Architecture and the Production of Postcard Images: Tradition vs. Critical Regionalism in Curitiba

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Contents

10 EDITOR'S NOTE
Nezar AlSayyad

11 I. KEYNOTE PAPERS
ARCHITECTURE, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION
Abdelhalim J. Abdelhalim

LEARNING TO CONSUME WHAT IS HERITAGE AND WHEN IS IT TRADITIONAL?
Nelson Graburn

MEMORY WITHOUT MONUMENTS: VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE
Stanford Anderson

COLONIAL NOSTALGIA AND CULTURES OF TRAVEL: SPACES OF CONSTRUCTED VISIBILITY IN EGYPT, 1840-2000
Derek Gregory

HERITAGE AND HOUSING IN GURNA
Timothy Mitchell

19 A3. GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN TRADITIONAL URBAN SETTINGS
GLOBAL COMMANDS AND LOCAL WISHES: THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE TRADITIONAL SUDS IN BEIRUT
Safia Toufic Shwayri

MODERNIZATION AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION: HOUSE FORMS AND BUILDING MATERIALS IN KARIMABAD
Sanwar Viquar

MODERNISM AS IDENTITY: RIO CIDADE AND THE AESTHETIZATION OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY
Anne-Marie Braudelhauw

THE MATERIALIZED USE OF THE PAST: GENTRIFICATION MAKING HERITAGE OUT OF URBAN BUILT ENVIRONMENTS
Ingrid Holmberg

21 A4. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: IDEOLOGY AND MYTH-MAKING
MAKING THE TOURIST CITY: NOTIONS OF CIVILITY IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY SAN FRANCISCO
J. Philip Quinn

MAYAN SPACE VERSUS A GLOBAL ECONOMY OF SIGNIFICATION
Andrzej Piotrowski

TOURISM OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM: POTSDAMER PLATZ, BERLIN
Donald J. Worts

THE ROLE OF BUILDING LEGISLATION IN HERITAGE PRESERVATION OF EGYPTIAN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE
Rania El-Azmudin Hammoudi

24 A5. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: THE THEMING OF VERNACULAR SETTINGS
IMAGE IS EVERYTHING: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEGEV BEDOUIN AS TOURIST ATTRACTION
Steven C. Dinero

ARCHITECTURE AND THE PRODUCTION OF POSTCARD IMAGES: TRADITION VS. CRITICAL REGIONALISM IN CURITIBA
Clara Irazabal
MANUFACTURING NATURAL HERITAGE: DISNEY'S WILDERNESS LODGE  
Eric Higgs and Jennifer Cypher

CELEBRATING THE AMERICAN SMALL TOWN: WHAT KIND OF SELLOUT?  
June Pauline Williamson

THE "NIGHT ZONE" STORYLINE: BOAT QUAY, CLARKE QUAY, AND ROBERTSON QUAY  
Heng Chye Kiang

27 A6. VERNACULAR SETS: THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AS PROP FOR STAGED EVENTS  
FROM "RUINS" TO "SIGHTS": ARCHAEOLOGY AS A RESOURCE IN PALMYRA, SYRIA  
Layla Al-Zubaidi

ARTS FESTIVALS IN THE TRADITIONAL ENVIRONMENT: THE VERNACULAR SETTING FOR ART AND AS ART  
Carol Martin Watts

"WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO THE OLD HOMEPAGE?": TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE IN THE COUNTRY MUSIC INDUSTRY  
Michael Ann Williams

BUILDING HOOKIPA  
Spencer Leineweber

RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPES AND THE INVOCATION OF TRADITION: TENRYU TEMPLE AND GARDEN, KYOTO, JAPAN  
Narik Brock Johnson

30 A7. POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE  
NOTES ON THE POLITICS OF CULTURE  
Samer Akkach

PARADOXES OF POST-COLONIAL PRESERVATION  
Robert Bruegmann

PRIVATE PROPERTY IN AFRICA: CREATION STORIES OF ECONOMY, STATE AND CULTURE  
Donald Knackeberg

TOURISM ENCOUNTERS: INTER- AND INTRACULTURAL CONFLICTS AND THE WORLD'S LARGEST INDUSTRY  
Mike Robinson

32 A8. INVOCATIONS OF ETHNICITY, NATIONALISM AND RELIGION IN HERITAGE STRATEGIES  
WHEN TRADITION BECOMES LUXURY  
Rosemary Lattor

RAISING THE STAKES: MANUFACTURED HERITAGE, COAST SALISH IDENTITY, AND CASINO ARCHITECTURE  
Caroline Swope

THE EVOLUTION OF BUILDING TRADITIONS: A LOOK AT BALI AND VERMONT  
Sandra Vitzthum

CASINOS, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, AND PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE IN NEW ORLEANS  
R.D. Washington

35 A9. HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS: IDENTITY, HERITAGE AND REPRESENTATION  
SITE AND CITATION: GUIDEBOOKS AND THE TOURIST GAZE  
Anne Bush

"THE ENGLISH PATIENT" REVISITED  
Haba Farrokh Aboud

AN ARCHITECTURAL PORTRAIT OF JERUSALEM: THE MANIPULATION OF TRADITION IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE BRITISH MANDATE IN PALESTINE  
Ron Fuchs

HOSPITALITY AND RESISTANCE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY CALCUTTA  
Swati Chandrasihay

REMEMBER THE PALACE: DIFFERENT GENDER IDENTITIES IN HISTORICAL MEMOIRS OF THE PHAYA-THAI PALACE, THAILAND  
Vimalin Rajivasharukul

III. DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND PRACTICE

39 B1. CONSTRUCTING TRADITION THROUGH DIFFERENCE  
A NATIVE'S HERITAGE, FABRICATED AND ASSEMBLED  
Noda M. Alhasani

ARCHITECTURE OF HERITAGE BETWEEN THE IMAGE OF SELF AND THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE OTHER  
Lobna Sherif

A TRADITIONAL SHAPE PACKAGED: ON THE PANCASILA MOSQUE OF INDONESIA  
Gunawan Tjahyono

BANJU TO BANJU: SHIFTING MODELS OF THE PERCEIVED "TRADITIONAL" TORAJAN HOUSE IN INDONESIA  
Chee-Kien Lai

THE COLONIAL LANDSCAPE OF LUCKNOW, INDIA  
Amrita Sinha

40 B2. INVOCATIONS OF TRADITION IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT  
CREATING AN ARCHITECTURE FOR THE "OTHER": REINTERPRETING A VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURAL TRADITION  
Joseph L. Ananda

URBAN HERITAGE, ALIENATION, AND CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY: CAIRO'S NEW DEVELOPMENT  
Galal Abada

REUSE OF THE VERNACULAR BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OF JORDAN  
Leen A. Fakhoury

TOURISM AND TOURISTS AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF EGYPT IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION  
Tarek Abu-Zekry and Ahmed O. El-Khalil

43 B3. ECOLOGY, TOURISM, AND TRADITIONAL SETTLEMENTS  
ECOTOURISM RESORTS AND HOTELS: A CASE STUDY OF AL MAHRA RESORT IN THE DUBAI DESERT  
Anna Elsheba

TOURISM FACILITIES AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT  
Amr Eileithy

THE IMPACTS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ON THE RED SEA COASTAL LANDSCAPE  
Mohammad H. Refaat

ECOLOGIES: MEETING THE DEMAND FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN EGYPT  
Ashraf Salama
45 B4. DESIGNED OBJECTS: PRODUCTS AND THEIR CULTURE
ENRICHED FRAMEWORKS
Stephanie Bartos
CHAIRS IN GLOBAL CULTURE
Galen Cranz
A CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF TOURISM AND ITS PRODUCTS IN TURKEY
Humanur Bagli

46 B5. TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE TRADITIONAL: BETWEEN GLOBAL AND LOCAL
CONFLICT AND RECONCILIATION: ON THE CULTURAL DYNAMICS IN CAIRENE PUBLIC SPACE
Omar Nagat
ARCHITECTURAL PRINCIPLES IN THE AGE OF TOURISM
Desmond Hui
A UNION OF TOWN PLAN, BUILDING FORM, COLOR AND LANDSCAPE: GRAIN ELEVATORS IN THE CANADIAN PRAIRIE
Anna Wegierska Mutin
TRANSFORMATIONS: GECEKONU AS VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE
Hande A. Birkaltn
PLACE VERSUS SPACE: GLOBAL FORCES AND LOCAL REALITIES
Basil Kamel

49 B6. TRADITION AS PROCESS AND PRACTICE
A SPIRITUAL CELEBRATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE
Katherine E. Leigh and Abimbola Asojo
THE RELEVANCE OF TRADITIONAL PROCESS IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION
Aly Assawee and Nabeel Elhady
KURA: A SECOND TRADITION
Rajo Niles
THE TRADITIONAL: PRODUCING THE BOOK OF STANDARDS FOR ARCHITECTURE OFFICES
Marwan Ghandour
TRADITIONAL SETTLEMENTS AND URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE
Peter Bossemann

52 B7. CONSERVATION, REHABILITATION AND IMPLEMENTATION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OR PERVERSION?
Dina K. Shehhab
THE EXPERIENCE OF CONSERVATION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IN PALESTINE
Jihad Awaad
TOURISM, MONUMENT CONSERVATION, AND URBAN REHABILITATION
Ronald Leuweck
ADAPTING TRADITIONAL DESIGN CONCEPTS FOR HIGH-DENSITY SETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENT
Mas Santosa

54 B8. THE PRACTICE AND PEDAGOGY OF PRESERVATION
PLACE, VISUALITY AND KINESTHETICS: TRADITIONAL EXPERIENCE OF ULURU-KATA TJUTA, CENTRAL AUSTRALIA
Michael Tawa

NOAH'S ARK PROGRAM: PRESERVATION OF THE HISTORIC CULTURAL PATRIMONY OF THE COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY THE ITÁ HYDROELECTRIC PLANT
Maria Elisabeth Pereira Rega
PEDAGOGY AND PATRIMONY: DESIGNING FOR TOURISM IN WORLD HERITAGE SITES
James E. Warefield
ACCESSING OUR HERITAGE: VISITABILITY AND THE CREATION OF VISITOR-FRIENDLY SITES
J.D. Harrison and K.J. Parker

57 B9. INVOCATIONS OF TRADITION IN PEDAGOGY
PLACE-MAKING THROUGH THE DESIGN OF BUILDING ENCLOSURES
Dominique Rommeau-Lloyd
HISTORY-TELLING THROUGH GARDEN DESIGN: A DESIGN PROCESS FOR A PUBLIC PARK IN PORT SAID
Dalila Elkerdany
HOGAN-HOUSE PROTOTYPES FOR PERSISTENCE
Jeffrey Cook
A TRADITION IN TRANSITION: ALI TUR IN GAUDELPOUPE, 1929-1937
Anna Halgin and Christian Galpin
INVOCATIONS OF TRADITION: THE RECENT WORK OF CHARLES CORREA
Soumyen Bandopadhyay

IV. CONSUMING TRADITION AND THE PRESERVATION DEBATE

60 C1. PRESERVATION OF THE VERNACULAR BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
CONSERVATION, TOURISM, AND TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES: THE CASE OF QUSIER, EGYPT
Ragai M. Said and A. Abdul Fattah
SURVIVING TOURISM: REPORT FROM AMASYA
William Bechhoefer
SWA: CULTURAL MEANINGS AND THE QUEST FOR AUTHENTICITY
Marvat El-Shafie
AMPHIBIAN STRUCTURES
Gladys Masay Martinez
THE QUESTION OF AUTHENTICITY: IDEALS AND REALITIES
Barry G. Rowney

C2. PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL LIFE-STYLES AND BUILT FORM
CULTURAL CHANGE AND URBAN DESIGN: WOMEN'S PRIVACY IN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN DAMASCUS
Khair Al-Kodimity
HERITAGE AT A CROSSROADS: THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE GULF REVISITED
Yasser Mounour and Zainab Shafik
THE VANISHING JOY OF THE TRADITIONAL PASAR IN JAVANESE SMALL TOWNS
Wisw Wijaya
66 C3. CONSERVATION PROJECTS AND CULTURAL SURVIVAL
WHAT'S LEFT WHEN THE ORE RUNS OUT, MATE?
Christine Landorf
CONSERVATION MEANS TO LAND-USE ISSUES IN SOUTH
SINAI, EGYPT
Magdy El-Bastawisy
TRANSFORMATIONS IN TRADITIONAL MARKETPLACES IN
FATIMID CAIRO
Ahmed Yusuf and Hala Mekawy
BUILDING FOR CULTURAL SURVIVAL: THE CASE OF IRARALAI
HOUSE/MUSEUM/CLASSROOM, ORCHID ISLAND, TAIWAN
John K.C. Liu

68 C4. BUILT HERITAGE: CHANGING PERSPECTIVES
PRESEVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE UNDER THE CLIMATE
OF WAR AND CIVIL UNREST, HERAT, AFGHANISTAN
Rahil Samiay
TOURISM AND CULTURAL HERITAGE: A SWISS PERSPECTIVE
Dieter Ackernoch and Geoffrey Kenworthy
EARLY COMPANY TOWNS OF THE VIRGINIAS
D. Eugene Egger and William Rutkowski
ABYANE AND MASSULEH: TWO VERNACULAR BUILT
ENVIRONMENTS IN IRAN
Iraj Eressam

70 C5. PRESERVATION OF BUILDING TYPES
TOWERS OF GUANGDONG PROVINCE, CHINA
Mui Ho
THE VERNACULAR FARMHOUSES OF THE VERCORS: BETWEEN
THE URBAN AND THE RURAL
Laurence Keith Loftin and Jacqueline G. Victor
HISTORIC REVITALIZATION AS A TOOL FOR TOURIST ATTRACTION:
EL SALANLEK PALACE HOTEL IN ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT
Hisham Gabr
TOURISM AND CHANGES IN A TRADITIONAL BUILDING IN
IRAN: THE SHRINE
G. Hossein Memarian and M. Anwarul Islam
ON PRESERVATION OF A COUNTRY HOUSE AS A STATION FOR
AUTOMOBILES
Nobuo Mitsuhashi and Nobuyoshi Fujimoto

73 C6. SITES OF SIGHTS: MUSEUMS OF HERITAGE
REPRESENTING AND RE-PRESENTING THE VERNACULAR:
THE OPEN-AIR MUSEUM
Paul Oliver
REPRESENTATIONS OF NUBIAN CULTURE IN TOURISM IN
ASWAN: THE VILLAGE AND THE MUSEUM
Elizabeth Smith
THE CIVIL RIGHTS STREET MUSEUM PROJECT, ATLANTA
Ranea Kemp-Relian and Leah Creque
TRANSITION FROM SPACE TO PLACE: THE HERITAGE PROCESS
IN OPEN-AIR MUSEUMS IN ENGLAND
Antonia Nousia
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK FOR THE SYRIAN LIMESTONE
MASSIF
Artilio Petruccial

77 C7. THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC IMAGES
RECONSTRUCTING A HISTORIC IMAGE: TECHNIQUES AND
PROCESS IN SHARJAH CITY
Ahmed M. Salah Ob
UNDERSTANDING TRADITION: A SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS
OF PRESERVATION EFFORTS IN AL’MARIA, SHARJAH
Yasser Elbashawy
IS THERE ROOM FOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN HONG
KONG, A CITY OF HIGH LAND COST AND RAPID DEVELOPMENT?
David Lung
REVIVING HISTORIC BEAUTY: THE CONSERVATION OF JIMEI
SCHOOL VILLAGE IN XIAMEN, CHINA
Mei Qing

79 C8. PRESERVED LANDSCAPES
LA FOCE: THE RE-CREATION OF THE PAINTER’S LANDSCAPE IN
SOUTHERN TUSCANY
Monu Livingston
SPATIAL PATTERNING AND TOURISM ON MOUNT BROVO,
INDONESIA
Endang Tiel Sunari Sarjaputro and Frank E. Brown
THE LINEAR URBAN SPACES AND PATHS IN HISTORIC CAIRO
Soheir Zaki Hawas
THE SUBMERSION OF DAILY LIFE: NOVA PONTE, BRAZIL
Alicia Duarte Penna

81 C9. PLANNING FOR THE LIVING HERITAGE
THE INTEGRATION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND URBAN
PLANNING PRACTICE: CRITERIA FOR AL ABBASSEYA DISTRICT
Sahar Aria and Shabana Shabka
GLOBAL FORCES, LOCAL TRENDS, AND URBAN DESIGN:
REQUALIFYING PLACES FOR SHOPPING AND TOURISM IN
RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL
Visanta del Rio
TRADITIONAL VERSUS INFORMAL DESIGN PROCESS IN URBAN
HOUSING GENERATION
Haslam Ann Baygat and Aiy Mohamed El Sewy
DOCUMENTING THE LIVING HERITAGE
Mohamed S. Khairy and Dina K. Shehaysb
TOURISM IN KULA AS A MEANS TO PRESERVATION AND
SELF SUSTENANCE
Cigdem Akkurt

84 V. SPECIAL PANELS
TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT: EGYPTIAN PERSPECTIVES
EXPLOITING ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IN TOURISTIC DEVELOP-
MENT: CULTURAL DISPARITY AND VISUAL PREFERENCES
Nasmati Abdal Kader and Sayad M. Ermousay
LOCAL TOURISM AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EGYPT:
THE NORTHWEST COAST
Donald P. Cole and Soniya Altorki

85 V. SPECIAL PANELS
GLOBALIZATION, THE EMERGENCE OF INFORMATION
SOCSIES, AND PLACELESS TRADITIONS
HOUSING, COMPLEXITIES OF TRADITION, AND MODERNITY
Ibrahim M.I. Al-Bu’Hie
BUILDING, AESTHETICS AND TECHNOLOGY
Akeil Ismail Kahera

HOUSING IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY
Omar Abdulaziz Hallaj

TECHNOLOGICAL OPENINGS TO EACH OTHER
Robert Mugerwa

UPGRADING AND CONSERVATION IN CAIRO: THE CASE OF ZAMALEK
Presenters: Maisa Mahmoud, Dalila ElKerdany, and Aly Gabr

CONCEPT OF VALUE: THE CASE OF ZAMALEK

THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF ZAMALEK

ARCHITECTURAL EVOLUTION OF ZAMALEK: PERIODS / STYLES / ARCHITECTS

SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT: PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

URBAN DESIGN AS A TOOL FOR CONSERVATION AND UPGRADING
A5. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: THE THEMING OF VERNACULAR SETTINGS

IMAGE IS EVERYTHING: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEGEV BEDOUIN AS TOURIST ATTRACTION
Steven C. Dinero
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ARCHITECTURE AND THE PRODUCTION OF POSTCARD IMAGES: TRADITION VERSUS CRITICAL REGIONALISM IN CURITIBA
Clara Irazabal
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MANUFACTURING NATURAL HERITAGE: DISNEY’S WILDERNESS LODGE
Eric Higgs and Jennifer Cypher
University of Alberta, Edmonton; and York University, Toronto, Canada

CELEBRATING THE AMERICAN SMALL TOWN: WHAT KIND OF SELL-OUT?
June Pauline Williamson
University of Utah, Salt Lake City, U.S.A.

THE “NIGHT ZONE” STORYLINE: BOAT QUAY, CLARKE QUAY, AND ROBERTSON QUAY
Heng Chye Kiang
National University of Singapore, Singapore

IMAGE IS EVERYTHING: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEGEV BEDOUIN AS TOURIST ATTRACTION
Steven C. Dinero

Since the late 1990s the tourist industry in the Israeli Negev Desert has grown seven-fold. Though the region’s austere topography and exotic flora and fauna provide its primary attractions, increasingly its human residents — the Negev Bedouin — have become a growing element of the Negev ecotourism package.

Using the Bedouin as a case study, this paper provides a theoretical framework for analyzing the commodification of indigenous culture for tourism-industry consumption. It is shown how, just as place, historical event, and material culture are shaped into a tourist product, so too can indigenous values, beliefs and traditions be packaged and sold as a consumer good.

The paper argues that the Negev Bedouin community is now undergoing a process through which it is being converted into an attraction for international tourists. This process is analyzed as it is manifested in three primary arenas: the “Bedouin Market” in Beer Sheva, the museums at Kibbutz Lahav and Rahat City, and through a variety of organized tours run by numerous operators throughout the Negev. Using data gathered from Israeli Ministry of Tourism documents, tour vendors on the Internet, and published tour guides, it is shown that two complementary processes, “Disneyfication” and “museumification,” have combined to render today’s community a caricatured semblance of its former self.

It is concluded that tourism planning and development in the Negev has furthered the proletarianization of the Bedouin population and has contributed to an overall Israeli government policy of Bedouin cultural decomposition. It is suggested, too, that if such a process does succeed in eventually contributing to the wholesale destruction of traditional Bedouin culture, it will have effectively killed the very “Golden Goose” upon which much of Negev tourism planning is now based. Such a lesson has far-reaching ramifications not only in Israel, but wherever indigenous culture is commodified in the developing world for international tourist consumption.

ARCHITECTURE AND THE PRODUCTION OF POSTCARD IMAGES: TRADITION VS. CRITICAL REGIONALISM IN CURITIBA
Clara Irazabal

In Curitiba, Brazil, the building of architectural monuments that make use of a direct vocabulary of tradition has been one of the major means to construct the city image in the last two decades. The government of Curitiba has plagued the city with foreign-styled landmarks mostly based on selective samples of European traditions. Such attempts strive to construct a city image that creates a sense that Curitiba has a heritage connected with the European established traditions. Examples of those ethnic landmarks are the Polonaise Memorial, and the German, Italian and Portuguese parks. Such monuments depict a cosmopolitan, international city, freed from the tortuous memories of black slavery and Indian submission that tint history elsewhere in Brazil. This selective editing of history valorizes and idealizes parts of the pasts, while erasing others (Ellin, 1996).

Curitiba, nonetheless, is not isolated in this practice. It is a contemporary urban phenomenon that cities create urban traditional forms that fall “out of context” in their nostalgic references to (an imagined) social and economic order of the past (Holston, 1989). The dominant class in Curitiba has participated in what has become a larger urban trend of “inventing tradition” (Hobsbawm, 1983), trying to transform a past into a commodity for mass consumption and profit-making. At its best, the invocation of foreign traditions in the Curitiban monuments derives in representations of a long-lost and often romanticized past, “one from which all trace of oppressive social relations may be expunged” (Harvey, 1989). At worst, it creates images without real referents, “a simulacrum or pastiche” (ibid.). These ethnic buildings in Curitiba ignore the
specific historic circumstances of the periods they quote, producing instead "history-as-Arcadian-symbol, not history-as-reality" (Davis, 1987).

The case of the invention of tradition in Curitiba, with its lineage in European heritage, is nonetheless unique, because it has been overly emphasized to the point of exhaustion, and can be said to have created a hyperreal theme park. Cities in our epoch compete with each other — and with theme parks — to attract visitors. One approach to this contest in Curitiba has been the creation of a "theme park" spread within the city. The urban buildings and spaces with far-away referents conform the Brazilian version of an EPCOT Center, with yet greater claims. In Curitiba, these monuments are supposedly expressions of ethnic groups that have claims in the past and present history of the city, and on its current spatial basis. As these stage-setting landmarks are officially presented and superficially accepted by some residents and visitors as a celebration of diversity and rich heritage in the city, they actually work as mechanism of exclusion. The decisions of who gets represented and who does not are deliberately made by the governmental and elite classes, targeting both residential groups that have cultural and economic power in the city, and potential desirable visitors (tourists and eventual investors).

In contrast to these structures, there are newly created public buildings in Curitiba that seem to be responding to a different intent. The are the Open University of the Environment (Unilivre) and the City Memorial, among others. Such buildings are attempts at critical regionalism. They celebrate local materials, crafts, climate, light and vegetation, avoiding the extremely sentimental characteristics of the ethnic buildings. With a critical commitment to place, they "deconstruct" the overall spectrum of world culture which they inevitably inherit" (Frampton, 1985). Critical regionalism emphasizes that the idiosyncratic and symbolic elements of traditional cultures should be assimilated with the rational and normative aspects of universal culture to generate "regionally based world cultures" (Frampton, 1985). I claim that the exploration of critical regionalism, as these examples show, offers the greatest potential for the solution of architectural and urban challenges in Curitiba, and can construct a competitive, more authentic image of the city in the century to come.

MANUFACTURING NATURAL HERITAGE: DISNEY'S WILDERNESS LODGE
Eric Higgs and Jennifer Cypher

Disney's Wilderness Lodge in Orlando, Florida, is one of thirteen themed resort hotels located on the Disney World property. It claims to offer guests a seamless themed experience of nature in an entirely built environment. Through elaborate design and with commercial intention, concepts and experiences that are deeply embedded in North American life — national parks, ideas of the frontier and wilderness — are constructed into the hotel and its environs and highlighted at every possible level in order to provide the visitor with an as-close-to-real-as-possible experience. This results in the creation of a hyperreal national-park-lodge setting; the real thing, only better — wilderness without dirt or danger. In their redefinition of natural heritage, what Disney attempts at the Wilderness Lodge is nothing short of a recalibration of nature as a conceptual product. Disney commodifies and markets the concepts of nature and wilderness and creates spaces in which to experience these concepts on Disney's own terms. In this way, Disney controls the experience of nature while visitors are within their domain, and colors experiences of nature without. We refer to this process as colonizing the imagination, and propose that Disney's simulacra challenges commonly held definitions of reality.

Our presentation will outline our field experience at the lodge and suggest that the creation of such places, and the selling of the experiences designed for them, is problematic because they replace actual experiences with virtual ones, creating a form of hyperreality. This highly constructed world fosters the endless availability of experience without the need for experience to occur within real spaces or contexts. Our worry, and that of philosopher Albert Borgmann, is that the boundary between artificiality and reality will become so thin that the artificial will become our center of moral value. Is there a danger in centering our lives in the artificial as compared to the real? It comes down to this: are these characteristics of authenticity that are vital to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of people and environments? This is an issue that remains unresolved at the close of the twentieth century. Our work in explicating Disney's version of nature is meant to clarify this question and provide space for reflection and discussion.

CELEBRATING THE AMERICAN SMALL TOWN: WHAT KIND OF SELL-OUt?
June Pauline Williamson

At the new town of Celebration in Florida an American domestic heritage is being preserved, Disney-style. The town has ostensibly been designed and constructed in accordance with the principles of New Urbanism, which aspire to return some of the traditional values of town-making to the business of speculative housing development. Celebration is an example of how the visual and aesthetic components of these principles have been co-opted without substantially transforming the mechanisms of contemporary real estate development, while also masking the political apparatus of transcending in such "towns." The houses exhibit state-of-the-art security and environmental-control technologies, as well as fiber-to-the-curb telecommunications services that are networked to schools and other institutions. By clothing this technological framework in an outfit assimilated from the tenets of New Urbanism, resi-