the issue of *A.D.* Price edited in 1968 entitled *What About Learning?*, he argued that mass communication media would promote increased access to knowledge and thus facilitate more intense questioning of previous social structures: 'such as industrial automation rendered various skills and operations obsolete, new methods of information storage, retrieval, comparison and computation enable the content of traditional education to be pruned.'[25] It is therefore no coincidence that the Pop-Up Parliament was for Price only one aspect of political education, which would be part of a broader revolutionary image that would reappear in various other projects.[26]

In the Oxford Corner House (OCH), an unrealised feasibility study that Price developed between 1965 and 1966 for the private company J. Lyons & Co, Parliament was to be physically connected to a centralised self-learning centre. [Fig. 2] This twenty-four-hour 'information hive' would provide a range of public facilities and mass media communication channels for conferences, teaching, exhibitions, and a library.[27] Referring to McLuhan's distinction between the 'hot' medium of film and the 'cold' medium of television, Price considered different stages of user participation. While some areas would be restricted to a low degree of participation, furnished with projections, other areas were considered highly interactive zones between humans and machines. For this project, Price had considered

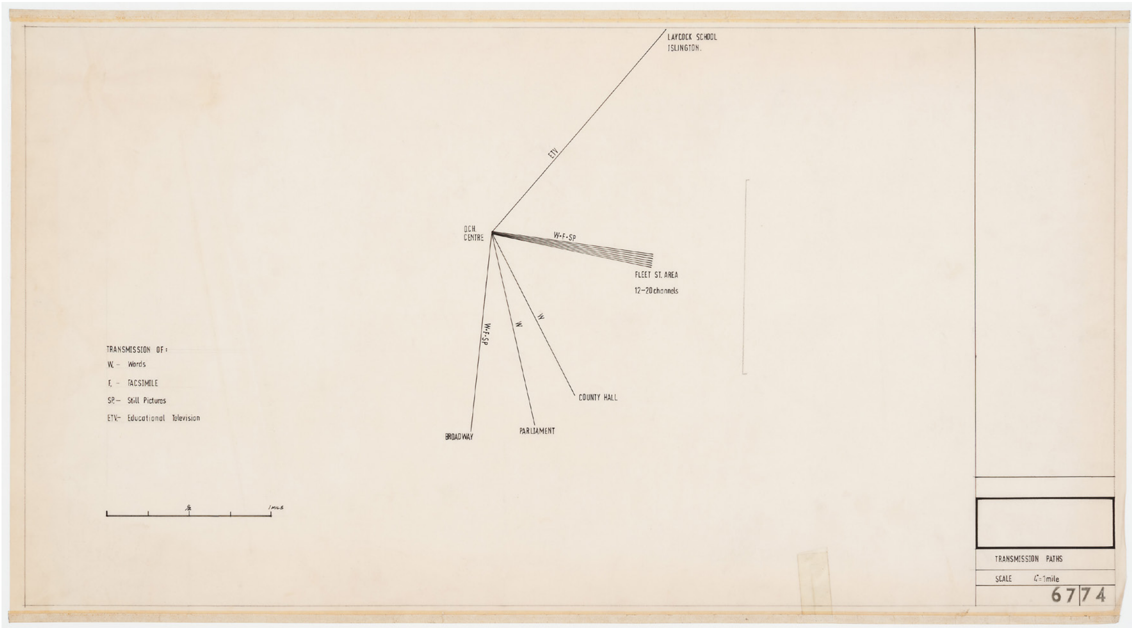

Fig. 2: Information transmission paths for Oxford Corner House, London, England, 1966. Source: Cedric Price Archive, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, File: DR1995:0224:127.

IBM mainframe computers that would offer the highest computing power for an expected monthly rental fee of £17 500.[28] Despite Price's emancipatory concept of making information publicly accessible, the question of private data ownership, – so heated today – is undeniable, as Nina Stener Jørgensen remarks in her critical review of this project.[29] Because user data can be gathered and evaluated, such a network hub has the capacity to become a valuable resource for studying user behaviour. But in particular, the connection to Parliament renders this project especially useful for a study of populism, since the affective dimension of political messages and their effects on popularity can be evaluated in real time.

Digital populism in the Pop-Up Parliament

In the basement of the Pop-Up Parliament, Price envisioned the technological basis for the politics of the twentieth century: a computerised library that centralised, processed, and distributed all information within Parliament. [Fig. 3] By that time Price had already exploited the computer as an instrument of democratic decision-making, by giving the public access to governmental information – an aspect that he indicated in the conceptual drawing for the project. By placing the computer at the heart of the new Parliament building, Price proposed that democratic social culture be redesigned through technology by using architecture and computation as integral parts within it. The computer was intended to promote communication as the basis for parliamentary work, and to become an instrument for both opinion-forming and decision-making. According to Price,

> improved information and communication facilities for Members [of the Parliament] would be … from a computerised library, easily accessible to all both physically and by electronic members … No longer merely a collection of printed information, the installation of a computer would transform the library from an information retrieval service to an information reinforcement and decision-making machine.[30]

Contrary to conventional library systems where finding information depended upon indexing by librarians, the computerised library would itself efficiently record, transmit, and process information. For Price, the generated feedback loops were an essential part of the new library system, which had the media operation of prediction at its core: 'once it knows your subject, it can plan what you should be thinking next.'[31] Undoubtedly this function would become useful for politics one day, as soon as the computational power and infrastructure of such libraries were able to effectively target what the public 'should be thinking next.' In sum, mass, media and data politics is the combination that precedes what nowadays is known as e-governance. In addition to its supposedly novel powers of socio-technical disruption, the computer can be understood in much more traditional terms: it can be seen as a fundamentally bureaucratic medium, its logics as primarily administrative ones. In the words of media-historian Cornelia Vismann: 'the computer implements the basic law of bureaucracy according to which administrative techniques are transferred from the state to the individual.'[32]

In his design Cedric Price acknowledged that governing as a cultural technique cannot exist without information processing. Rather than concealing this fundamental media operation behind the closed doors of bureaucracy, Price opened it up to the public, provoking a potential socio-technical reconsideration of what open data means for society.

In his day, Cedric Price may have been justified in his intention of opening up the black box of the House of Commons, and of making politics accessible to the public through technology. However, this anticipated a tendency that would become a problem with digital populism decades later. The TV ratings of the 1960s were the small statistical forms of today's big metadata. This is precisely why the question of the ownership of infrastructure and data should be raised as a political issue in the historical context in the same way as today. If, at the time,

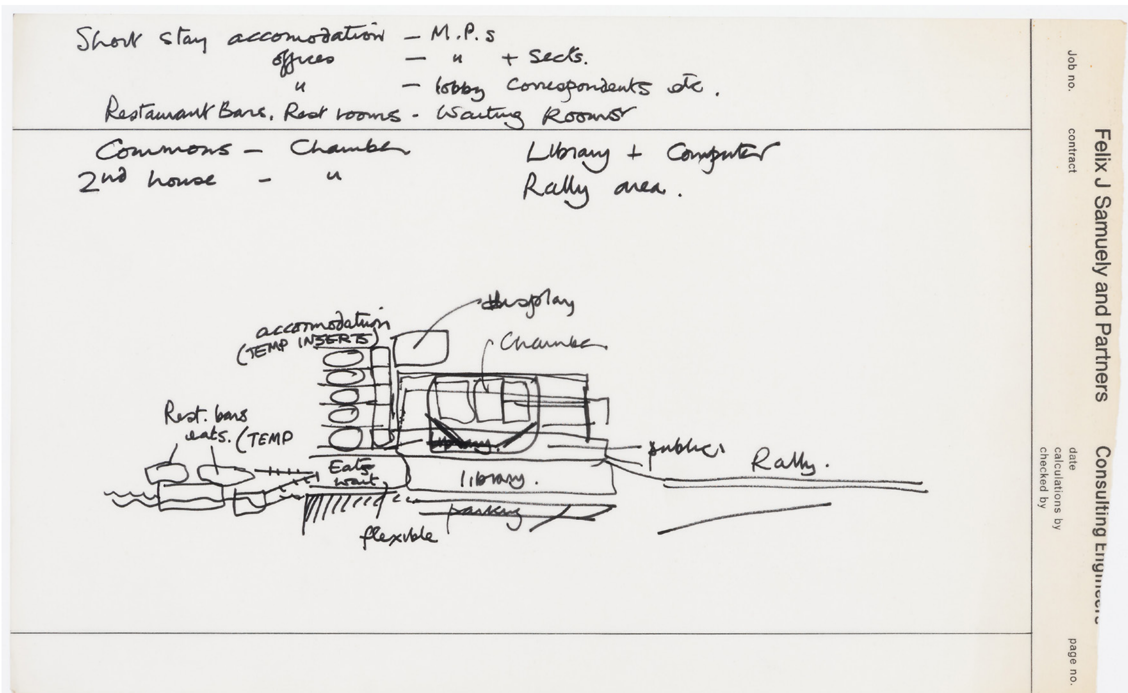

Fig. 3: Conceptual sketch for Pop-Up Parliament, London, England, 1965. Source: Cedric Price Archive, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, File: DR1995:0219:002.

the quantification of ratings could already communicate immediate results to politicians indicating their popularity, then it was only a matter of increasing computing capacity before this could be turned strategically against the public itself, in order for (populist) news to reach its intended target groups. Having McLuhan's forecast in mind that information can be used as a weapon, Price's 'decision making machine' now appears to be a deliberately dangerous gesture that anticipated today's feedback politics in a surprisingly apolitical manner. The free availability of data has a disproportionately high price, which is determined by the ownership of the infrastructure providing the access. As is commonly recognised, the result of this sad irony is that it was precisely this combination of big data and populism that would drive the UK out of the EU almost fifty years later, with the 'help' of the broadcaster Nigel Farage, the UKIP party, and Cambridge Analytica.[33] Although it can be assumed that this kind of development was not at all what Price had in mind, nevertheless, the appropriation of mass media by twenty-first-century populism may be seen as a technical condition already embedded in 1960s pop culture. A critical discourse about the popularisation of politics through technology, rather than blind affirmation, could have probably created a deeper awareness. We are now used to the idea that user-generated content and data-driven campaigning would bolster populist strategies in what has recently been coined the 'technological performance of populism.'[34] On the contrary, data-driven politics have a cultural history that reaches to the origins of the cybernetic era, in which architecture plays a central mediating role in the relation between user and technology. Ultimately, the relationship between mass media and politics is not a trivial matter.

On the aesthetic level, mass media may appear free, open, and even participatory, but technical standards and infrastructure render them potential political weapons. After reading McLuhan, Banham had termed television 'the symbolic machine of the Second Machine Age.'[35] But this reduction of media to symbolic or aesthetic qualities underestimates its real political impact. Beyond the symbolic aspects, television sets up the conditions of an operative machine that dictates mechanisms of immediacy and quantification, which will only be realised through computation at a much later stage.

Parliamentary obsolescence

Price had planned for his Pop-Up Parliament to be obsolescent within fifty years. So, if this design had ever been realised, it would have been demolished by now, raising the question of what kind of media-architecture would be adequate for the task of redesigning political discourse today. Price does not mention anywhere what precisely the 'Pop-Up' in his project title signifies. Architecturally, it may refer in representative terms to the instantaneous, temporary, ephemeral construction of the parliament, adaptive to political changes. Aesthetically, it may also refer to pop culture, with its tendency to bind together mass media and the public into a new political agency. But none of these interpretations can do without media in socio-technical terms. Whether it be the physical things that make politics public through ramps and screens on Parliament Square, or open-data mechanisms that process governmental information, these dynamics show how media politicise. Media are not neutral, and so it becomes even more urgent to question notions of care and responsibility within the framework of a media-critical practice.

Recent literature has treated architecture in traditional terms as an iconographic place of politics, and tended to make superficial accusations, such as right-wing ideology being symbolically associated with particular designs. Such a misconception perpetuates the assumption that the physical and the digital are two unrelated spheres, in which right-wing populism finds the ideal conditions for it to be heard and articulated.[36] In other words, populism is considered an ideology that is stored and transmitted through things, by ignoring

the effects of information processing. Reconsidering the Pop-Up Parliament in this light makes us aware of how information-processing is inherent in the use of mass media, which is why current-day populism has been so effective in targeting its intended audience. Populism has appropriated the use of mass media that was once rooted in pop-culture, because ownership of data and infrastructure has not been interrogated critically enough; instead, the media was assumed to have a neutral agency. In this sense, Price may have been overly idealistic in his belief that open access to information would be enough to set up the condition for emancipation within the emerging knowledge society. This kind of approach ignored the fact that data ownership determines data politics, in a sense paving the way for populism to appropriate media infrastructures for its own sake. But if Price had made us aware over half a century ago that political concepts may become obsolete with technological innovation, the question arises whether the architectural typology and institution of Parliament has not become obsolete with the growing impact of digital platforms and cloud computation.

Notes

I would like to thank David H. Haney, and Georg Vrachliotis for their attentive comments on earlier versions of this work.

1. Hansard, 'House of Commons Rebuilding', *Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons*, vol. 393, (28 October 1943) columns 403–473.
2. Cedric Price, 'The Pop-Up Parliament', *New Society* no. 148 (29 July 1965): 8.
3. Ibid., 7–9.
4. Peter Barker, 'Non-Plan Revisited: Or the Real Way Cities Grow: The Tenth Reyner Banham Memorial Lecture', *Journal of Design History* 12, no. 2 (1999): 95–110.
5. Reyner Banham, Paul Barker, Peter Hall and Cedric Price, 'Non-Plan: An Experiment in Freedom', *New Society* 13, no. 338 (20 March 1969).
6. Price, 'The Pop-Up Parliament', 8.
7. Potteries Thinkbelt was published in 'Potteries Thinkbelt', *New Society* no. 192 (2 June 1966): 74. Non-Plan was published in Banham et al., 'Non-Plan', 435. The Fun-Palace is discussed in B. N. Lewis, 'Fun Palace: Counterblast to Boredom', *New Society* no. 133 (15 April 1965): 8.
8. Adam Sharr and Stephen Thornton, *Demolishing Whitehall: Leslie Martin, Harold Wilson and the Architecture of White Heat* (London: Routledge, 2013).
9. Price, 'The Pop-Up Parliament', 8.
10. Ibid., 8.
11. House of Commons Information Office, 'Sitting in Private', in 'Some Traditions and Customs of the House', factsheet (January 2009), 5, https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/commons-information-office/g07.pdf.
12. Price was a member of the Labour Party that in the 50's and 60's defended the idea that automation of industrial production as a form of technical progress had the potential to bring about freedom for society. For Price's political position see also: Tanja Herdt, 'Die Stadt und die Architektur des Wandels: Projekte und Konzepte des britischen Architekten Cedric Price (1960–ca. 1984)', PhD Dissertation (ETH Zurich, 2012), 25–26.

13. Price, 'The Pop-Up Parliament', 9.
14. On a media-historical framework in the distinction between spaces of speech and spaces of textuality see Dennis Pohl, 'Simultan Regieren: Sprache und Schrift im Europäischen Ministerrat', *Archiv für Mediengeschichte* 19, *Kleine Formen*, ed. Joseph Vogl, Friedrich Balke, and Bernhard Siegert (2021): 157–169.
15. Price, 'The Pop-Up Parliament', 10.
16. See for instance Chantal Mouffe, *For a Left Populism* (London: Verso Books, 2018).
17. On Cedric Price's Oxford Corner House project and the entanglement of platform capitalism and participation, see Nina Stener Jørgensen, 'Capital of Feedback', *Footprint* 13, no. 2 (December 2019): 25–46.
18. Ibid., 8.
19. Quintin Hogg (Lord Hailsham), House of Commons Debates (1965) vol. 713, column 1065, 28 May, a motion by T. L. Iremonger to introduce an experiment in television broadcasting, as cited in Bob Franklin, 'Televising the British House of Commons: Issues and Developments' in *Televising Democracies,* ed. Bob Franklin (London/New York: Routledge, 1992), 10.
20. Michael Cockerell, *Live from Number 10: The Inside Story of Prime Ministers and Television* (London: Faber, 1988), 41, as cited in Franklin, *Televising Democracies,* 3.
21. Ibid.
22. Alastair Heatherington, Kay Weaver, and Michael Ryle, *The Study for the Hansard Society on the Televising of the House of Commons* (London: Hansard Society for Parliamentary Government, 1990).
23. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994 [1964]), 342.
24. Ibid., 329–30.
25. Cedric Price, Introduction, *Architectural Design (What about Learning?)* (May 1968), 242.
26. Cedric Price, 'Developing Patterns of Urbanisation: Learning', *Transactions of the Bartlett Society* 7 (1968), 55–73.
27. Canadian Centre of Architecture, 'The Information Hive: A Reading of Cedric Price's Oxford Corner House', March 2011, https://cca.qc.ca.
28. Stanley J. Mathews, 'An Architecture for the New Britain: The Social Vision of Cedric Price's Fun Palace and Potteries Thinkbelt', PhD Dissertation (Columbia University, 2003), 298–313.
29. Jørgensen, 'Capital of Feedback', 25–46.
30. Cedric Price, handwritten manuscript (1965), Cedric Price Archive, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, File: DR:1995:0235:007:003, as cited in Herdt, 'Die Stadt und die Architektur des Wandels', 280.
31. Price, 'The Pop-Up Parliament', 9.
32. Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology,* trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 163.
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35. Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age,* 2nd edition (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967), 10.
36. For such attempts see *ARCH+* No. 235 (May 2019), *Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise*, guest ed. Stephan Trüby, https://archplus.net/de/archiv/ausgabe/235/.

Biography

Dennis Pohl is postdoctoral researcher at the group Architecture Theory and Digital Culture at TU Delft, and at the chair of Architecture Theory at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). In Summer 2022 he is research fellow in the LOEWE research cluster Architectures of Order.

His research interest lies in a material and cultural history of the digital in architecture. In his PhD thesis entitled 'Designing Europe: The Architecture of Territory, Politics, and Institutions', he analyzed the historical impact of architectural design techniques on political planning in post-war Europe. Dennis was a research fellow at the DFG research group Knowledge in the Arts at the Berlin University of the Arts (2015–2018), and DAAD fellow at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University New York (2018). He was co-director of the AA Visiting School Brussels 'The House of Politics', and contributed to the project 'Eurotopie' in the Belgian pavilion at the 16th Architecture Biennial in Venice.

There and Back Again: Council Housing, Right to Buy and the Politics of Architectural Pluralism

Owen Hopkins

One of the more surprising facts for anyone who has followed the debate about council housing – indeed, politics – in the UK over recent decades is that the government responsible for the highest number of council house completions was a Conservative one. In 1953, the Minister for Housing in Winston Churchill's government, Harold Macmillan, oversaw the completion of 252 380 new council houses – a number not exceeded before or since.[1]

As the country began to rebuild after the devastation wrought during the war, and perhaps even more significantly sought to build a better world than had existed before, Conservative and Labour parties became locked in an arms race of bigger and bigger promises. [Fig. 1] When Macmillan was told by Churchill in 1951 that he would need to build 300 000 homes a year, the prime minister admitted that 'it is a gamble – it will make or mar your political career, but every humble home will bless your name if you succeed.'[2] Macmillan did succeed and was rewarded by the voters when, having become prime minster himself in 1957, he led his party to general election victory two years later.

Fast forward to 2019, and there were just 3 800 council houses completed during the calendar year. This was out of a total of 214 190 new houses of which housing associations contributed 38 390, with the remainder developed privately. Even this measly number of council house completions, both in absolute and relative terms, actually constitutes something of a revival from the nadir of 2004, when just 130 council homes were completed.

Given the extraordinary contrast between, on the one hand, the race to the top of the post-war era and, on the other, the race to the bottom of more recent decades, it might seem counterintuitive to attribute them to the same political tendency. Yet, this kind of dramatic inversion is what populism does to any political debate or situation it touches. Since at least the 1950s, council housing – that is, housing built and managed by local authorities and let long-term at low rents – has been at the centre of populist politics in the UK. And at the same stroke, populist politics in the UK has been tightly bound up with the built environment.

If architecture and by extension urban planning rely on the careful consideration and balancing of multiple and overlapping positions and points of view, an appreciation of the complex networks and systems in which we conduct our lives and, perhaps above all, the application of knowledge and expertise, populism may very well be its diametric opposite. Notoriously suspicious of 'experts' and other so-called elites, populism meets complexity with simplistic slogans and battle cries, and at its worst instrumentalises people's concerns and aspirations, their hopes and their fears, for political gain.

History has frequently shown that monomaniacal politics – which might be another definition of populism – tends to create architectural and urban mono-cultures. Such environments, in turn, breed further populism whether of the right or left. This, at least, this essay contends, is the lesson of the story of council housing – in both rhetoric and reality – in the UK over the last six and a half decades. Over that time, as we will see, council housing has

been at the centre of a debate that, like most populist debates, is not just polarised but asymmetric, conflating questions of aesthetics, typology and planning and tenure type, where a middle ground is by definition impossible.

The asymmetrical nature of the debate becomes most apparent in the present revival in council house building and the way this has been shaped by the legacies of council housing in the UK in discourse as well as in built form. Rather than simply seeing architecture as a reflection of the era and society that created it, this essay argues for the active role that the built environment can play in shaping the direction, content and tone of subsequent debates. While populism may breed populism, the corollary is that architectural and urban pluralism has the potential to foster political pluralism too.

Revival vs Right to Buy

While modest and highly concentrated, the revival of council house building reflects both need and opportunity – the former longstanding, the latter a more recent development. Waiting lists for council housing remain very long: nearly 250 000 in 2020, although this is considerably down from a high of 380 000 in 2012.[3] The opportunity to build has, rather strangely, come from one of the reasons driving these long waiting lists: the high house prices in the south east and especially in London. There, property values have reached a level that allows local authorities to develop a site and be able to use the profits generated from flats for private sale to subsidise those for council rents.

One of the figures at the forefront of this minor renaissance is Peter Barber, an architect based in London's Kings Cross, who made his name in 2006 with the Donnybrook Quarter – a new city block south of Victoria Park in Tower Hamlets. [Fig. 2] The project is oriented around two tree-lined streets, which integrate with the existing streetscape. Architecturally it is low-rise, but high-density, with rows of front doors opening directly onto the street, generous balconies, and overhanging windows, which create a sense of community and common ownership.

Since then, Barber has worked almost exclusively in the field of social and affordable housing and has continued to reinvent familiar typologies and urban forms, notably terrace houses, mews and apartment blocks. While the brilliant white render of Donnybrook – which traces a connection to Álvaro Siza's seminal Quinta da Malagueira in Évora, Portugal and even the purist modernism of the 1920s – has latterly been swapped for brick, the modernist forms and architectural language remain, yet deployed in ways that integrate the new developments with existing streetscapes and patterns of social life.

Even with the lack of central government funding and the frequent need to partner with developers, numerous councils have realised some high quality council houses in this way, which have proved popular with residents (as well as critics) and which positively contribute to the city. Yet hanging over them is the spectre of Right to Buy, and the risk that these exemplary public assets could be lost to private ownership.

That the Right to Buy scheme still exists, four decades after coming into law as perhaps the defining policy of Margaret Thatcher's government, shows how fully she reconfigured UK society and politics. No policy summed up Thatcher's ripping up of the post-war social democratic consensus better than the Right to Buy scheme, which gave council tenants the opportunity to buy their homes. Meanwhile, in tandem with a wider roll back of the state, Thatcher's government oversaw dramatic reductions in council house building: in 1978, the year before she gained office, there had been 113 660 completions; in 1991, the year after she was eventually deposed, there were just 11 060.

Thatcher saw council housing as having created a vast client state of Labour voters dependent on state welfare. This she aimed to replace with a property-owning democracy, which, as well as reflecting the new era of individualism and self-reliance,

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 1: LCC Architects' Department (design team led by Ted Hollamby), Brandon Estate, Southwark, London, completed 1961. Photo: author.

Fig. 2: Peter Barber Architects, Donnybrook Quarter, Hackney, London, completed 2006. Photo: Morley von Sternberg.

would reliably return Conservative governments. Thousands of people would quickly take advantage of this new freedom afforded to them.

At a macro scale, the Right to Buy scheme resulted in a massive transfer of public assets into private hands. Between 1980/1981 and 2013/2014, 1.8 million homes were sold in England under the scheme. But the drop in the number of houses owned by local authorities was even greater: from 5.1 million to 1.7 million, as a result of the 1988 Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) policy, which allowed local authorities to transfer their stock to housing associations or social landlords.

Right to Buy was a classic example of populist politics, exhibiting all of its hallmarks. It set the interests of the ordinary person against those of overbearing, out of touch elites (architects and town planners). With this, it carried the added significance of being directed at the very thing that is so central to our identities and sense of self-worth: the home. To a situation of extraordinary complexity, Right to Buy offered a solution so simple it could be encapsulated in a three-word slogan. 'Right to Buy': everyone knew instantly what was meant by those three words, a lesson that the coiners of its populist descendants 'Take Back Control' or 'Get Brexit Done' were careful not to forget.

Of course, over this time, its contradictions – another key aspect of populist politics turned into policy – became very apparent. Although Right to Buy was ostensibly conceived to promote owner-occupation, many former council properties are now rented out privately. This has created a bizarre situation whereby the state – via housing benefit – often ends up subsidising the rent of private tenants living in former council housing, with the difference between the social and market rent ending up in the pockets of landlords.[4] Far from reducing dependency on the state, the Right to Buy scheme has increased it.

Yet the scheme was never about economic logic – and although other European countries, notably the Netherlands and Sweden, had equivalent schemes, no other country could rival the scale, top-down nature and ideological zeal of Right to Buy.[5] Even on its own terms, the policy was riven with contradictions. For starters, there was the paradox that as people were being encouraged to buy their council house, the modern housing estates on which many of them stood were being demonised as failed, crime-ridden poverty traps. Surely, these were places that residents would want to escape, rather than buy into? Or maybe these estates were not as bad as their detractors made out.

Success vs failure

In sheer practical terms, Right to Buy was only possible because, at the time of its enacting, so much of the UK's population lived in council housing. It was a populist policy borne out of the populist policy of the previous era: the mass council house building programme, the scale and at times grandiose nature of which made it an inevitable target for criticism once the gap between rhetoric and reality became clear.

It is hard to trace exactly when views of council housing began to change, as the process was gradual and multifaceted. Nevertheless, the Ronan Point disaster of May 1968 is usually seen as an important watershed: only two months after it opened, a minor gas explosion caused the partial collapse of this twenty-two-storey tower block in East London, killing four people and provoking a media furore. The subsequent investigation revealed both shoddy construction and a panel construction system unfit for purpose.

The fact that Ronan Point was 'modern' architecture, and that so many of the council estates built during the 1950s and 1960s across the country similarly reflected modernist architectural and planning principles, was central to the growing critique. Modernism provided the perfect cypher for the much broader assault on the social-democratic consensus under which Britain had been governed over that period. It was an easy bogeyman: foreign in origin and apparently unsuited to Britain's climate and

traditions; imposed by an apparently out of touch elite; indelibly associated with various high-profile cases of corruption; and, to many eyes, standing as the manifold evidence of the damage to so many city centres done in the name of the modern.

As far as estates were concerned, these critiques were bolstered by the ideas of Canadian sociologist Oscar Newman, who, in his 1972 book *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention Through Urban Design*, attributed crime and anti-social behaviour in modern housing estates to particular aspects of their design. Although Newman's research focused mainly on the US, in 1974 he was invited to Britain to take part in a *Horizon* documentary entitled 'The Writing on the Wall' to see if the same 'mistakes' were being made this side of the Atlantic. Inspecting the Aylesbury Estate in South London, his position was obvious from his first comments, describing it 'almost as if creatures from another world had come down and built their own environment; it's that foreign'.[6] [Fig. 3]

Newman's ideas were soon picked up by Alice Coleman, a researcher at King's College London, who embarked on a systematic analysis of modern housing estates. Her conclusions were similarly damning: modern design, rather than alleviating social deprivation, was actually the cause of it, with features such as deck access, communal entrances and elevated walkways playing a key role in facilitating crime and anti-social behaviour. While supposedly grounded in scientific rigour, even a cursory read of Coleman's resulting book, *Utopia on Trial: Vision and Reality in Planned Housing* (1985) reveals her methods to be far from objective.

Nevertheless, Coleman provided important academic cover for Thatcher's broader assault on council housing and was even invited to Downing Street to discuss her ideas, while also advising on the re-working of a number of 'failed' estates. While Coleman was genuinely interested in questions of design and generally advocated adaptation rather than demolition, politically, modern architecture was the most visible manifestation of the policy-economic and broader value system that had created it, which Thatcher was so eager to destroy. In this sense, modernism's own failures – both real and perceived – acted as an important distraction from the otherwise obvious success of the post-war housing policies, which had led to millions of people being housed in dramatically better conditions than they had enjoyed previously. It was not perfect, but, across the board, had represented a vast improvement.

Since then, criticism of council estates in terms of their modern architecture has become a recurring and familiar trope in political discourse. For politicians of all persuasions, demonising council estates is a useful fall-back tactic for courting attention, guaranteed to be lapped up by the press. In 2016, for example, then prime minister, David Cameron, described how 'in the worst estates … you're confronted by concrete slabs dropped from on high, brutal high-rise towers and dark alleyways that are a gift to criminals and drug dealers'.[7] Cameron's words were not so very different from Tony Blair's 'forgotten people' speech, his first delivered as prime minister, which was famously staged at the Aylesbury Estate. [Fig. 4] Blair's premise was that the residents of Britain's council estates had been forgotten, stating: 'I don't want there to be any forgotten people in the Britain we want to build', before adding, 'there are estates where the biggest employer is the drugs industry, where all that is left of the high hopes of the post-war planners is derelict concrete.'[8]

This is not to say that Blair or Cameron were populists. Although they had populist moments, both were politicians from the centre ground. But when it comes to council housing, the nature of the debate ensures that every politician becomes a populist. In this way, council housing has long since ceased being about bricks, mortar and concrete – or, indeed, about the people who live their lives in estates – but has become an analogue for values, ideals and beliefs.

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 3: Peter Barber Architects, Rochester Way, Greenwich, London, completed 2020. Photo: Morley von Sternberg.
Fig. 4: London Borough of Southwark Architects' Department (Hans Peter 'Felix' Trenton), Aylesbury Estate, Southwark, London, 1963–77, shown undergoing demolition in 2016. Photo: author.

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Fig. 5: Then Prime Minister Tony Blair, accompanied by community PC Kevin Holland, as he leaves the Aylesbury Estate in Southwark, shortly after delivering his ‘forgotten people’ speech of 2 June 1997. Photo: Stefan Rousseau, PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo.
Fig. 6: Léon Krier et al., Poundbury, Dorset, UK, 1993–ongoing. Photo: Upper high street, CC BY-SA 4.0 https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Modern vs beautiful

So, returning to Peter Barber's work, given all that has come before, it has meaning that far exceeds its physical presence. And it is no surprise that the thought, sensitivity and abundant quality of his projects, coupled with his avowed social commitment, has seen Barber draw near universal praise from those on the political left (which includes most architecture critics), with his work standing as a tantalising and affirming glimpse of what would be possible on a much grander scale under the type of social-democratic or even socialist political settlement they advocate for. [Fig. 5]

Central to much of the admiration of Barber's work is that it is 'modern' in both conception and form – in a weird mirror image of the way the modern design of post-war council housing was fundamental to attacks on it from the political right in the 1970s and 1980s. Aesthetics remains a dividing line and one wonders whether Barber would be quite so revered on the left if he added pitched roofs, cornices and classical door cases rather than flat roofs, ribbon windows and abstract massing. Equally, it is also valid to ask whether council housing would be more palatable to the political right if it took traditional as opposed to modernist form.

This was one of the questions raised, albeit implicitly, by the Conservative government's establishing of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission (BBBB) in 2018 with the mission of improving housing design, and by implication delivery, in Britain. Chaired by Roger Scruton, philosopher and long-time advocate for traditional architecture, the commission made it clear from the start that beauty meant traditional architectural styles. On one level, this was simply a re-heating of the style wars that marked 1980s architectural culture in Britain, when the Prince of Wales, quite remarkably in retrospect, led the traditionalist charge on behalf of 'ordinary people' against the modernist establishment.[9] [Fig. 6] Yet the commission can also be seen as a response to the present situation, a housing crisis that even a Conservative government with a political base built on continually rising house prices could not ignore, and the belated realisation that the only way to deal with it was to build.

A comment made Kit Malthouse, then Minister of State for Housing and Planning, in early 2019 in response to a publication by Policy Exchange, the right-wing think tank whose work had paved the way for the commission, makes this point very clearly:

> My biggest challenge by far as Housing Minister will be convincing the British people that the land needed to solve the national housing crisis lies in their suburbs, villages, cities and towns. The only way we stand a chance of winning their support for this output is if they like what we build – beautiful buildings gather support; blank ubiquity garners protest and resentment. If you get the design right, the scale, the context, the fitness, communities will feel enhanced and respected and will lay down their petitions and placards.[10]

In this way, beauty smooths the way towards new development by neutralising NIMBYism. If a building is beautiful, the logic goes, then many of the objections to it fall away, the corollary being that popular resistance to development was because what architects served up – modern architecture – was ugly, out of place and out of scale. The possibility that this modern architecture might be in the form of council estates and all of their populist associations was left unsaid, but implied.

Such a simplistic argument is hard to take at face value, and we might dismiss the BBBB Commission as an exercise in populist political positioning, defining the Conservatives and their central policy of Brexit against out-of-touch metropolitan elites. They are certainly far from alone on the political right in recognising the potential of traditional architecture to be used in this way. From a broader perspective, the commission forms part of an increasingly nationalist and nativistic discourse around traditional architecture, of which Donald Trump's executive order mandating the classical

style for all federal buildings is the most notable example.[11]

Beauty, however, appears to simply be a means to an end. Not long after the BBBB Commission published its final report in January 2020, the government announced their intention to radically reform the planning system.[12] This was followed in August 2020 by a white paper that laid out a dramatic series of changes that would allow many developments to proceed with 'permission in principle'; to remove the Section 106 obligations for small-scale developments, which provides provision for local amenities, in particular housing; and to reform Use Classes allowing commercial buildings to be converted into housing.[13]

'Beauty' was, of course, prominent in these proposals, yet in this context rather transparently acting as a decoy for massive deregulation, a role that had been suspected all along. And needless to say, council housing is entirely absent from the white paper, which provides its own answer the aforementioned question of whether the right would be any more amenable to council housing if it was 'beautiful'.

Populism vs pluralism

The absence of council housing from the government's white paper is in stark contrast to the Labour Party's manifesto for the 2019 general election, where it appeared front and centre. Yet even for Labour this was a comparatively recent thing. The party's manifesto for the 2015 election promised to build at least 200 000 homes by 2020 to ensure that 'people's aspirations for home ownership will be fulfilled'. But it made no mention of council housing or social housing.[14] For the 2019 election, however, council housing was at the heart of the ambitious programme put forward by then leader, Jeremy Corbyn. If elected, the party pledged to build '100 000 new council homes a year for social rent … the biggest such programme since the 1960s'.[15] Promising 'to take on the vested interests holding people back', the council house building programme represented a key component of the party's unashamedly populist ambition to deliver 'for the many not the few'.[16]

At first glance Peter Barber's architecture appears ready-made to help fulfil this ambition. But while both are rooted in a passionate belief in the value of council housing, there are considerable divergences between Barber's approach and Labour's 2019 manifesto pledge. For a start, the manifesto does not get into how and where these 100 000 new council homes would be built if the party had won. But to build at that scale, it seems unlikely that it would be possible to do so in the way that Barber does: relatively small, tightly integrated, entirely urban developments, and designed by a small private practice, rather than the public sector. Moreover, the self-conscious harking back to the 1960s glosses over the fundamental changes between that moment and our present one in our relationships to the state, the environment and each other. So while Barber's architecture might appeal to, and win the approval of, left-wing populists, it is far from populist itself.

As we have seen over the course of this essay, whether it hails from the left or right, populism is ultimately more interested in how architecture can be used politically, than in actually delivering good buildings. While Labour's target of 100 000 homes is laudable in many ways, and without the cynicism and dangerous flirtation with the far right that marks the 'beauty' agenda, it is nevertheless a blunt tool in comparison to the almost crafted nature of Barber's projects. It does not take much, for instance, to imagine such a target leading to a repeat of the mistakes that marred the council house building programmes of the post-war era, when populist politics were similarly made concrete. These are not the mistakes that modernist architects and planners are traditionally accused of; rather, even more fundamentally, the way grand, transformative policies of the era were directly translated into similarly dramatic architectural and planning projects which had little room for alternative approaches,

scales and registers. In other words, the alluring yet wholly reductive idea that big policies required big architectural manifestations. Despite the obvious achievements of post-war council house building, one of the sad ironies of the monomania that emanated from the simplicity of this equation was the creation of architectural monocultures that became such easy targets for the populist politicians and commentators who followed, in stark contrast to the tactical nature of Barber's projects, even if they are similarly avowedly modern in conception.

This essay has shown just how far populist politics in the UK is tightly bound up with the built environment, the question of council housing in particular. While successful in raising the living conditions of millions of people, the mass council house building programmes of the post-war era illustrated that when populism is translated into architectural form, it inevitably leads to further populism. This fed the inevitable backlash against post-war modernism and culminated with the Right to Buy scheme. Decades later, council housing still remains a useful scapegoat for the populist right and more recently the strongly implied foil for the populist call for 'beauty' as the cure for the ills of the built environment. There is some irony, therefore, in the political left's call for a new generation of council house building explicitly in terms of the scale and nature of that achieved during the post-war era.

Populism breeds populism; the question is how to break this cycle, how to get beyond the fetishisation or demonisation of council housing and beauty, and establish a meaningful debate about housing provision in the UK that has the potential to enact real, positive change. The answer, I would argue, lies not in one single approach but in fostering many.

It is often said that architecture is the manifestation of the society that created it – its ideals, values and power structures – and by implication architecture is a reflection of external ideas and agendas. Yet, this essay has shown that while architecture can be passive, appropriated and instrumentalised, it also has the potential to be active, dynamic and inspiring. If populist politics tends towards a monocultural architecture and urbanism, then it stands to reason that a built environment that allows room for different forms, ideas and agendas may itself help foster a politics of pluralism. Let a thousand flowers bloom.

Notes

1. This and the following housing completion numbers are from the Office for National Statistics, 'House Building, UK: Permanent Dwellings Started and Completed', 1 March 2021, https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ukhousebuildingpermanentdwellingsstartedandcompleted. Adding in the houses built by private developers and a small number by housing associations, the total for the year would exceed 325 000. The following year that same total would reach 350 000, just surpassing the pre-war peak, before eventually hitting a colossal 425 830 in 1968. However, 1953 would remain the high watermark for council house completions. Shelter, 'Pride Versus Stigma in Social Housing as the Big Conversation Gets Underway', 18 May 2018, https://blog.shelter.org.uk/2018/05/pride-versus-stigma-in-social-housing-as-the-big-conversation-gets-underway/.
2. Asa Bennett, 'How Many Houses Politicians Have Promised and How Many They've Actually Built', *The Telegraph*, 7 October 2015, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/property/11916491/How-many-houses-politicians-have-promised-and-how-many-theyve-actually-built.html.
3. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 'Households on Local Authority Waiting List, Borough', 2013, updated 2020, https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/households-local-authority-waiting-list-borough.
4. Ian Cole et al., 'The Impact of the Existing Right to Buy and the Implications for the Proposed Extension of Right to Buy to Housing Associations', Summary of the Evidence Review for the CLG Select Committee Inquiry into the Viability and Sustainability of Housing Associations, Sheffield

Hallam University, 2015, https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/commons-committees/communities-and-local-government/Full-Report-for-Select-Committee-141015final.pdf.

5. The only exception – although one that perhaps proves the rule – was the mass privatisation of housing in former Eastern bloc countries after the fall of the USSR.
6. The episode of *Horizon* was called 'The Writing on the Wall' and aired on the BBC on 11 February 1974. It is available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OMH7N_6nCE.
7. David Cameron, 'Estate regeneration: article by David Cameron: Writing in the Sunday Times, the Prime Minister explained how regenerating estates will bring security to families and improve life chances', 10 January 2016, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/estate-regeneration-article-by-david-cameron.
8. The quote from Tony Blair's speech made on 2 June 1997 is from Municipal Dreams, 'The Aylesbury Estate, Southwark: 'all that is left of the high hopes of the post-war planners is derelict concrete', 7 January 2014, https://municipaldreams.wordpress.com/2014/01/07/the-aylesbury-estate-southwark-where-all-that-is-left-of-the-high-hopes-of-the-post-war-planners-is-dere-lict-concrete/.
9. The Prince's best known intervention came in his 1984 speech to mark the 150th anniversary of the RIBA, where the he attacked the architectural establishment, claiming that 'for far too long, it seems to me, some planners and architects have consistently ignored the feelings and wishes of the mass of ordinary people in this country', and infamously described Ahrends Burton and Koralek's proposed extension to the National Gallery as 'a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved and elegant friend.' HRH The Prince of Wales, 'A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales at the 150th anniversary of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), Royal Gala Evening at Hampton Court Palace', 30 May 1984, https://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-150th-anniversary-royal-institute-british-architects-riba-royal-gala.
10. Quote from Kit Malthouse appears in Jack Airey, 'Building Beautiful', 28 January 2019, https://policyex-change.org.uk/publication/building-beautiful/.
11. The executive order was quickly revoked by Joe Biden. Zachary Small, 'Biden Revokes a Trump Order Seeking 'Classical' Civic Architecture', *New York Times*, 26 February 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/26/arts/trump-biden-executive-orders-federal-buildings-architecture.html.
12. The BBBB commission's report is entitled 'Living with Beauty: Promoting health, well-being and sustainable growth'. It was published in January 2020: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/govern-ment/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861832/Living_with_beauty_BBBBC_report.pdf.
13. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 'Planning for the Future: White Paper August 2020', August 2020, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/958420/MHCLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf.
14. Labour Party, 'Britain Can Be Better: The Labour Party Manifesto 2015', https://b.3cdn.net/labouruk/e1d45da42456423b8c_vwm6brbvb.pdf.
15. Labour Party, 'Labour's Plan for Housing' (appendix to The Labour Party Manifesto 2019), https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/13218_19-Housing-Manifesto-v4.pdf.
16. Labour Party, 'It's Time for Real Change: The Labour Party Manifesto 2019'. https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Real-Change-Labour-Manifesto-2019.pdf.

Biography

Owen Hopkins is an architectural writer and curator. He is Director of the Farrell Centre at Newcastle University. Previously he was Senior Curator of Exhibitions and Education at Sir John Soane's Museum and before that Architecture Programme Curator at the Royal Academy of Arts, where he was the curator of numerous exhibitions, events series and other projects. A frequent commentator on architecture in the press, on radio and TV, he is author of seven books, including *The Museum: From its Origins to the 21st Century* (2021), *Postmodern Architecture: Less is a Bore* (2020), *Lost Futures* (2017), *Mavericks* (2016) and *From the Shadows* (2015), and editor of a further seven books, journal special issues and digital publications. He lectures internationally and is a regular guest critic at architecture schools as well as a judge for a number of architecture awards.

Review Article

Trump's Aesthetic, Spatial and Architectural Dramalities

Sophie Suma

Two months after Donald Trump announced his bid for the presidency on 8 August 2015, the journalist Jonathan Capehart in a conversation with Trump employee Omarosa Manigault, drew a link between *The Apprentice* (NBC, 2004–2014) and the candidate's political debates: Manigault compared the audience of twenty million watching Trump on TV arguing about politics to the eighteen million viewers of the first few seasons of *The Apprentice*.[1] She argued that the reality show was not just entertainment, it was reality, and that Americans were as fascinated with Trump during the debates as they had been with *The Apprentice*. In her eyes, people believe in Trump because he looks 'authentic' and because he seems to herald a 'new reality'. [Fig.1]

I would argue that this new reality, 'emerging ready-armed from Trump's brain, is the result of a carefully calculated strategy that he put in practice in the light of his long experience with the media'.[2] If television, and specifically reality shows reality shows did much to create Trump's image, the corollary has been that his communication strategy owes much to how this functions in terms of media and scenography. His imperial descent in the main escalator to the lobby of Trump Tower typify the construction of a theatrical effect. There he spatialises and dramatises his presence in a setting that he believes best radiates power. Whether to the sound of blaring music when greeting candidates in *The Apprentice* before announcing their next mission, or to applause and yelps, as was the case on 16 June 2015, when he announced his candidacy for the 2016 presidency, these slow entrances are stage-managed – a form of spectacularisation engineered specially for the media and for the audience he wants to win over and impress.[3] The Trump Tower lift activates the space of Trump's dramality.[4] It is an object of dramatic tension through which his performance is stage-managed.

Trump has a long history of working with mass media. Already in the late 1970s, while the Trump Tower was still on the drawing-board, his ambition was to erect, in his words, 'the first super-luxury high-rise property in New York to include high-end retail shops, office space and residential condominiums'.[5] Pitching his future real estate project to the press and on TV, he expatiated on the glamour the tower would give the city, as well as on the economic benefits that would accrue – though the latter were soon put in doubt by architecture critics and journalists.[6] As Trump was announcing his determination to erect the tallest skyscraper in New York to match the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center lower down on the same skyline, an article by *Chicago Tribune* critic Paul Gapp voiced misgivings as to the relevance of such a project – besides, that is, massaging its client's ego. An outraged Trump promptly sued the journalist, claiming that such slander might have a negative economic impact on sales in the future building. In October 1984, after the skyscraper had been delivered, an article by *New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger pointed out that such proceedings were absurd, since no architecture critic in the world could single-handedly talk down the real estate market by criticising a building.[7] Goldberger went on to argue

that Trump's suit was simply a ruse to get tongues wagging about him and his tower. The critic seemed well aware of how Trump was already toying with the media to his advantage.

A few years down the line, the media had become the single most important platform for Trump's self-presentation. Since his election campaign, many media outlets have presented the former US President as a populist figure – that is, as someone who understands the interests of working people and challenges the structures of government. If dramality remains a constant in Trump's communications agenda, it became particularly apparent in the architecture policy he conducted during his mandate. At least two strategies put into action on the architecture front have roots in dramality: 1) the visibilisation of Trump's agenda in the form of one of the most ambitious ever construction projects in the United States on its border with Mexico; 2) the transgression of long-held (historical, legal, aesthetic, and so on) precepts and the institutional enshrining of new rules in architecture design and representation. Succeeding in making Trump popular with a certain demographic and publicising his ideology, it can be shown that his architectural policy ultimately stems from his populist stance.

Making visible: the Wall as ideology

Trump built his first presidential campaign on the reiteration and consolidation of the values of the United States in keeping with his rallying-cry, 'America first', and on the revalorisation of its economy and global reach with 'Make America great again'. His aim was to recover American wealth relocated abroad and put globalisation into reverse. To preserve the American way of life and keep its riches within its borders, he criticised recent capitalism as being undermined by a neoliberal elite that promotes relocation and outsourcing. Thus, a key point in Trump's programme was to strengthen the border with Mexico so as to protect blue-collar jobs and lower the crime rate.[8] Against the odds, Trump's wall proved highly popular during and after the campaign. The organisation 'We Built the Wall' attracted far more supporters than expected and they were ready to pour money into the project. Polls showed that a majority of Americans wanted the wall completed to slow immigration and bolster American values. Trump's Border Wall was born out of this promise. Its popularity might almost hide the fact that the wall belongs to a type of nationalist architecture intended to preserve, maintain and impose law and order. By regularly highlighting the progress of the Wall's construction in the media and talking up its legitimacy on social networks, Trump turned a radical idea into a popular symbol.

Following his election, Trump would often refer to himself as the 'builder president'. Transforming the wall into a landmark construction therefore presented him with an opportunity to showcase not only his leadership, but also the skills he had acquired in construction and architecture, and thus legitimise his architectural policy. In a speech during the presidential campaign in Iowa on 25 August 2015, he declared that, for an experienced contractor like himself, such a venture would be 'easy': 'Very easy. I am a builder. It's easy. I have built buildings that exist. Can I tell you what is more complicated? The most complicated thing is to build a 95-floor building. OK?'[9] Since 2014, Trump has frequently posted propaganda slogans about the wall on his Twitter account, such as '*Secure the border! Build a wall'*![10] During his tenure, however, Trump's supposedly unifying symbol was soon seen as synonymous with anti-democracy. The wall was certainly instrumental in foregrounding his political agenda and ideology. Although Trump addresses the world with an approachable vocabulary, and with uncomplicated ideas that make him popular, this apparent simplicity is a populist media strategy.

The plan for a vast border fence physically separating Mexico from the United States was the brainchild of George H. W. Bush in 1990. It was taken up by Bill Clinton in 1993, who had fourteen miles (22.5 km) of wall erected, thereby reducing the number of people detained by the border patrol.

Fig. 1: “You’re Fired” banner on the New York Trump Tower. Photo: BBC News, 12 July 2017.

In 2006, after Congress had approved the Secure Fence Act, Bush set up an additional seven hundred kilometres. Construction of its various sections continued until 2011 during the mandate of Barack Obama. In all, more than a thousand kilometres of hard border were built, running from California to the gates of Texas. Undertaken by several administrations, its form is far from unified: fencing in some places, in others concrete blocks, logs of wood, barbed wire, and so on. If the crossing of cars has been partially halted, individuals can still get through without too much difficulty, in particular across the Texas border beyond the Rio Grande.

The Trump administration applied for the extravagant sum of $5.3 billion to reinforce those portions of the existing wall or barrier too fragile or dilapidated to fulfil their function properly. The ultimate goal was to build a wall about three thousand kilometres long running the entire length of the border currently open. Like many other projects involving the construction of walls, this type of architecture curtails liberties and serves as a social partition between Mexico and the United States. If the wall – a fundamental construction element, together with the structure, roof, foundations and openings (windows and doors) – seems a banal architectural object, according to the architect and philosopher Richard Scoffier, it also cordons off functions as ‘an instinctive marking of space’ and forms part of an architectural interpretation of spatial limits, acting as a beacon of political and ideological tension.[11] This is precisely what makes Trump’s Border Wall the visible manifestation of the former president’s populist strategy.

According to Jan-Werner Müller, political populism fosters a way of thinking that rejects a plurality of political positions and curbs democratic debate.[12] The wall exemplifies an authority that has no truck with discussing other, more imaginative solutions for regulating immigration, while its physical and symbolic monumentality suppresses the democratic border.[13] The project will not bring US companies that have relocated to Mexico or China for economic reasons back to America, just as it will not prevent foreigners from entering and working there. Coupled with the ICE Border Police, Trump’s Border Wall is now seen as a racist statement designed to curtail individual freedoms.[14] *Washington Post* journalist Henry Olsen reminds us that populist politics means taking working people into account in political decisions in an effort not to penalise them with respect to the wealthiest: ‘the people vs. the powerful’.[15] But populism can hardly be said to be an open policy free of political and ideological posturing that could heal class and gender divisions. While Trump’s wall clearly articulates a discriminatory, racist and nationalistic policy, the question remains which ‘American people’ the system benefits. Müller reminds us that if populist leaders seek to represent the ‘real’ people, the question of who those people might be is left begging: if they seem certainly not to correspond to the elites, neither are they the (silent) majority. Norberto Bobbio’s *Dictionary of Politics* defines populism as ‘a political doctrine whose chief source of inspiration is the people, considered as a homogeneous social aggregate and as the exclusive repository of positive, unambiguous and unchanging values’.[16] In politics, however, dealing in populist discourse does not systematically lead to the application of a policy in favour of ‘the people’ in all their diversity.

Maxime Boidy argues that ‘what we mean by “populism” as applied to knowledge and ideas possesses negative connotations because of how the notion is dealt with in the mainstream political and media practices’, so that ‘such uses denigrate discourses and strategies seen as looking for the levers of their success in the baser instincts of the people’.[17] This definition is close to that offered by Ernesto Laclau, who views populism as a communicative strategy, a ‘cultural hegemony’.[18] All the propaganda around the wall, fuelled by Trump himself on social networks, does indicate a populist strategy made visible by one of the most liberticidal examples of architecture in US history. Populism also carries with it a demagogic stance catering

for a predominantly White Anglo-Saxon Protestant population, which feeds into a noxious nationalism and fosters mistrust of government: the wall sanctions this rabble-rousing at once physically and symbolically. It is, however, not the only evidence that Trump's architectural policies serve a populist strategy.

Institutionalisation: transgression as an architectural policy

What does Trump actually know about architecture? First, he lacks all consideration for the artistic and historical value of the buildings of the past, showing no hesitation to demolish them if he wants the site they occupy. While clearing the ground for the construction of Trump Tower on 5th Avenue in 1980, he ordered the demolition of the Bonwit Teller Building (1827–1980), an Art Deco jewel on the site.[19] The facades of the historic edifice were clad in splendid bas-reliefs by René Chambellan and presented an entrance grille designed by Otto J. Teegan. In 1979, at the request of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, whose experts had stressed their historical importance, Trump promised that these valuable features would be preserved.[20] In the end though, both the reliefs and the entrance grille fell foul of the wrecking-ball.[21] Set on redrawing the face of New York with his tower, Trump simply refused to extend the construction deadline to make time to recover elements that he believed devoid of artistic and historical value.[22]

During his period in office, Trump was finally able to officially proclaim the ethical stance of his architectural policy. On 18 December 2020, while still President and alleging that 'modern architecture has been, overall, a failure', Trump signed an executive order entitled 'Make Federal Buildings Beautiful Again', which stipulates that, henceforth, federal buildings are to be neoclassical in style. In some respects, this diktat amounted to an attempt to turn the tide of history.[23] Harking back to buildings designed by the founding fathers of the United States, such as the Capitol (1793–1812) and the White House (1792–1800), its text illustrates the function of architecture as Trump sees it. According to an article in the periodical *Architectural Record* – which first made the proposed executive order public by posting it online on 4 February 2020 – and was originally spearheaded by the National Civic Art Society (NCAS), Trump had been pondering the text for a year before signing it.[24] Its objective was to reform and amend a previous executive order entitled 'Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture' penned by Daniel Patrick Moynihan and issued by President John Fitzgerald Kennedy in 1962. The earlier edict had declared that the design of Federal buildings ought to take into account contemporary stylistic developments and not seek to enshrine an official national style.

Trump's new decree, on the contrary, was intended to urge future architects entering competitions and designing buildings to draw their inspiration almost exclusively from the classical idiom.[25] The aim of this instrumental use of history was to impose the idea that the most 'beautiful' buildings in the United States are in the neoclassical style and the 'ugliest' (including the Seagram Building, the J. Edgar Hoover Building for the FBI, the Hubert H. Humphrey Building) in a modernist or contemporary idiom. The text thus addresses head-on the aesthetic issue of the beautiful and the ugly in architecture – an ambivalent question that no architectural theory has ever been able to resolve.[26] Moreover, it was based on a public survey conducted by the American Institute of Architects in 2007, which ranked Americans' 150 favourite buildings.[27] The poll was, however, rather too good to be true since it either simply omitted contemporary buildings or gave them a low score.

The text ratifying the order, issued on 21 December and entitled 'Executive Order on Promoting Beautiful Federal Civic Architecture' (it remained on the White House website until it was rescinded by the new president, Joe Biden) refers to the architectural preferences of earlier presidents. For federal monuments such as the Capitol,

the pioneering eighteenth and nineteenth-century leaders commissioned architects to design buildings whose forms took their cue from the classical architecture of Greek, Roman antiquity. This idiom was informed by the spirit of the Enlightenment, which, heir to the intellectual ferment of the Renaissance and Humanism, saw the architecture of Antiquity as the summit of formal beauty and harmony. It is hard to see how such a style could be promoted today, however. Judging by his own projects, Trump sees architecture simply as a concrete manifestation of the power of the United States – or of his own power in the public arena (the notion of the landmark).[28] It can therefore hardly come as a surprise that the authoritarian language of his decree condemns recourse to any other style. By diverting attention to a question of aesthetics, the order runs roughshod over history and transgresses the rules of democracy by threatening to diminish freedom of expression in civic architecture nationwide, as well as ignoring centuries of oppression of certain peoples in the process. Though the classicism of official US government buildings in the nineteenth century paid tribute to the inaugural genius of ancient architecture, the vision championed by Trump and the NCAS through this executive order is a reminder of the exclusionary nature of his populist politics.

Although Trump's executive order is now defunct, efforts made to institutionalise its ideology did leave traces. On 5 March 2020, the White House tennis pavilion project, already underway at the time, was unveiled by the then First Lady, Melania Trump, via her Twitter account.[29] Accompanied by a number of photos, the announcement declares that she is working with the National Park Service to replace an old maintenance building located near the tennis courts. An official document from the National Capital Planning Commission dated 6 June 2019 posted online shortly after revealed the plans and elevations for a pavilion of classical proportions and style.[30] The text proclaims that the building, clad in limestone and roofed in copper, will boast colonnades, panoramic floor-to-ceiling windows and fanlights. Directly echoing the aesthetics of the White House, the declared intention of the park service was that the future building fit seamlessly into the surroundings. Inaugurated a few days before the president signed his executive order, the tennis pavilion's architecture is decidedly neoclassical given its proximity to the most emblematic federal building in the United States. Once completed, the project can be seen as a blatant example of the premature if effective implementation of the executive order. In this way, the pavilion institutionalised Trump's architectural policy, ensuring that it would remain visible even if the order is rescinded – as indeed it was.

This was not, however, the first time since his election that the former president had flouted the rules of decorum and subverted symbolic or democratic spaces. With the show of weaponry, tanks, fighter jets and Air Force One held at the Lincoln Memorial above National Mall Park in Washington DC on 4 July 2019, Trump scripted and spatialised the clash between the narrative of freedom and new images of propaganda (might and power). [Fig. 2] The parade seemed designed to resemble the Bastille Day march-past in France. In the United States, however, the Fourth of July is not a military pageant, the signing on that day in 1776 of the United States Declaration of Independence from Britain generally being commemorated in a peaceable manner with speeches, concerts, and cultural and community events. Trump was promptly accused by members of Congress, the press, and several media personalities of hijacking the national Fourth of July celebrations.[31] Breaking with tradition, the parade was widely seen as a strategy for showcasing the power of his administration and US military might. By choosing to make his speech at the bottom of the Lincoln Memorial steps, Trump was not selflessly celebrating the history associated with the monument or defending individual freedoms, as Martin Luther King Jr. had done in 1963 in his 'I Have a Dream' speech; he was indulging in an

Fig. 2: Donald Trump announcing his candidacy for U.S. President in the New York Trump Tower. Photo: NBC News, 16 June 2015.

act of symbolic violence incompatible with the myth of American democracy. More recently (autumn of 2020), Trump's staging of the Republican National Convention in the Rose Garden before a crowd of a thousand or so people infringed the Hatch Act, which forbids the organising of official or mediatised party political events on this symbolically neutral site (the White House is 'the People's house').

Like many statesmen before him (Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, and so on), Trump deploys the tools of storytelling, a technique with a long tradition in the United States. Exploiting the story of political events and their mediatisation, he thus joins the ongoing narrative of the history of men and women who make politics.[32] Trump – in an endless stream of crowd-pleasing high-jinks, spoofs and stagey tricks – combines this practice with a process of mystification that engenders pure illusion. Trump's exploitation of the media spawns a 'new reality' – that of his own fiction.[33] Damien Le Guay describes reality TV shows in the same terms: 'reality TV does not seek to perceive the world – it represents it in its own way'.[34] It makes no attempt to address the real; it oversimplifies it, stoking social violence, an atmosphere of conflict and cruelty that makes people doubt that they can ever live peacefully side by side.[35] In the same vein, Christian Salmon declares that, if reality TV was once just entertainment, 'Trump has used it as a tool for the conquest of power'.[36] Trump has thus transferred the dramality of the TV screen to the political sphere, creating new conditions of public communication. Persuasion is no longer the sole aim; it is now accompanied by principles of subversion and transgression that should be understood as new media phenomena, for which the old rules of probity no longer apply, while Trump's bid to institutionalise his ideology has instrumentalised both space and architecture on numerous occasions.

Exit

As a populist, Trump presents himself as a moral authority who represents the People. His architecture policy advocated sealing the US border with a wall, drafted an executive order for a one-size-fits-all architecture that nostalgically re-enacts the imperial colonialism of an era in which the founding fathers sought to legitimise slavery by a classicism financed by slavery and built by slaves, and promoted the construction of exorbitantly priced buildings.[37] On the face of it, the exterior of Trump Tower conforms to the architectural modernity of New York, displaying lines similar to those of the Seagram Building (Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1958) or the World Trade Center (Minoru Yamasaki, 1973). The interior, though, is garishly ostentatious: marble and gilt, custom-made furniture, rare fabrics, and so on.[38] Until relatively recently, the doors were opened by doormen dressed as footmen. The overall atmosphere hovers somewhere between faux Italian Renaissance and a set for an early episode of the American soap opera *Dynasty* (1981–89).[39] One thing is sure: it is a style in blatant contradiction with the anti-elitist stance Trump advocated during and after his presidential campaign.

Essentially, Trump's dramality embraces two populist architectural strategies: the visibilisation of borders and the institutionalisation of ideology through building. His 'wall of shame' and his executive order herald the return of spatial nationalism in US history: their ideology does not seem to represent American society and Americans generally, but solely that sector of the population that perceives Trump's character only through the prism of his media impact.

As we have seen, Trump's career was largely an offshoot of the reality-TV culture that emerged from the early 1990s media environment, at a time when he was regaining his business footing and flirting with politics. And it was this same visual culture, this same media-based power embodied by television, the press and later by social networks that made him an entertainment figure. The form and look of his buildings, the way his homes and workplaces are decorated, how he occupies space, how his every appearance is scripted, together with his

scandalous architectural reforms all bespeak an approach to events designed to maximise visibility, all the while demonstrating his instrumentalisation of architecture for propaganda and business purposes. Trump has acquired his immense popularity today, not only by dint of television, his vast wealth, and his real estate ventures, but above all through elaborate strategies of dramatisation. Trump has indeed succeeded in his transition from television spectacle to politics.[40]

His actions and speeches are typical of the 'mytholeptic' – of one who never tires of scripting his performance, stage-managing the world in order to take advantage of a society in crisis.[41] But what then is the ethics behind Trump's appropriation of history, space and architecture? In the words of Chris Younès and Thierry Paquot, 'ethics partakes of our relationships to others and to the world'.[42] With a perceptual framework that involves erecting elitist skyscrapers, defending colonial architecture, using historical monuments for his own devices, and transforming a border fence into an architectural event by reconstructing it as a hermetically sealed wall, Trump has indelibly rendered his populist vision. He seeks to embody a power both monolithic and total, as was all too evident when he goaded his supporters to storm and ransack the Capitol to prevent the ratification of Joe Biden's election victory and sow distrust of the new administration.[43] To succeed progressive icon Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the Supreme Court, Trump chose conservative judge Amy Coney Barrett, whom he inducted in the White House on 26 September 2020. Since the beginning of his term, Trump has used the White House to serve his own interests, repeatedly violating the Hatch Act. His relationship to architecture resembles his relationship to the world at large – a type of excessive instrumentalisation that aims to represent the American space as a much-feared and powerful nation-state over which he would rule unchallenged.

The United States and the wider world perceive him through dramalities he promotes like a producer of fictions. Perhaps even more disturbing is the institutionalisation of a vision of architecture that has pushed America into overt spatial nationalism – a common enough phenomenon in history, usually the work of notorious dictators. What will be the effect of the events discussed here on the future of architecture in the United States? Will Trump's dramality, with its tub-thumping speeches and populist spaces and events, continue to make headway as a new modality of political expression?

This article is not intended to justify the existence of a link between politicians and television, as this has already been made visible by different events, such as the Kitchen Debate (Richard Nixon and Nikita Kruschev) in 1959 during the American Exposition in Moscow, by Bill Clinton playing the saxophone at the Arsenio Hall Show in 1992, Ronald Reagan as a film and television actor, or during the different appearances of politicians during their presidential campaigns. Rather, it is about revealing a relationship between an unprecedented architectural staging and Trump in his political mode, where architecture is at the same time a material, structural and metaphorical component. While Trump is obviously not the first leader to turn politics into showbiz and to instrumentalise architecture for ideological purposes, he appears as the president of the United States who has most profoundly muddied the distinction between fiction and reality in the political sphere, immersing his audience in a performance where space and architecture play a subordinate role in his shadow.

Notes

1. Having appeared in several episodes of *The Apprentice*, Manigault was employed by Trump during his 2015 campaign and later appointed assistant to the president. Made redundant in 2018, she published *Unhinged*, an exposé of the problems in the White House under Trump.
2. Jonathan Capehart, 'One year ago, Trump descended that escalator and took political discourse down with him', *The Washington Post*, 15 June 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2016/06/15/one-year-ago-trump-descended-that-escalator-and-took-political-discourse-down-with-him/. Even as president, Trump continued to work as co-producer of *The Celebrity Apprentice*.
3. Some audience members had been paid to clap. Fabrizio Calvi, *Un parrain à la maison blanche* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2020).
4. We have here a perfect illustration of what Mark Burnett (president of MGM Television, creator and co-producer of *The Apprentice*) defines as 'dramality'. A neologism coined by Burnett to describe his reality shows, 'dramality' is a portmanteau word made up of 'drama' and 'reality', the two elements that constitute the new paradigm of TV reality that has become current since the 1990s. Television dramality relies on the dramatisation of 'authentic' facts and emotions as closely as possible to reality. Mark Burnett, *Survivor: The Ultimate Game*, (London: TV Books, 2000); Mark Burnett and Martin Dugard, *Survivor II: The Field Guide*, (London: TV Books, 2001), 9.
5. https://www.trumptowerny.com/trump-tower-new-york. Delivered in 1983 by American architect Der Scutt. See also Sy Rubin, *Trump Tower* (Fort Lee: Lyle Stuart, 1984).
6. Marylin Bender, 'The Empire and Ego of Donald Trump', *The New York Times*, 7 August 1983.
7. Paul Goldberger, 'Architecture view: can a critic really control the marketplace?' *The New York Times*, 14 October 1984.
8. Michael Magcamit, 'Explaining the Three-Way Linkage between Populism, Securitization, and Realist Foreign Policies', *World Affairs* no. 3 (autumn 2017): 6–35.
9. 'Donald Trump Rally Dubuque Iowa', *Live CNN*, 25 August 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJ6UojhAbdw.
10. Donald Trump (@realdonaldtrump), Twitter, https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/496756082489171968?. Trump's Twitter account has been suspended, and therefore the link does not work at the moment.
11. Richard Scoffier, *Le Mur, cours 1, Où commence l'architecture?,* lecture on 12 May 2011, Université Populaire du Pavillon de l'Arsenal, Paris : https://www.pavillon-arsenal.com/fr/arsenal-tv/conferences/universite-populaire/9036-le-mur.html; Wendy Brown, *Murs: Les murs de séparations et le déclin de la souveraineté étatique* (Paris: Les Prairies Ordinaires, 2009).
12. Jan-Werner Müller, *Qu'est-ce que le populisme ? Définir enfin la menace* (Paris: Premier parallèle, 2016).
13. Moreover, the construction of a wall along the entire border could damage protected sites – not that this would bother the Trump administration, since a 2005 law allows the president to use his authority to circumvent a number of environmental regulations. Simon Romero, 'Tribal Nation Condemns "Desecration" to Build Border Wall', *The New York Times*, 26 February 2020, www.nytimes.com/2020/02/26/us/border-wall-cactuses-arizona.html.
14. T. C. Boyle, *The Tortilla Curtain* (London: Bloomsbury, 1995). ICE stands for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal agency policing the US border.
15. Henry Olsen, 'Trump is living up to his populist promise', *The Washington Post*, 25 June 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/06/25/trump-is-living-up-his-populist-promise/.
16. Norberto Bobbio, Nicola Matteuccci and Gianfranco Pasquino, *Dizionario di Politica*, (Bologna: TEA, 1990), 735–40.
17. Maxime Boidy, *Les études visuelles* (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2017), 58.
18. Ernesto Laclau, *La raison populiste* (Paris: Seuil, 2000) [2005]).

19. For this building, as well as for many others, Trump collaborated with New York architect Costas Kondylis, with whom he shares an interest in skyscrapers.
20. Christopher Gray, 'The store that slipped though the cracks', *The New York Times*, 3 October 2014.
21. Harry Hurt III, *Lost Tycoon: The Many Lives of Donald Trump* (Brattleboro, VT: Echo Point Books, 1993).
22. In his article Callum Borchers reports how, in the course of a telephone conversation with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Trump allegedly impersonated an expert named John Baron who argued for the destruction of these architectural features during demolition on the grounds that they were ultimately not sufficiently valuable to save. Callum Borchers, 'Donald Trump hasn't changed one bit since his first media feud in 1980', *The Washington Post*, 18 March 2016.
23. Cathleen McGuigan, 'Will the White House order new federal architecture to be classical?' *Architectural Record*, 4 February 2020, www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/14466-will-the-white-house-order-new-federal-architecture-to-be-classical.
24. Cathleen McGuigan, 'Will the White House order new federal architecture to be classical?', *Architectural Record*, 4 February 2020, www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/14466-will-the-white-house-order-new-federal-architecture-to-be-classical.
25. The draft decree also appears to allow for the use of neo-Mediterranean, Spanish neocolonial, neo-Gothic and neo-Romanesque styles, while modernism, deconstructivism, brutalism and contemporary architecture are excluded.
26. Mickaël Labbé, *Textes clés de philosophie de l'architecture* (Paris: Vrin, 2017).
27. 'AIA Reveals Public's Choice America's Best Architecture', *AIArchitect: The News of America's Community of Architects*, vol. 14, 9 February 2007, https://info.aia.org/aiarchitect/thisweek07/0209/0209n_150bldgs.htm.
28. Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge MA: Harvard/MIT, 1960).
29. White House Grounds, Tennis Pavilion. [It would make more sense to link here to the Melania tweet].
30. National Capital Planning Commission, Executive Director's Recommendation, 'White House Grounds, Tennis Pavilion', 30 May 2019, https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/actions/2019June/8077_White_House_Complex,_Tennis_Pavilion_Staff_Report_Jun2019.pdf.
31. Peter Jamieson, Samantha Schmidt, Hannah Natanson and Steve Hendrix, 'Trump's Fourth of July celebration thrills supporters, angers opponents', *The Washington Post*, 5 July 2019, www.washingtonpost.com/local/fourth-of-july-celebrations-to-draw-thousands-to-the-nations-capital/2019/07/03/a6d2adb8-9da1-11e9-b27f-ed2942f73d70_story.html.
32. Christian Salmon, *Storytelling: La machine à fabriquer des histoires et à formater les esprits* (Paris: La Découverte, 2007).
33. Christian Salmon, *L'Ère du clash* (Paris: Fayard, 2019).
34. Damien Le Guay, *L'Empire de la téléréalité*, (Paris: Presses de la Renaissance, 2005), ## [insert page number].
35. Ibid., 140.
36. Salmon, *L'Ére du clash*, 321.
37. Irene Cheng, Charles L. Davis and Mabel O. Wilson, eds., *Race and Modern Architecture: A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020).
38. Ada Louise Huxtable, 'Donald Trump's Tower', *New York Times*, 6 May 1984.
39. In spite of a jumble of materials, murals and classical furniture that overloads the space and clouds the vision, the Trumps like to compare their apartment to the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Ivana, who oversaw the furnishings and decorations of the Trump family's 1000 m² triplex at the top of the tower, remarked that 'this is how Louis XVI would have lived if he had had money'. Ivana Trump, *Raising Trump* (New York: Gallery Publishing Group, 2017), 108.
40. Dork Zabunyan, *Fictions de Trump: Puissances des images et exercices du pouvoir* (Paris: Point Jour, 2020).
41. '*Mytholeptique*', a neologism coined by Christian Salmon in *L'Ère du clash*, 333.

42. Chris Younès and Thierry Paquot, *Éthique, architecture, urbain* (Paris: La Découverte, 2000).
43. Timothy Snyder, 'The American Abyss', *The New York Times Magazine*, 13 January 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/fr/2021/01/13/magazine/trump-capitole-fascisme-racisme.html.

Biography

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Visual Essay

Architectural Antiquisation

Mari Lending

It took president Biden nine weeks to revoke president Trump's *Executive Order on Promoting Beautiful Federal Civic Architecture*, issued on 21 December 2020. In Oslo, in the week of the presidential inauguration, we had sixty-five third-year students read Trump's contribution to architecture in the course 'The History of Architectural Theory', where we start in the present moment before manoeuvring backwards toward Pliny the Younger and Vitruvius. To me, the executive order proved a perfect opportunity to introduce two thousand years of architectural debate and ideas, and the fascinating document that bears Donald J. Trump's signature certainly deserves a place in the anthologies on architectural theories, not least because of its intricate system of footnotes and definitions of vital terms such as 'Classical Architecture', 'Brutalist', and 'Deconstructivist': '(b) "Brutalist" means the style of architecture that grew out of the early 20th-century modernist movement characterised by a massive and block-like appearance with a rigid geometrical style and large-scale use of exposed poured concrete.'[1]

The executive order corroborates a rich modern tradition in which 'classical architecture' and popular taste is made to coincide. Such conflations invite dichotomising and polarising. Here, 'modernist' and 'contemporary' oppose 'classical', while the 'architectural elite' is contrasted with 'the American people'. The 'general public' is defined in terms of negation: '(e) 'General public' means members of the public who are not: (i) artists, architects, engineers, art or architecture critics, instructors or professionals, or members of the building industry' – while part (ii) contains a number of other groups residing outside of the general public.[2] Section C deals with transformation and restoration. The order charges that, when renovating federal buildings (those not built in accordance with the classical and beautiful), 'redesign should be given substantial consideration, especially in regards to the building's exterior'.[3] This beautification strategy carefully aligns the American presidential order with the recent work of another state leader with architectural inclinations, namely the project 'Skopje 2014', commissioned by Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski of the nationalist party VMRO-DPMNE for the capital of what was in 2019 renamed the Republic of North Macedonia.

The Norwegian artist Espen Gleditsch's photographic series *Who's Afraid of the Neo-Neo-Classical?*, shot in Skopje and shown in Oslo in the spring of 2019, depicts contemporary downtown Skopje as hovering somewhere between construction and ruin. The fabulist nostalgia of nationalistic identity politics is architecturally expressed in the covering up of the facades of brutalist buildings with columns, porticos, tympanums, and cupolas in polyurethane and plaster. The populist operation comes with a vocabulary of its own. Gleditsch's architectural investigations into the phenomenon of *antiquisation* ('antikvizacija') adds yet another layer to an already palimpsestic antiquity.

28
FOOTPRINT The Architecture of Populism: Media, Politics, and Aesthetics | Autumn/Winter 2021 | 131–144

#1

Since the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991, Greece has blocked the Republic of Macedonia's access to NATO and the EU, insisting that the name Macedonia be reserved for the northern Greek province, and constraining its naming rights to the euphemistic acronym FYROM (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). After a 2018 referendum, the renamed Republic of North Macedonia has gained NATO membership, while negotiations with the EU are pending. Through an extraordinary version of the phenomenon of inventing tradition, and to depict an unbroken heritage back to Philip II of Macedon and the empire of his son Alexander the Great, the war over the past has been fought by deploying fantasies of Hellenistic antiquity in the service of contemporary, nationalist populism.

The transformation of modern Skopje is due to seismic shifts; first geologically, then politically. Major parts of the city were destroyed in an earthquake in July 1963. Under President Josip Broz Tito of the un-aligned Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the UN organised a competition for rebuilding Skopje. In 1965, Kenzo Tange won the competition and made a masterplan. Over the next decades, the city became something of an open-air museum for brutalist, concrete experiments, with individual buildings designed by international and regional architects.

Among the buildings that disappeared with the earthquake were typical examples of 19th century neoclassicism that furnishes cities all over Europe and beyond. In the neo-neo- classical idiom framed by Gleditsch, the traces of 19 th century cosmopolitanism as well as the unexpected cold war internationalism represented by UN diplomacy and Tange's masterplan is wrapped up in an oxymoron: a nationalistic classicism.

The photo shows Zoran Staklev's The MEPSO building (Electricity Transmission System Operator of Macedonia) on the River Vardar in a fantasy classicist edition.

Espen Gleditsch, Who's Afraid of the Neo-Neo-Classical? #1, Recladded MEPSO-building and the River Vardar at sunrise, 2019. 82 x 102 cm, archival pigment print.

#2

At first glance, Gleditsch's series might be conceived as ironic, in the sense that it portrays an apparently ludicrous endeavour. After all, Skopje has in the last decade been nick-named the capital of kitsch. Yet, the images also evoke a century of modernist critique of 'classical' monumentality. The urban scenographies in present-day Skopje do not really pretend to be buildings such as the Vittorio Emanuele monument, New York Public Library, or the Lincoln Memorial: examples of an emptied monumentality that Louis Mumford in the 1930s felt were threatening to turn the world into a graveyard.[4] The urban transformation mimics the recipe Sigfried Giedion bemoaned in 1944: 'the recipe is always the same: take some curtains of columns and put them in front of any building, whatever its purpose and to whatever consequences it may lead', although Skopje hardly qualifies as pseudo-monumental.[5] The abundance of conspicuously placed columns are real in the same sense as La Strada Novissima was a very real thing in Venice in 1980, when Paolo Portoghesi under the title 'The End of Prohibitionism' aimed at rehabilitating the classical column from twentieth-century totalitarianisms. Assisted by set designers from Cinecittà, he pursued an imaginary architecture 'animated by the crowd, and where, as on a stage, there was always an inside and an outside, a part for the employees and another for everyone else.'[6] Yet while Portoghesi's temporary play took place in the Arsenale, the stage set Nikola Gruevski initiated around 2010 is the city centre of a European capital. These curtains of columns are unabashedly scenographic, with colossal columns obscuring windows in the original buildings, making the view from both the inside and the outside the scene of anti-tectonic propaganda.

Espen Gleditsch, *Who's Afraid of the Neo-Neo-Classical? #2, Columns, glass, concrete*, 2019. 102 x 82 cm, archival pigment print.

#7

Espen Gleditsch has explored modernist polychromy in his work, such as the colour schemes of Eileen Gray, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Arne Korsmo. He has also worked photographically with classical sculpture. In the carefully framed image 7, the reclad Government Building, designed by Petar Mulickovski in 1970 for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, comes forth as a pristinely white work on paper. The building consists of seven cubic volumes lifted above ground, in a concrete and steel construction and with the facades dominated by rows of windows. This fragment of 'Skopje 2014' appears as a twisted version of the engraved frontispiece of Sebastiano Serlio's book on antiquities, published in Venice in 1540. The facade of Serlio's book shows rusticated stone arches through which a broken obelisk can be seen in the distance. The allegorical personification *Architettura* stands in a niche with drawing and measuring devices in her hands. Strewn prominently across the foreground are building fragments: bits of entablatures and cornices, a base and parts of fluted columns covered in weeds. The frontispiece displays the passage of time and antiquity as a depository. There are no people present either on Serlio's printed page where the architectural language of classicism was written in marble, or in the Skopje photo, where a classicist dialect is uttered in polyurethane. Whereas Serlio's engraving promises a landscape of discovery awaiting the curious student of history, the empty whiteness of the Government Building telegraphs a different message: move along, nothing to see here.

Espen Gleditsch, *Who's Afraid of the Neo-Neo-Classical? #7, Recladded government building*, 2019. 102 x 82 cm, archival pigment print.

#11

Behind undemocratic leaders' love of new classicisms lurks Periclean Athens. Ancient Rome with its changing regimes has also furnished an architectural repository for modern states: while Napoleon identified with imperial Rome, Brutus and not Caesar became the hero in the fledgling United States of America. By invoking 'the classical architecture of Ancient Athens and Rome', president Trump wished to 'visually connect our contemporary Republic with the antecedents of democracy in classical antiquity', and to remind the citizens of their rights and responsibilities 'in maintaining and perpetuating its institutions'.[7] That requires buildings that 'command respect from the general public'. In downtown Skopje, the sources for the recent urban redevelopment were of a more direct sort, in order to install national pride in the public by projecting the cultural legacy of ancient Macedonia onto the contemporary city.

In Skopje, architects are not excluded from the general public. Yet independent of métier, the public was not happy with the redesign of the exteriors of their buildings, nor with the senseless expenditure of money. There were no crowds to animate the constructions, as in Venice in 1980, and the exteriors did not appeal to the audience, that is, to 'everyone else'. The second layers of facades have been continuously tagged with graffiti and smeared with paint, while the beautification apparatus is crumbling and suffers from cracks, leaks, and collapsing materials. In 2017 Prime Minister Gruevski was received a prison sentence for corruption, and has since 2018 enjoyed political asylum in Victor Òrban's Hungary.

Espen Gleditsch, *Who's Afraid of the Neo-Neo-Classical? #9, Protest,* 2019. 102 x 82 cm, archival pigment print.

#4

In the post-war era, Skopje has been considered a capital of high-end brutalist architecture. The experiment was part of a particular European regional modernism, situated between the East and the West, as recently featured in the exhibition *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (2018–2019).[8]

A number of the iconic brutalist buildings that furnished Kenzo Tange's masterplan for the city centre of Skopje are untouched by the contemporary antiquisation, among them Janko Kontantinov' Post Office and Telecommunication Centre (1968–1981). Today, Konstantinov's concrete high-rise is the home of Deutsche Telekom. This multistorey building has escaped the whitewash of antiquisation, revealing perhaps the limitations of the idiom – or it may be that global corporate capitalism is simply not as easily taken hostage in the service of nationalist identity politics.

Espen Gleditsch, *Who's Afraid of the Neo-Neo-Classical? #4, Telecommunications building (by Janko Konstantinovz, 1974)*, 2019. 102 x 82 cm, archival pigment print.

#10

The hyphenated title of Espen Gleditsch's Skopje series – the neo-neo – conjures a conception of history that allows the chronological ordering of architecture as stylistic development along the lines of a nineteenth-century zeitgeist. In the western tradition, new classicisms have repeatedly been relaunched as new beginnings and as a universally valid common ground. When Heinrich Hübsch in 1828 presented his pamphlet with the polemical title *In what style should we build?*, he strongly felt that classicism had become obsolete in the face of new building programs.[9] The question was surely more radical than his answer, when he proposed the medieval *Rundbogen*-style as appropriate for the future: it still had potential, he argued, as the Romanesque had been interrupted by the Gothic before it was brought into fulfilment. Hübsch's historical construct resurfaced in the *Deconstructivist Architecture* exhibition at MoMA in 1988, in the juxtaposition of contemporary architectural projects and Russian constructivist art. 'I felt we must reinvestigate the aborted and untested experiments of modernism, not to resurrect them but to unveil new fields of building,' Zaha Hadid later explained.[10] Yet, pointing backwards to prepare for new moves forward, still proposes a conception of history which is fundamentally teleological.

The 'neo-neo' in Gleditsch's photographs hints that anachrony is perhaps more typical than chronology. His portrayal of the weird temporalities at play in a city that appears as more than simply a set design, exposes melancholy while leaving us to ponder what precisely the lost object to be mourned is. Brand-new and ghost-like, Skopje is depicted as a work in progress and a work in reverse, a construction site of ruins in which patina and the passage of time are somehow regurgitated.

Espen Gleditsch, *Who's Afraid of the Neo-Neo-Classical? #10, Pavillion,* 2019. 102 x 82 cm, archival pigment print.

Notes

1. Donald J. Trump, 'Executive Order on Promoting Beautiful Federal Civic Architecture', issued on 21 December 21 2020 (Washington, DC: The White House), Sec. 3 'Definitions. For the purposes of this order', (b).
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., Sec. 2 'Policy', (c).
4. Louis Mumford, 'The Death of the Monument', in *Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art,* ed. Leslie Martin, Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), 264 .
5. Sigfried Giedion, 'The Need for a New Monumentality', in *New Architecture and City Planning,* ed. Paul Zucker (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), 555.
6. Paolo Portoghesi, 'The End of Prohibitionism', in Portoghesi, Vincent Scully, Charles Jencks, and Christian Norberg-Schulz, *The Presence of the Past* (London: Academy Editions, 1980), 12.
7. Trump, 'Executive Order on Promoting Beautiful Federal Civic Architecture', Section 1, 'Purpose'.
8. Martiono Stierli and Vladimir Kulic, eds., *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980* (New York: MoMA, 2018).
9. Heinrich Hübsch, *In what style should we build?* (In *Welchem Style sollen wir bauen?*, 1828), in Wolfgang Herrmann, ed. and translation, *In what style should we build: The German debate on architectural style* (Los Angeles: Getty, 1992), 63–102.
10. Zaha Hadid, 1998, quoted in Hal Foster, 'New Fields of Architecture: Zaha Hadid', *Art Forum* 45, no. 1 (September 2006), https://www.artforum.com/print/200607/new-fields-of-architecture-zaha-hadid-11491.

Biography

Mari Lending is a professor of architectural theory and history at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design, and a founding member of OCCAS (the Oslo Centre for Critical Architectural Studies). She works on nineteenth- and twentieth-century architectural culture, and at present on architecture and provenance. Among her latest books are *Plaster Monuments: Architecture and the Power of Reproduction* (Princeton University Press, 2017); with Peter Zumthor, *A Feeling of History* (Scheidegger & Spiess, 2018); and with Erik Langdalen, *Sverre Fehn, Nordic Pavilion, Venice: Voices from the Archives* (Lars Müller Publishers, 2021).

The full photo series is available at:
http://www.espengleditsch.com/ Espen_Gleditsch/ work_ whos_ afraid_of_the_neo_neo_classical.html

Visual Essay

Cult of war: The Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces

Nina Frolova and Elena Markus

The Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces in Kubinka near Moscow by the architect Dmitry Smirnov is dedicated to the resurrection of Christ and was officially completed on 9 of May 2020, less than two years after start of planning in September 2018. The cathedral is a quintessential example of the post-Soviet populist ideology, representating a mixture of ostensibly religious values with multiple secular cult objects. Also dedicated to the victory in what Russians call the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945), it addresses the myth of a glorious history of the Russian Empire and its ancestors, and the unity of the people and power in the former Soviet Union with its mighty and wise national leaders.[1]

The present Russia appeals to the power strategy of security- and law enforcement authorities of the bygone Soviet Empire. Today's leaders implement this strategy by combining the re-emerged cult of war with the new-nationalistically tinged traditional values. However, commerce and consumption along with entertainment within the cathedral area are supposed to ensure the 'Great Victory' and 'Great Power' populist narratives.

This populism looks back to a long history in Russia. In the *narodniki* movement, which arose in the 1860s, the intelligentsia, a young intellectual elite, tried to come closer to the 'common people' to promote social ideas against the Tsarist regime. Today, although the current political system uses populist rhetoric to mimic its social engagement, its populism shouldn't be understood as an exclusively 'top-down' phenomenon. After a century and a half, the concept of populism in Russia can still be 'characterized by a particular form of political relationship between political leaders and a social basis', produced and articulated 'through "low" appeals which resonate and receive positive reception within particular sectors of society for social-cultural historical reasons'.[2]

Soviet meta-narrative and post-Soviet ideological creativity

The cathedral is located in the Patriot Park, a hybrid of a military trade fair and amusement park for re-enactment events and the admiration of war machinery. The cathedral and its grounds are the park's main attraction, and act as an immense 'decorated shed' visible from the nearby Minsk highway. The strictly symmetrical plan, with an esplanade leading from the car park, puts the cathedral in the centre and the Memory Lane museum-complex along the edges, with a small park between them.

In contrast to the hero-rhetoric of the socialist era, the new Russian historical policy also embraces distinctive elements borrowed from the Russian Orthodox Church and its history, which have been modified to better suit the new patriotic culture. Its visual vocabulary can be identified not only in propaganda movies and mass culture images, but also finds its expression in architecture, in which some appropriated religious symbols are merged with elements of the 'Great Victory' quasi-religion to form a specific iconography of contemporary state populism.

However, the post-Soviet ideological creativity regarding this re-emerged cult of history – and, in particular, the cult of war – is not a complete novelty. Along with the conservative turn in the time of Brezhnev (the Soviet leader from the mid-1960s to the early 1980s), the so called cult of peace came into effect: the meta-narrative of the 'Great Patriotic War' and the cult of the war heroes took the place of Stalin's personality cult.[3]

Bird's-eye view of the construction site of the Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces (August 2019). Source: mil.ru, via Wikimedia Commons.

Ceremony of consecration of the Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces (June 2020). Source: Ministry of Defence (photo: Vladislav Timofeev, Alexey Ereshko, Andrey Rusov), via Wikimedia Commons.

Simplified symbolism

The design of the Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces is a revamped Byzantine and Russian revival architecture close in meaning to those historicist styles under the last Russian Emperors, which expressed the ideas of a strong nationalistic state, successor to Byzantium and Old Rus'. The lower church of the saint 'equal to the apostles', prince Vladimir the Great, who baptized Rus' in 988, is located in the plinth of the cathedral. It is essentially a baptistery with a large immersion font that could be used for adults converted to Orthodox Christianity. The main Church of the Resurrection of Christ, that is, the cathedral itself, is placed above it.

Everything in the cathedral is made to amaze and to amuse: from the rather naïve cipher of important dates that amount to the building's dimensions to the first ever use of a glass ceiling in a traditional Russian Orthodox church. Analogous to the symbolic use of colour, the cathedral's geometry and its proportions are based on numbers that symbolise 'significant figures and dates from Russian history'.[4] Numerology defines its proportions and dimensions: the fifteen-metre piles of the building's foundation refer to the banner of the Great Victory that belonged to the Red Army's 150th rifle division and was raised above Berlin's Reichstag building on 30 April 1945. The height of the belfry, seventy-five metres, commemorates the seventy–five years that have passed since 1945 in 2020. The iconostasis of forty-eight icons is intended to awaken a memory of the duration of the Great Patriotic War and Soviet-Japanese War: exactly forty-eight months.

The Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces in Patriot Park, Kubinka (Juli 2020). Source: Velbes, Wikimedia Commons.

Military motifs

The cathedrals' main reference to recent military history is, in particular, its surface design. The pervasive khaki colour of the facades and interior walls clad with glass-fibre concrete is intended to give the impression that the cathedral is built from melted down armour. Indeed, thanks Sergei Shoigu, the Minister of Defence and mastermind of this project, the cathedral's metal steps and floor-plates are made from an alloy of the continuous track of real tanks and other weaponry from Nazi Germany, so that everyone entering the cathedral 'treads on the defeated enemy's arms'.[5] The same dark green hue also covers the facade of the Memory Lane museum-complex which encircles the cathedral, as well as all fences, lamps, and benches with its quasi-Old Russian ornamental motifs that densely populate the adjoining area.

The Main Cathedral, facade detail. Photo: Natasha Alekseeva.

Realistic images of a thousand years of Russian history

Three ornamented portals lead into the Resurrection Church. The main, western entry is decorated with images of eleventh-century Russian martyrs, princes Boris and Gleb, whose swords serve as door handles. But since these saints, who died with a Christian humility, appears not to be heroic enough, as Vladimir Putin once said, this remains their only representation.[6] By contrast, such efficient military leaders and strong-willed rulers as St Alexander Nevsky and St Dmitry Donskoy are repeatedly depicted within and outside the cathedral, as well as Vladimir the Great, who could also be regarded as the first conqueror of the Crimea region.

The visual programme of the Resurrection Church focuses on the role played by Russian Orthodoxy, its clergy, faithful rulers and military commanders, and by miraculous icons, in the course of a thousand years in various conflicts on Russian soil and beyond, with the main theme dedicated to the Great Patriotic War. The mosaics appear strictly realistic when compared with the Byzantine stylization of the lower church.

Non-traditional religious and even wholly secular scenes have the most prominent role in the cathedral's decoration system. The juxtaposition of the pre-World War 2 events and battles from the Great Patriotic War echoes the clerical tradition of comparing episodes from the Old and New Testaments, in which the former foreshadows the latter. The lower tier of mosaics, closest to the visitor, represents heroic soldiers from the Great Patriotic War with the main battles listed below. The last scene in this series depicts a group portrait of so-called warrior-internationalists, with a long list of post-Second World War military conflicts, from China and Korea to Hungary and Czechoslovakia to both Chechen wars, Georgia, Crimea and, finally, Syria.

Ceremony of consecration of the Main Cathedral, bird's-eye view (June 2020). Source: Ministry of Defence (photo: Vladislav Timofeev, Alexey Ereshko, Andrey Rusov), via Wikimedia Commons.
Western portal. Photo: Nina Frolova.

The Motherland is calling!

The cathedral's chief iconographic peculiarity lies in an almost complete overhaul of the decoration system of the Eastern Christian traditional church. The only episodes from the New Testament to be depicted are the entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem (which could be seen as a metaphor of the storming of a city by a general) and the Annunciation: both mosaics are rather small semi-circular images above the northern and southern doors. The western wall, usually reserved for a large-scale portrayal of Judgement Day, is used here for a monumental figure of the Mother of God with the Child. She strongly resembles the woman in the famous wartime poster 'The Motherland is Calling!' by Irakli Toidze. The Christ Child holds a scroll with a quote: 'And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die' (John 11:26), so that the Christian idea of divine retribution is literally replaced here with the univocal promise of eternal life, as if soldiers, the cathedral's main congregation, are exempt from God's judgement.

Ceremony of consecration of the Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces (June 2020). Source: Ministry of Defence (photo: Vladislav Timofeev, Alexey Ereshko, Andrey Rusov), via Wikimedia Commons.

Вѣруѧй
въ мѧ
живъ
будетъ
и не
оузритъ
смерти
во вѣки

Valhalla-like mythology

The southern and northern apses combine images of patron saints of various military corps, such as St Barbara for missile forces and artillery, St Elias for the parachute corps, and various saint warriors like St Alexander Nevsky or St. George, with portrayals of secular military leaders from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries; an unusual juxtaposition, since traditionally, non-canonized persons could only be depicted in the role of donor, humbly kneeling beside saints if they were represented at all.

Another central Christian idea, that of redemption through the sacrifice of Christ, is downplayed by the exemplary location of the Crucifixion in the north-western corner. Its modest appearance is overshadowed by the omnipresent mosaics with their gold backgrounds. This simplistic take on Christianity brings to mind a pagan idea of a God as mighty and severe, without any nuances. The afterlife of warriors seems borrowed from the Valhalla-myth, where the winners are never judged, only celebrated. Christ is not a sacrificial Lamb of God but a gigantic golden statue in the central apse, where it seems to soar against the azure mosaic background and host of the seraphim.

Inner view. Photo: Nina Frolova.

A fragment from the mural depicting Putin, Shoigu, and other politicians on the occasion of the Crimean annexation. Photo: Arts Council for the Cathedral construction.

ШТУРМ КЁНИГСБЕРГА
ОСВОБОЖДЕНИЕ СТРАН ВОСТОЧНОЙ ЕВРОПЫ
БИТВА ЗА БЕРЛИН
КАПИТУЛЯЦИЯ ФАШИСТСКОЙ ГЕРМАНИИ
РАЗГРОМ МИЛИТАРИСТСКОЙ ЯПО

Great symbols of newer Russian syncretism

The ‘bloodless’ annexation of Crimea in 2014 is depicted side by side with its counterpart from 1783. A much-discussed mosaic celebrating an event from the 2014 campaign, with Vladimir Putin and his entourage presented among Crimean people, has been put the in choir gallery, closed to the general public. In the aftermath of the media scandal, the portraits of the Russian president and other politicians have been replaced with a group of clergy carrying an icon.[7]

The cathedral’s main icon, Christ appearing on the Image of Edessa, is supposedly painted on wood from the gun carriage dating back to the time of Peter the Great and found in the Neva River. The importance of first Russian Emperor today is due rather to the strong connection of the current Russian powers to St. Petersburg (founded by Peter in 1703), and has hardly any connection to his aspiration for a progressive Western influence. Moreover, this icon’s ‘imperial’ planks are held together by the hand-guard of the Soviet Tokarev self-loading rifle, one of the main weapon types used by the Red Army during the Second World War, and since than a great symbol of the recent syncretism that marks state populism in Russia.

The cathedral, created by the military authorities and opened in June 2020, not only employs populist rhetoric, but it also serves as an attraction in the surrounding Patriot Park, a ‘military Disneyland’ opened in 2015 that includes such attractions as the Partisan Village, the Multifunctional Firing Centre, the Military-Tactical Games Centre, and an exhibition dedicated to the current conflict in Syria which ‘will stun you with the realistic panorama of the ruined Palmyra and the effect of presence in the area,’ as the park homepage promises.[8]

Sculpture depicting Christ Almighty. Ceremony of consecration of the Main Cathedral of Russia’s Armed Forces (June 2020). Source: Ministry of Defence (photographed by Vladislav Timofeev, Alexey Ereshko, Andrey Rusov), via Wikimedia Commons.

When the ‘Syrian Breakthrough’ campaign came to an end, the agit-train with the terrorists’ trophy weapons arrived at Patriot Park near Moscow, the final destination of its route. Source: Ministry of Defence, via Wikimedia Commons.

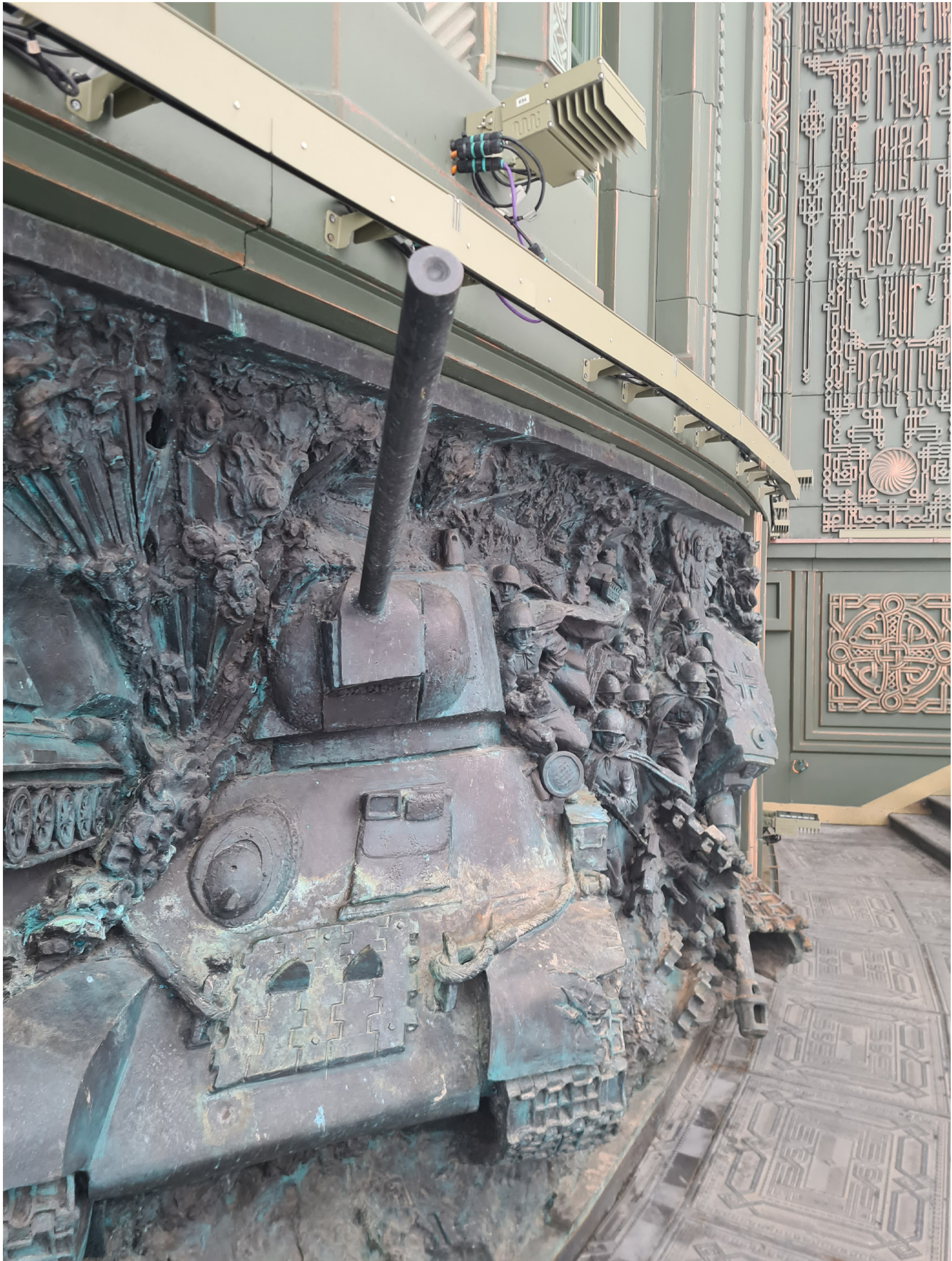
Populist narrative

Numerous festivals have complemented the populist approach of the Main Cathedral and the Patriot park complex after its opening in 2020. For example, the Spasskaya Tower Festival, which took place in September 2020, in which the Russian Frontier Guard Band and other military ensembles performed songs dedicated to the festival theme: 'Seventy-five years: the end of the war'. In November 2020, the Field of Victory open-air museum near the Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces hosted a reconstruction of the Battle of Moscow (1941), which involved a detailed recreation of people's militia division movements and the use of historical armoured vehicles. The New Year's festival in the Patriot Park, with a slide and skating rink on the Cathedral Square attracted about two hundred thousand people, according to the official statistics.

The return of a plurality within the field of architecture after 1991 proceeded from the initial impulse after decades of ideological monopoly in Soviet society. The once predestined and predictable future, 'until it was no more', then gave place to a variety within the post-Soviet political imagination.[9] Yet alongside an intensifying identity crisis, an effort from above could be observed at the beginning of the twenty-first century to reclaim a peculiarly 'correct' past.[10] The identity gained has served, among other things, to justify Russia's aggressive military policy and, on the basis of a selective representation of Russian history and its 'heroic' military past, indicated a renewed turn towards a Soviet-inspired era of 'timelessness'.

The post-Soviet aspiration for new social and political models emerged from the ideological vacuum after the collapse of the regime.[11] But the longing for a lacking normality and stability eventually turned out to be a path towards an authoritarian state and a dysfunctional civil society. Expressed by its invariably primitive symbolism, the visual language of the cathedral architecture is emblematic of contemporary Russia, where popular cultural motifs are integrated into the narrative of populist authoritarian state policy.

The tank from the depiction of the Battle of Prokhorovka at the apse's exterior. One of the largest tank battles in history, it was fought by the Red Army and the German forces on 12 July 1943. Photo: Nina Frolova.



Notes

1. World War II is rarely discussed outside the academia in Russia; all public celebrations, commemorations and discussions are centred around the so-called Great Patriotic War, started on 22 June 1941, the day when the Soviet Union was first attacked by Nazi Germany, and officially ended on 9 May 1945.
2. Pierre Ostiguy, 'Populism: A Socio-Cultural Approach', in *The Oxford Handbook of Populism,* ed. Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser, Paul Taggart, Paulina Ochoa Espejo, Pierre Ostiguy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 104.
3. 9 May, a 'Victory Day', was not a public holiday in the Soviet Union before 1965. Graeme Gill, *Symbols and Legitimacy in Soviet Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 199–202.
4. Official homepage of the Main Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces, https://hram-mil.ru/.
5. 'The steps of the main temple of the Russian Armed Forces will be made of German tank tracks', *RIA Novosti,* 13 March 2020, https://ria.ru/20200313/1568579576.html. Our translation.
6. Arseniy Zamoscianov, 'Boris and Gleb: "Lay down and waited to be killed"? If Sviatopolk acted at the instigation of the evil one, what was the deed of the saints who did not resist?' *Pravmir*, 6 August 2018, https://www.pravmir.ru/boris-i-gleb-legli-i-zhdali/. Our translation.
7. 'When it was reported to him, he smiled and said: "Someday grateful descendants will appreciate our merits, but right now it's too early to do so", Peskov relayed the head of state's words.' *TASS,* 26 April 2020, https://tass.ru/politika/8338855. Our translation.
8. Patriot park homepage: https://patriotp.ru/obekty/vystavochnaya-ekspozitsiya-posvyashchyennaya-lokalnomu-konfliktu-v-sirii/; Shaun Walker, 'Vladimir Putin opens Russian 'Military Disneyland' Patriot Park', *The Guardian*, 16 June 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/16/vladimir-putin-opens-russian-military-disneyland-patriot-park.
9. Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005); Aleksander Etkind and Mikhail Minakov, 'Post-Soviet Ideological Creativity', in *Ideology After Union: Political Doctrines, Discourses, and Debates in Post-Soviet Societies*, ed. Aleksander Etkind and Mikhail Minakov (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2020), 9–18.
10. Egor Isaev, 'The Militarization of the Past in Russian Popular Historical Films', in Etkind and Minakov, *Ideology after union*, 237.
11. Luke March,'Populism in the Post-Soviet States', in Kaltwasser et al., *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*, 214–31.

Biography

Nina Frolova studied art history at the Moscow State University. Having started her career as a research fellow at the Shchusev State Museum of Architecture (2003–2008), she is now head of the Architecture and Fine Arts Department at the Great Russian Encyclopedia publishing house and managing editor at Archi.ru – Russia's leading architectural publication.

Elena Markus (b. Kossovskaja) studied architecture at the UdK, Berlin University of the Arts. Since 2014, Elena has been teaching at the TUM Technical University of Munich. In her PhD entitled *(Dirty) Realism: Analogue Architecture 1983–1987*, she investigated the social and political significance of an architecture production of images with regard to the 'realism', as well as to the 'dirty realism' discourse in the architecture of the 1980s, and by the work example of Swiss architecture group Analogue Architecture.

Interview

Mary McLeod in conversation with Salomon Frausto and Léa-Catherine Szacka

In February 1989, architectural historian and theorist Mary McLeod published her now seminal essay entitled 'Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism' in *Assemblage* 8.[1] In the essay, she examined the relationship between architecture and politics in the 1980s, a time of unprecedented change. The following conversation discusses the circumstances under which the essay was originally written and offers her reflections thirty years later to think about the relationship between architecture and populism today.

Salomon Frausto: Thanks for taking time to have this conversation with us. Léa-Catherine and I are co-editing this issue of *Footprint* entitled *The Architecture of Populism: Media, Politics, and Aesthetics*. When we started conceptualising the call for papers, your seminal essay, 'Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism,' was a point of reference for us. Under ideal circumstances we would have actually asked you to write a companion piece or a sequel for *Footprint*, but in lieu of that we thought it would be nice to have this conversation, to understand a bit more about the context within which this essay was originally written and then to talk about some of the ideas that are still fertile today, and then talk about what would happen if we were to change the title to 'Architecture and Politics in the Trump Era'. What would the subtitle be to something like that? For example, would it be 'From Environmental Crisis to Social Inequity'? Not to put words in your mouth, but to see how this thinking relates to today's situation. The relationship between architecture and politics is an important part of your scholarly work, undoubtedly influenced by you involvement in the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies. It has been present in your teaching, from seminars to lecture courses, and even in your PhD. We would like to discuss some of these ideas with you today. We're interested in two things: what are the origins of the essay, and how does it relate to the early period of *Assemblage,* where you originally served as an editorial consultant? Where shall we start?

Mary McLeod: First, an explanation of how the article came to be. Originally, that issue of *Assemblage* (issue no. 8) was to be guest edited by Richard (Dick) Pommer, a wonderful architectural historian married to the feminist art historian Linda Nochlin. Pommer had originally worked on late Italian Baroque architecture, especially Piedmontese architecture, but by the 1970s had begun doing research on twentieth-century architecture, particularly housing; he wrote one of the seminal articles about public housing efforts in the United States during the '30s.[1] The overall theme of the *Assemblage* issue was to be architecture and politics, and knowing my work on Le Corbusier and interest in postmodernism, Dick asked me to write an essay on contemporary American architecture. Originally, all of the authors in the publication, except Mark Wigley, were invited by Pommer to contribute.[2] In fact, I think Wigley's essay on deconstruction is quite different in its content and

ideological orientation from the other texts in the issue. There was apparently some disagreement about my essay – and I was told that someone on the editorial board had strong objections to it, presumably due to my comments about MoMA's Deconstructivist Architecture show, and as a result Wigley's essay was added. However, I don't know any of this first-hand. What I'd like to emphasise is the fundamental role that Pommer played both in that issue of *Assemblage* and in the genesis of my piece.

I should also say a few words about my connection to *Assemblage*. As you may already know, in the first issue I'm listed as the consulting editor, a role I would continue to have through the third issue. When Michael Hays first had the idea for the journal, a couple of people – Stan Anderson and George Wagner, I think – suggested that he talk to me about the possible direction and content of the journal. Theory was central to it, but I probably wouldn't call it the 'first theory journal.' In the US, *Oppositions* undoubtedly played that role, although, like the early issues of *Assemblage, Oppositions* was a mixture of history, theory, and contemporary criticism. *Assemblage* was widely regarded as following self-consciously in *Oppositions*'s footsteps, if by another younger generation. After the third issue, I backed away from the journal because I sensed a change in its direction, a change, as Salomon mentions, that probably wasn't really apparent to many readers until around the tenth issue or so. I felt that the journal was becoming less political, less historical, and more influenced by poststructuralist theory, some of which I've been quite critical of. That doesn't mean I didn't continue to read it and remain engaged with many of the issues it raised, but I felt a greater sympathy with the journal's original orientation.

In terms of other influences, you're absolutely right, Salomon, that the essay was in part a product of the thinking – the discussions and debates – that emerged at the Institute, especially around the Revisions Group. But the interest in politics and architecture was not by any means unique to us – it was very much a part of my generation. I started college in 1968, a time when you couldn't escape politics. My doctoral thesis focused on Le Corbusier's architecture and politics, but again, this concern was not unique to me. Think of someone like Jean-Louis Cohen, a year older than me – he, too, looked at political issues, but through from a different lens. The fact that Dick Pommer was able to assemble a group of architectural historians who were addressing political issues is itself indicative. What was perhaps somewhat less typical is that I dealt with contemporary architecture in terms of politics. But as I said, political critique was in the air – for example, Michael Sorkin's groundbreaking exposé of Philip Johnson's flirtation with American fascism and Nazi Germany in the early '80s.

For the Revisions Group, postmodernism was a major subject of concern, as it was for so many architects in the US at the time. In my case, it was something I experienced first-hand. Michael Graves was one of my teachers, both my second-year master's studio critic and an advisor on my master's design thesis, and I saw his evolution from the formal explorations of Five Architects to an interest in historical forms and decoration. And, of course, Columbia (where I began teaching in 1978) was a hotbed for these debates. There were serious battles – not personal, but intellectual – between Ken Frampton and Bob Stern; and then later, when Bernard Tschumi joined the faculty as dean, there were other debates.

SEF: Would you tell us more about the Revisions group and how that might have influenced your ideas in the article?

MM: Most of us in the Revisions group were quite left – and vehemently opposed to what we saw as the conservative swing in American politics and culture during the '80s. We also reacted against the Institute's emphasis on self-publicity and its links to a male power scene, which we believed was at

odds with some of the fellows' own theoretical and political positions. But I would stress that the fellows were quite a diverse group: for example, Ken Frampton allied himself with the Frankfurt school and was sympathetic to phenomenology, whereas Eisenman was interested in Chomsky's linguistics and then Derrida.

In the Revisions Group, we read a number of texts by Marxist theorists and critics, such as Manfredo Tafuri and Fredric Jameson, and undoubtedly these writings influenced my thinking about architecture. We also organised a couple of public events at the Institute, two conferences: one was on postmodern art, including David Salle and Sherrie Levine, and the other was *Architecture, Criticism and Ideology*, where Jameson gave his first paper on architecture; it resulted in the first Revisions publication.[3] In both conferences, the political implications of postmodernism were really the central concern.

I might also add that the only person, besides Dick Pommer, who read and criticised in depth a draft of my article was Joan Ockman, whom I became close friends with through Revisions; and I remain grateful for her sharp comments and advice.

SEF: In hindsight, what do you think you introduced to the discussion of postmodernism at the time?

MM: I had hoped, as I said, to elucidate the relationship between contemporary political and social transformations with contemporary developments in architecture. Certainly, art historians such as Tim Clark and Michael Baxendall had explored the social and political context of art in the past; and more recently, Andreas Huyssen had considered the political implications of postmodern culture in his essay 'Mapping the Postmodern.' That essay was fundamental to my own thinking and prompted me to think about how his argument might relate to architecture.

Perhaps what was new to my essay, at least in a journal such as *Assemblage* – and please correct me if I'm wrong – was my introduction of popular culture to architectural criticism. The frontispiece of my essay was a cover of *Time* magazine showing Philip Johnson holding a model of the AT&T building. Today, this image is well known, but I don't remember it being used in a scholarly context before then. I was very conscious of the commodification of architecture that was occurring at that moment: Michael Graves selling shoes; Bob Stern appearing in house ads; Helmut Jahn being featured in inflight magazines. It seemed like something new – quite different from how architecture was portrayed in the popular press only a decade earlier. Architects had become media stars. I don't remember photos of architects being used in ads before then.

Léa-Catherine Szacka: In the article, you mention the polemic between Denise Scott-Brown and Kenneth Frampton. This polemic went on for a while beginning in *Casabella*. I was wondering if you could comment on this and also on the afterlife of the debate? The specific polemic is over, but this elitist versus mainstream debate still goes on, or how would you situate it in a longer historical perspective?

MM: Lest I forget, Léa-Catherine, I wanted to mention something related to Salomon's earlier comment about the idea of an essay titled 'Architecture and Politics in the Trump Era.' Are you by chance familiar with the article that Michael Sorkin wrote in *The Nation* in the midst of Trump's presidential campaign?[4] He used the marvelous phrase 'gilt by association.'

Returning to your question, I remember reading that issue of *Casabella* when I was in architecture school. As the only woman in my first-year architecture class at Princeton, I was delighted by Denise's acerbic retort – and even though Kenneth Frampton is now one of my dear friends, I confess I still enjoy her wonderful parody of his prose. It was for many of us then an important debate, one that reflected

strains in American politics at the time, particularly on the left. How much of popular taste was an authentic reflection of middle-class and working-class values, and how much was imposed by what Adorno and Horkheimer called the culture industry? Although Denise and Ken had both studied at the Architectural Association in London and shared an appreciation for contemporary architects such as the Smithsons, I think for Ken, her embrace of Las Vegas and Levittown – and more generally, American mass culture – was just too alien to his own political position. He was deeply influenced by the Frankfurt school at that time, and in the late ’60s, when he was still teaching at Princeton, he was also in close contact with Tomás Maldonado, who was a visiting professor there; Maldonado was, of course, one of the most vehement critics of Scott-Brown and Venturi’s analysis of Las Vegas.[5]

Perhaps, as an American, I was, and still am, more sympathetic to the populist strain in Scott-Brown and Venturi’s work. I recognised the elitism that Denise identified in American academia, but I also identified with the New Left, which didn’t share Adorno’s – and Ken’s – fear of popular culture. In fact, for many of us, it was, or could be, a positive, even radical, force. Think, for example, of Bob Dylan and folk music and the role that it played in anti-Vietnam protests; or *Ms.* magazine and movies like *Thelma and Louise,* how they helped broaden support for the women’s movement, even if some of us were initially scornful of Gloria Steinem when she founded *Ms*. For me, one of the most telling examples of how mass culture can help bring about or at least reinforce change is the stage persona of some rock musicians, such as David Bowie and Village People, who challenged gender conventions and attitudes about sexuality. But I think for Ken, who came to the US in the midst of the Civil Rights movement and antiwar protests, everything to do with American capitalism was (and still is) horrific. When I interviewed him for an article that I wrote about the influence of the Frankfurt School on his thinking, he said it was coming to the States that radicalised him, and he quoted a remark that Michael Glickman had made to him: ‘You have to understand, in England the claws [of capitalism] are hidden but in the States they are visible.’ He was appalled by Las Vegas, which represented for him all that was wrong with consumer society and capitalism. This relates as well to his aversion to scenography. He has always had a preference (and this might be seen as his continuing allegiance to certain values of the Modern Movement) for what he calls the ‘tectonic’ – those elements of architecture that reveal, speak of, a building’s construction. This is apparent in his essay ‘Towards a Critical Regionalism’ and also, of course, in his book *Studies in Tectonic Culture* (1995).

So, what I was trying to argue in the *Assemblage* piece is that there was a progressive dimension to postmodernism’s populism in its early phase. I thought that architects such as Charles Moore and Venturi and Scott Brown in the ’70s were seeking to address a genuine shortcoming of modern architecture, at least as it evolved in the US – its failure to communicate to a broad range of people. They recognised the widespread disillusionment with post-war corporate modernism – its banal 1950s office blocks, empty concrete plazas, and desolate public housing projects. I’m speaking, of course, from an American perspective. I think the situation in Europe was quite different, even if there, too, many were unhappy with post-war modern architecture, especially large-scale housing blocks (the *grands ensembles*) and urban reconstruction. But this initial progressive impulse in postmodern architecture had largely dissipated by the early ’80s; and like so many avant-garde artistic movements, it seemed that the architecture of Moore, Graves, and Stern had itself become commodified.

L-CS: Do you see things the same way now? Because obviously this was written almost on the battlefield, in 1989; so now, thirty-two years later, do you still see things the same way or would you have a different view?

MM: I see much of it the same way now. In fact, re-reading the essay before this interview, I was surprised how little I disagreed with myself, with one big caveat, and that concerns the popularity of Decon – or rather, the popularity of the architecture by the designers labeled 'Deconstructivist' in MoMA's exhibition. When I wrote the essay, I was very sceptical that Deconstructivism would last long or have much of an audience. That was certainly true of its theoretical justifications. Almost as soon as the show was over, the movement fizzled. Instead of Derrida, there was an infatuation with Deleuze, at least in schools like Columbia. I'm not sure if the same thing happened in Europe, where I sense the interest in poststructuralism in architecture circles was never as strong. But, by about the mid-'90s, and certainly by the late '90s, architectural theory seemed moribund in the US. Digital design, new technologies, and most of all, the post-recession building boom had made it largely irrelevant for a generation eager to build. But what I did not anticipate in 1989, when I was writing the essay, was the success that many of the architects in the Decon show would have, or how popular their buildings would be – the most obvious example being Gehry's Bilbao. It's a populist work. Despite its radical forms – or perhaps, more accurately, because of them – it seems to appeal to everyone. Yes, it's become highly commodified – the epitome of architectural branding – but for me (and I think for a lot of people including the residents of Bilbao), it's an incredibly powerful, meaningful, exuberant work that helped generate life in the city. Many of the designs by Hadid, Koolhaas, Tschumi, and even Eisenman have also had surprising public success – all over the world. But few today would see their work as 'Deconstructivist'; rather, their designs are known by their names – a Zaha, a Gehry, and so forth. Nor would many relate their designs to Derridean philosophy or any particular theoretical claims.

L-CS: Yeah, by then, these labels certainly weren't working anymore. It had simply become individualism. So whatever label you're trying to apply doesn't really work.

MM: Yes, it soon became more about personal style, or to repeat myself, a kind of branding, which is not to diminish the considerable creative originality and popular success of many of these works. It was a strange moment, in which, as I said earlier, Deconstructivism seemed to disappear as quickly as it had began, not that Tschumi or Eisenman ever renounced their own theoretical ambitions. Theory continued to persist throughout the '90s in the pages of *Assemblage*, although it seemed increasingly detached from architectural practice. This trajectory comes out clearly in some of the statements in the last issue of *Assemblage* (no. 41) published in April 2000.

SEF: Returning to this issue of *Footprint*, what we see here, or at least within this particular Delft context, is that the idea of architectural theory is still very much based… well, if we think about the understanding of what it meant to do architectural theory in that particular moment in the US, let's say applied philosophy, I don't know how else to call it… but here, we still have people applying philosophy and claiming that it's architectural theory, which I find a kind of antiquated rhetorical technique. I wonder if you could reflect on how this rhetorical technique, at least in the US, has faded, given the real urgencies of our time, like environmental crises and expanding social inequity? I wonder, in your own thinking, how you see the evolution of architectural theory – well, today architectural thinking – and also in relation, given there's never really a schism between history and theory. What are your reflections on applied philosophy considered as architectural theory, and where do you see architectural theory going today, or architectural thinking in terms of embedding discourse into the world of ideas?

MM: Those are good questions. In fact, one of my own hesitations about the evolution of *Assemblage* was that I thought that philosophy and theoretical approaches from other disciplines (such as from linguistics, literature, and psychoanalysis) seemed to be applied to architecture a priori – that is, often trying to make architecture fit into a specific theoretical paradigm. I'm someone who has long been interested in theory, and sees it as essential in helping me think harder about architecture and architectural history, as well as history and politics more generally. But I don't think theory should ever be used formulaically, as was too often the case with efforts to use semiology to analyse architecture or, to cite another example, attempts to apply Peter Bürger's distinction between the avant-garde and modernism to explain different movements in modern architecture in the post-World War I period (this was something we discussed in the Revisions group). For me, it's critical to keep assessing what's relevant in theory and what's not – and how architecture is similar or different from other fields. It's a back-and-forth process. Perhaps, too, this continual critical scrutiny is a means to refine, or even help generate, richer theoretical ideas.

In terms of the situation today, I agree completely that other issues – ecology, social justice, economic inequities, gender, and race – have supplanted theory, at least as it was understood in the '80s and early '90s. These subjects, of course, have their own theoretical dimensions – for example, theories of the 'anthropocene' and 'capitalocene' – but, for the most part, the urgent need for practical action has taken precedence in architecture, as it has in other fields. This is evident in Black Lives Matter, the Me Too movement, and organisations such as ArchiteXX, as well as activist groups dealing with queer and trans issues in architecture. In this regard, recent activism reminds me more of the 1970s than the late '80s and '90s, although activism concerning queer and, especially, trans identity is certainly new in architecture. However, I think the progressive role of theory in foreshadowing and even inspiring these movements should also be acknowledged. Henry Urbach's essay on the closet in *Assemblage* in 1996 and Joel Sanders's book *Stud*, published that same year, helped open up discussion of male gender identity and gay issues in architecture. But I think it's also become clear in the past decade or so that theory wasn't sufficient in addressing cultural, social, economic, and, above all, racial and gender inequities in architecture and society at large. And the new wave of activism has achieved results: almost all the Ivy League schools of architecture now have women deans; numerous women faculty are tenured; and women are finally receiving prestigious professional awards, if still too rarely. I sense that the same thing is also happening in Europe. And yet – and here I sound like I'm equivocating – I think there's a risk of one without the other, that is, activism without theory or vice versa. For me, inclusion is not enough without more fundamental change, whether reforming studio culture, eliminating the star system, instituting flexible work schedules, dealing with conditions of architectural labour, or addressing even larger social and political structures. I still very much believe that theory – critical reflection – can help elucidate less visible and persistent inequities and structural problems.

Journalism, too, might play a fundamental role in elucidating these issues – and in overcoming the gap between theoretical discourse, which can often be arcane (and as a result have few readers), and the profession and public at large. I miss a voice like Michael Sorkin's; his articles in the *Village Voice* and later *The Nation* were sharp, witty, searing critiques of the blatant failings in the profession and society at large. Are there similar critics in Europe? I enjoy reading the architectural criticism in *The Guardian*, although it's not nearly as politically engaged (or amusing) as Sorkin's was.

SEF: Going back to this 1980s moment and shifting slightly to the commodification or commercialisation of people like Michael Graves et al., I wonder if access to 'quality' design would not be affordable

otherwise. Thinking through the lens of populism, that accessibility of quality design and working within mass production also relates to a modernist idea, even if the formalism or style was something else. Is this thinking attached to the integration of mass production and design into society?

MM: Your questions remind me of a comment Charlotte Perriand made when she came to New York in 1996 and gave a talk at the age of 93, and someone asked her what she would like to do now? She said, Design for IKEA'; she admired that IKEA has made decent quality design available to more people. That's the positive side of mass-market design. However, it's also important – and for me, this is one of the responsibilities of criticism, or perhaps, more accurately, investigative journalism – to look beyond that and consider how those inexpensive goods are made. What are the environmental costs, the labour conditions, workers' salaries? These are some of the issues that The Architectural Lobby has been addressing, but that should also be addressed by the media.

Another fashionable word these days at Columbia, one that frustrates me, is 'entrepreneurship.' It's used as if it's always a good thing. We all love Apple gadgets and Steve Jobs, etcetera, but for me, the way the word is used ignores the question of who's benefiting from these new inventions or enterprises, and what their role is in a capitalist economy with ever-escalating profits and income inequality. At least in Europe there are more safety nets.

SEF: Yes, but that's the interesting thing. Maybe, as you say, that's obviously where the politics is at the moment: what happens to your IKEA packaging, or what happens with the dismantling, the deforestation of of what are still primary forests in Scandinavia and other places? That's truly the political question related to design and politics as separate entities.

L-CS: Should we come back to this idea of replacing the Reagan era by the Trump era? I think that's probably the most general question of this conversation. If you had to write this text today but reflecting on the relationship between architecture and politics – maybe we can even say in the post-Trump era because, hopefully, we're in the post-Trump era – what would be the subtitle?

MM: I'm not so sure. We're in a moment of rampant eclecticism in architecture – neo-Brutalism, neo-po-mo, neo-avant-garde, and so on – a culture of 'anything goes'. I'm not sure you can associate any particular stylistic movement or theoretical current in architecture with Trump's presidency, although it did seem to coincide with ever more extravagant forms (for example, West 57th, Bjarke Ingels's pyramidal apartment block) and strange new building types targeted to the very rich, such as the super-tall, super-skinny towers springing up in midtown Manhattan. It's as if the commodification of the '80s had escalated exponentially. In hindsight, what was happening during the Reagan era looks almost benign compared to now, but when I wrote the essay, I couldn't imagine it getting worse.

Notes

1. Mary McLeod, ‘Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism’, *Assemblage* 8 (February 1989): 22–59.
2. Richard Pommer, ‘The Architecture of Urban Housing in the United States during the Early 1930s’, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (*JSAH*) 37, no. 4 (December 1978): 235–64.
3. The other contributors were Dennis P. Doordan, Geogio Ciucci, Michael Rustin, K. Michael Hays, and Richard Pommer himself.
4. Fredric Jameson, ‘Architecture and the Critique of Ideology’, *Architecture, Criticism, Ideology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 1985), 51–87.
5. Michael Sorkin, ‘The Donald Trump Blueprint,’ *The Nation*, 26 July 2016.
6. See Tomás Maldonado, ‘Las Vegas’, in *La Speranza progettuale, ambiente e società* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970), translated by Mario Domandi as *Design, Nature, and Revolution: Towards a Critical Ecology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972). Maldonado was responding to Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown’s essay ‘A Significance for A & P Parking Lots, or Learning from Las Vegas,’ *Architectural Forum* 12, no. 2 (March 1968): 37–43.

Biography

Mary McLeod is a Professor of Architecture at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservations, where she teaches architecture history and theory. Her research and publications have focused on the history of the modern movement and on contemporary architecture theory, examining issues concerning the connections between architecture and ideology. She is the editor and contributor to *Charlotte Perriand* and the Art of Living (Abrams, 2003) and co-edits the website *Pioneering Women of American Architecture*.

Footprint is a peer-reviewed journal presenting academic research in the field of architecture theory. The journal encourages the study of architecture and the urban environment as a means of comprehending culture and society, and as a tool for relating them to shifting ideological doctrines and philosophical ideas. The journal promotes the creation and development – or revision – of conceptual frameworks and methods of inquiry. The journal is engaged in creating a body of critical and reflexive texts with a breadth and depth of thought which would enrich the architecture discipline and produce new knowledge, conceptual methodologies and original understandings.

Footprint is grateful to our peer reviewers, who generously offered their time and expertise. In this issue, the following papers were peer-reviewed: 'Negative Anthropology: An International Comparison of Various Types of Right-Wing Spaces'; 'Virtues of Proximity: The Coordinated Spatial Action of Community Land Trusts'; 'Call and Response: Popular Media and Architecture in London's Historic Housing Crises'; 'New Classical' Contemporary Architecture: Retrotopic Trends and Phantasms of Tradition'; 'End Times and Architectural Style on the Christian Campus'; 'Cedric Price's Pop-Up Parliament: A Role Model for Media Architecture and Data Politics'; 'There and Back Again: Council Housing, Right to Buy and the Politics of Architectural Pluralism'.

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